

NEWSLETTER

SEPARATED CHILDREN IN EUROPE PROGRAMME

JUNE 2003

In this issue:

- Programme update
- Country news
- Legal changes
- Practice
- Statistics
- Conferences, seminars, events
- Publications
- Web sites

The content has been prepared from publicly available sources and information provided by the participants of the Separated Children in Europe Programme's NGO Network.

Programme update

Since the start in December of the ongoing program period the following activities and developments have taken place:

Empowerment of separated children:

An Advisory Group on children's participation has been created to assist the SCEP advisor and co-ordinator in developing participation work with children. NGO network members from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Norway and the UK are part of this group.

A training pack on participatory methods has been developed and will soon be tested in various countries.

Comparative analysis of EU member states' strategies, policies and practices regarding separated children:

The work with the revision of Statement of Good Practice is close to its completion. In June a small working group will meet to discuss the strategic decisions to be taken regarding the inclusion/exclusion and selection of international instruments into the

new SGP before the final document is sent for endorsement.

New national assessments are taking place in several countries at this moment. The aim is to finish the elaboration before the summer.

Sandy Ruxton – who developed the SCEP Plan of Action in the year 2000 – is working in on the analysis of the implications of the EU common asylum policy for separated children. This document will be launched in the autumn.

Training activities in CEBS countries:

In March the SCEP, in close collaboration with Save the Children Romania, and with the financial support from Save the Children Sweden, held a three day workshop in Bucharest on Age Assessment and Identification for NGO network members, government officials and other NGOs working with the issue of separated children in Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania. The report of the workshop will be available in the near future on the SCEP web site.

Policy development, EU-lobby strategy and European awareness raising

An Advisory Group on EU issues has been formed with NGO network members from Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the UK. The AG will contribute to fulfil the objectives of the SCEP, especially in the area of influencing EU policy regarding separated children, and to develop and implement the national NGO partners' advocacy strategies.

Funding, administration and financial management:

The Save the Children members of the SCEP Steering Committee made a clear statement in their March meeting that there is a strong wish to have the programme continue working and developing in the 28 countries after 2003.

The SCEP web site was moved in January 2003 from the Centre for Europe Children to the Save the Children Alliance.

The new SCEP web-site address is ***www.separated-children-europe-programme.org***. The site is updated on a bimonthly basis and in the period February to April 2003 the site had 66.502 visits.

UNHCR/Save the Children Joint Activities in Europe:

A work plan for joint activities in 2003 has been established covering the organisational framework and future collaboration.

Collaboration on activities will – subject to availability of funds – be in the following areas:

- Host and management of the SCEP web site
- Revision of the Statement of Good Practice
- One network meeting and one theme conference
- Follow up training to Training of Trainers
- Updated Country Assessments
- Comparative study based on updated Country Assessments.

A meeting between UNHCR officials from the Europe Bureau, CEBS regional and national offices and the Programme Co-ordinator took place in November in Budapest. The process of broadening the “New Statement of Good Practice” was discussed, and linked to this, the elaboration of the updated National Assessments by the NGO partners.

Concerning Regional co-operation the issue of the participation of the CEBS NGOs in the SCEP programme meetings was discussed as well as UNHCR's implementation of a “Regional Competence Development Network Programme”, CDNP. Members of the CDNP are NGOs from 11 countries in Central Europe, Baltic States and Cyprus. Ideas were interchanged about how both networks, the SCEP and the CDNP, could benefit from each other's expertise (see also *www.cdn.net*).

Furthermore, issues of European co-operation and lobby and advocacy at the EU level were discussed.

As **new UNHCR SCEP Co-ordinator** Ms. Jacinta Goveas has been appointed as of April 2003. Ms. Goveas is Regional Advisor on Refugee Children for the Europe Bureau and based at UNHCR HQ in Geneva.

New NGO contact in Ireland is Cabrini Gibbons, Legal Officer at the Irish Refugee Council.

Country news

AUSTRIA: Clearingstellen (clearing-houses) are reception centres specialised for separated children. The residence time is limited to three months after arrival. It is the intention to give the children the possibility to rest and to carry out medical and psychological examinations and to look for subsequent adequate housing and care facilities. After two years these centres are now under pressure. It is not longer possible to get co-funding from the European Refugee Fund. Therefore the Bund (federal state) and the

Länder (states) are working on a financial agreement to prolong the existence of this centres. Until now no agreement could be reached.

BELGIUM: A platform composed by civil society associations and authorities has been created in Namur (Wallonia). It has been inspired by the nation wide platform 'Minor in exile'. The reason is the opening of a reception centre for separated children in Gembloux, near Namur, and the growing issue of how to best assist separated children. Participants' objectives are to share information and expertise, to better understand who does what, to network and to better understand the issues of concern.

'Minor in exile' is now producing two newsletters in Dutch and French, one with brief articles and one with in-depth articles.

Three new reception centres for separated children have been established in 2002, one in Brussels, two in Wallonia. One of the two later is dedicated to child victims of trafficking. Its address is secret for security reasons.

A research project focusing on children begging in Belgium is currently being done. Two categories of minors begging have been identified: separated child victims of trafficking (only two cases so far) and children with their families (the majority). Most are from Central and Eastern European countries. The research has been commanded by the Minister of Child Welfare, and the purpose is to understand the situation and make recommendations to better protect these children. This research should be finished by July 15 2003.

FINLAND: The Central Union had European Refugee Fund funding for 2 years for the project Alone in Finland. In the second year the focus was – besides co-operation with lawyers (The Finnish Refugee Advice Centre) and other actors – to develop the guardian system. Training was offered and a handbook for guardians produced (to be launched in June). One part of the training was a seminar

in March where e.g. the asylum procedure was discussed in the light of the principle of best interests. Discussions on how to improve the guardian system and the organising of this are still going on with relevant actors.

GERMANY: In December 2002 the German High Court made a decision to postpone the Immigration Act. The Act has to be re-negotiated in the two chambers of parliament. The original draft was virtually no progress for the situation of separated children but the view of many children's rights activists is that the new drafts as a whole should be withdrawn.

The situation of all projects co-financed by the European Refugee Fund is very bad. The Federal Asylum Office, which is responsible for the distribution and the administration, is withholding 20% of this year's funding. It could take until April next year to get the money for projects started in 2002. Some institutions can only continue their operations by taking loans from banks but the majority is in severe danger to stop their work very soon.

GREECE: In Thessaloniki the number of separated children from Albania has been reduced. However the street workers now meet "new children", comparing with those who are already registered.

The NGO Arsis, local partner of the international organisation Terre des Hommes, acts in Thessaloniki and run a programme for separated children from Albania.

IRELAND: Age assessment is still an issue for the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC). As there is no definitive test suitable across all cultures, a judgement call is made on the age of a child – after having spoken with the young person concerned. This is unsatisfactory for all working with separated children.

In January 2003, the *Lobe* and *Osayande* cases were brought to the Supreme Court, where it was held that non-EU national

parents do not have an automatic entitlement to residency on the basis of a child born in Ireland, as had been policy up to this date. (Every child born in Ireland is an Irish citizen, Constitution, Art. 2). However, this decision was specific to the facts of these particular cases.

Approximately 10,000 applications for residency are still being considered, and the Government has not yet decided how those cases will be dealt with. While this is an immigration matter, many asylum seekers withdrew their asylum applications over the past few years on the basis that they would be granted residency after having a child in Ireland. There is concern over those who withdrew their asylum applications with the legitimate expectation that they would be granted, as of February 2003, applications for residency on the basis of having a child born in Ireland are no longer being accepted by the Department of Justice.

THE NETHERLANDS: On 23 April 2003 the court (kort-geeding) ruled in a complaint by a few separated children about their centre. They complained over not having enough free time, the rules being too strict and not being allowed to leave the centre area. The court concluded according to CRC article 31 that children have a right to play and that the campus must allow them to have more free time – and that there should be a complaints board accessible for the separated children.

NORWAY: On commission from the Directorate of Immigration, Save the Children Norway will develop a model for individual supervision of separated asylum seeking children in reception centres.

In the autumn 2002 Save the Children in Norway, Denmark and Sweden launched a pilot project on separated children from Somalia and home country links. The project is partly financed by the European Commission. The target group is 16-20 years old Somali youth who came to one of the

three countries as separated children and who have expressed a wish to visit their home country. The objective is to provide them with the possibility to visit their home country for a short period. Through this they will have the possibility to strengthen their links with their home country and get a better overview of choices for their future.

PORTUGAL: In the first three months of 2003 the total number of asylum seekers is 20, the lowest in several years and a drastic decrease.

Though unaccompanied minors only constitute a small group of asylum seekers in Portugal (45 from 1999-2002) PRC is concerned about the excessive border controls that limit the rightful access of asylum seekers to the territory and consequently to protection.

An unaccompanied minor, national from Sierra Leone arrived in Portugal in September and presented his asylum claim at the International Airport of Lisbon. PRC considered it fundamental to achieve a fair decision to determine the age of the young male. Therefore an examination for age assessment, a dental forensic examination, was made at the Instituto de Medicina Legal. This examination proved to be determinant to the decision. After a non-admissibility decision by the SEF, and the consequent appeal by PRC to the NCR, the age of the boy, 13 years, was considered of most importance and deliberated an admissibility decision. The boy is now a bearer of a Provisional Residence Permit and lives in a Youth Centre.

Each year there is an increase of the number of asylum seekers who have been tortured or victims of violence or ill treatment in their country of origin. PRC has raised this issue since the lack of psychological support to these persons was much felt.

Therefore, PRC welcomes the creation of CAVITOP (Centre of Support for Torture Victims), which is to provide systematic and continuous psychological and psychiatric support to asylum seekers and refugees suffering from torture, violence or ill treatment.

ROMANIA: A project proposal was submitted to Romanian Social Development Fund in 2002. The project is a partnership between Save the Children and the National Refugee Office, Ministry of Interior, and aims to organise a special programme for separated children. The project will start in May 2003 and consists in organising a daily programme for all separated children on cultural orientation, computers, English lessons etc. Specialised staff – social counsellor, teacher for cultural orientation and a psychologist – will be involved.

SLOVAKIA: Separated children issues have been incorporated in the curricular of the Refugee Legal Clinics at Trnava University as of January 2003.

In December 2002 a joint mission of the Migration Office and NGOs went to Nurnberg to see the practical part of the infrastructure for separated children.

SPAIN: In mid-February, there were around 11 repatriations of unaccompanied minors in Madrid. In every case, the child opposed his repatriation. To the knowledge of Save the Children Spain, none of the children were consulted before the repatriation was carried out, nor were their opinions taken into account when taking the final decision to send them back to Morocco.

Most of the NGO personnel who had custody of the children, consulted by Save the Children, opposed the repatriations on the grounds of it not being in the best interests of the child. A number of the children were well integrated in Spain, some had residence permits being processed – which only happens after 9 months of continuous legal

guardianship in Madrid – and most of them, once in Morocco, rapidly began trying to re-enter Spain illegally, at great risk to their physical well-being.

At least one of repatriations was opposed by a doctor due to the child was undergoing a serious medical treatment. The repatriations were carried out at dawn (5-6am), and the government offices were not open at that time to respond to anybody opposing the repatriation. NGOs with custody of the children were notified a day or so in advance of the repatriations.

According to the NGOs that exercised custody over the children, none of the procedural guarantees were respected with consistency. The children were turned over to the Moroccan police, who kept them in a police station for. They were required to pay a fine to be released from the police station; and if unable to pay the fine, the children had to appear before a judge.

UK: The closure of the Red Cross Reception Centre at Sangatte in Northern France received wide spread news coverage in the UK as many believed its presence was a significant factor in the large numbers of asylum seekers arriving in the UK. The official figures announced by the Home Office for the year 2002 placed the UK as the European country receiving the largest number of asylum seekers and this understandably drew particular media attention. In the main the British media continue to portray very negative images of asylum seekers.

The UK has announced its ‘New Vision’ for asylum. Broadly this proposes that many asylum seekers will be removed from the receiving countries to ‘Transit Processing Centres’ on the fringes of the European Union where their claims will be assessed. A second strand of the vision expands this and talks about Regional Protection Zones in the regions that generate asylum seekers. The UK will be presenting their vision to European Union partners in June 2003.

Legal changes

AUSTRIA: The Austrian government is currently drafting a new asylum law. Major changes are expected including restrictions on access to the asylum procedure. The scheduled access procedure will, as far as known, also include separated children. On January 1st 2003 the new foreigner employment act (Ausländerbeschäftigungsgesetz) came into force. This new legislation makes it even more difficult for asylum seekers to get access to the legal and durable labour market. There are no exemptions for separated children.

BELGIUM: A draft law on guardianship has been adopted. To be implemented an agreement has been adopted between the communities and federal authorities.

On January 9th 2003, a resolution proposition has been made to stop detaining children in closed centres.

CROATIA: The Asylum Law is in parliamentary procedure and has passed second hearing.

There is a need for development of a procedure for reception of separated children, regarding accommodation etc. to be formally adopted by the Government of Croatia. The initiative is passed to the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare by the Task Force for the protection of separated children in Croatia.

DENMARK: In January 2003 the Danish Parliament passed an amendment to the Aliens Act concerning separated children. According to this a guardian is to be appointed for each separated child seeking asylum in Denmark after April 1st 2003. Furthermore a lawyer is to be assigned in all cases where the child's asylum application is turned down. Finally the authorities have the obligation to search for the parents of the child, subject to the acceptance of the child or the guardian.

FINLAND: The Aliens Act is to be revised to make it consistent after numerous changes since it came into force in 1991. The previous government left a Bill in December 2002, but it lapsed in Parliament due to lack of time and upcoming elections. The new government will restart the process. A group of NGOs has been active last year and quite a lot of the views were taken into account in the Bill. The group is to meet with the new Minister of Interior in May to discuss these views. The NGOs are working on keeping open the possibility to get the family to Finland instead of – with the small number of asylum seekers – to put a clause in the law stating that family reunification should happen first and foremost in the country of origin or in a third country.

GERMANY: A proposal to withdraw the reservations against the CRC is still on the agenda.

A study is under way about the situation of children recruited to be soldiers. This should help to raise awareness about the special needs of this particular group of separated children.

GREECE: It is expected that the Presidential Decree No. 3064 will be issued, according to which competent agencies for the support of separated children will be appointed. Hereby the gap on the guardianship should be filled in, because according to the existing one (61/99), the Minor's Prosecutor is the guardian only as far as the asylum procedure is concerned. Today several problems up for which no guardian is appointed, e.g. concerning education and health level, and the NGO is working with the child applies to the First Instance Court asking for the guardianship on a specific issue.

IRELAND: The Immigration Bill 2002 is being discussed by the Irish parliament. It contains provisions for Carrier's Liability, and a fine of €3,000 for airlines/other carrier's

who carry passengers with false/no documentation.

The European Convention on Human Rights Bill 2001 proposes that the ECHR be incorporated into Irish law through interpretation. This has been strongly criticised by a number of organisations who have requested this to be reconsidered in favour of constitutional or legislative incorporation.

“Dublin II” (which contains specific provisions on unaccompanied minors) will also come into operation in Ireland.

NORWAY: In the Norwegian government’s White Paper on organised crime and trafficking, there was far too little focus on children. In Save the Children Norway’s submission on the matter, it was argued that: 1) Focus on trafficking of children should be prioritised by Norwegian authorities, 2) the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child should be the basis for protection of these children, 3) children have a special need for protection, 4) penalty for trafficking of children should be stricter than for other trafficking, 5) the victims of trafficking must receive protection and care

PORTUGAL: Though not a priority of the government, asylum policy goes with the agenda of the EU policies for harmonisation, pressed by the dimension of immigration.

A new law – Decree-Law 34/2003 of February 25th, Regime of Entry, Stay and Departure of Aliens and Expulsion – which came into force at March 12th, has the main objective of preventing the growth of illegal migration and to strengthen the legal instruments to return persons to their countries of origin, in co-ordination with IMO policies.

ROMANIA: Different drafts of a Child Law have appeared in the last six months, and after written recommendations and lobby activities,

provisions recommended by Salvati Copiii (Save the Children Romania) are included in the latest draft of April 2003. The provisions refer to the term of separated children to be included, that separated children are seen as children in a difficult situation, that those who do not apply for asylum are now included in the legislation so they will no longer risk to be accommodated in the closed centres of the Aliens Department.

SLOVAKIA: New Asylum law has entered into force as of January 1st 2003

Alien and Border Police together with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family commented the Amendment of the Alien Law in light of unaccompanied minors.

An Inter Ministerial working group composed of the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, Ministry of Health, Alien and Border Police, UNHCR and IOM is meeting regularly on a monthly basis.

SLOVENIA: A proposal has come up for organising a shelter for separated children.

UK: On January 8th the Home Office implemented Section 55 of the recent Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act. The purpose of this section was to exclude those asylum seekers who could not prove that they had lodged their application as soon as was ‘reasonably practical’ from receiving state subsistence. The government were clear that unaccompanied children, families with dependent children and those with special needs would be exempt from this restriction so in theory there should have been no impact upon separated children. However a number of applicants claiming to be children and whose age was disputed, thus being treated as adults by the Home Office, found themselves falling foul of the legislation thus being denied support.

The legality of this Section 55 of the Act was successfully challenged in the High Court i.e.

it was deemed unlawful but the appeal court subsequently overturned this decision. However the Appeal Court did outline that the Home Office needed to be clearer about what exactly they meant by ‘reasonably practical’ and further they had to thoroughly assess the applicant’s reasons for any delay in lodging their application.

Practice

BELGIUM: By initiative of the NGO Service Droits des Jeunes, a pool of lawyers has been created. Two meetings have been held and a list of lawyers willing to be trained and to represent separated children has been elaborated. The lawyers can be contacted 24 hours as a turnover is organised to make this possible. Four training sessions are planned for April and May.

The Head of the separated children’s unit at the Home Office has changed and encouraging meetings have been held with the new head of office. The separated children’s unit and the unit dealing with victims of trafficking (adults and children) have merged, as both groups need special attention and particular protection.

The federal authority has created a new administration to co-ordinate the placement of asylum seekers, “FedAsil”. It controls the quality of reception of asylum seekers and co-ordinates voluntary return. Critics have been made questioning the independence of the administration, its effectiveness, its non-existent co-operation at the European level etc.

CROATIA: Legal guardians were appointed to all 227 separated children registered by local social services.

There is an urgent need of assessing the process of appointment of legal guardians to separated children as well as the accommodation in social welfare institutions.

FINLAND: At the Directorate of Immigration trained officials interview all separated

children and also make the decision. This is part of a larger reform of transferring all asylum interviews from the police to the Directorate of Immigration. Excellent guidelines on interviewing children have been made and distributed, available also in English.

The NGOs, however, are concerned how the reform is going to work in practice. There have been some difficulties because good practices turn out to cost money. There have been delays in interviews because is costly to send officials to make interviews in a large country. In some cases the local police has made the interviews, against the new agreement – the police should only interview concerning travel route and identity. DNA testing is costly and this causes difficulties for family reunification.

Some issues still need to be discussed: 1) The police need training on how to deal with children as they are still doing a part of the interview, 2) interpreters need training in working with children and young people.

Some children need special attention: having come as separated children, soon after having been placed in a group home adults turn up and claim being their parents. It has to be considered very well whether to place a child with a family as it has turned out not always to be in the best interests of the child. It is a delicate issue to “investigate” the family and it demands time and co-operation between different actors.

GERMANY: In the city of Munich all unaccompanied minors are now under guardianship. It is the first big city in Germany to offer this form of protection to all minors.

In Hamburg a policy of deterrence combined with very strict and unfavourable age-assessment for separated children helped to decrease the number of arrivals dramatically, up to 90%. The children now go to other cities with the effect that social services are collapsing.

GREECE: An example of good practice in Thessaloniki: There is a good and fruitful co-operation between the Minors' Prosecutor, the Police, Minors' Department and the NGO Arsis. The goal is protection and safe repatriation of children who are recognised as victims of trafficking. In every case the Albanian governmental institutions are informed and take over the tracing of the family, investigate and ensure the conditions by the return. It is also important that the child is supported upon arrival to his/her country following the repatriation.

IRELAND: All asylum seekers without exception will now be accommodated in Direct Provision Centres. Where individuals with particular health concerns etc. could apply for rent allowance for private accommodation in the past, this will no longer be possible.

Separated children are being housed in hostels around the Dublin area. There are concerns over the numbers of children in the hostels and the number of children who are assigned to social workers.

With EURODAC now operating across Europe all asylum seekers over the age of 14 must have fingerprints taken.

The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform have recently – without reasons – refused a number of citizenship applications from recognised refugees.

NORWAY: The Directorate of Immigration has introduced age assessment of separated children seeking asylum. X-ray of hand-wrists followed by an examination of teeth performs the age assessment. The Directorate states that the age assessment is voluntary and offered to the asylum seekers during the asylum interview. However, Save the Children Norway questions that this is completely voluntary; an asylum interview is not a comfortable situation and it is signalled that if the asylum seeker turns down the offer, the

Directorate will view this upon as non-co-operation.

PORTUGAL: Some aspects of the new law concerning family reunification, travel documents, renewal of residence permits and expulsions are to be regulated soon. The Portuguese Refugee Council is aware that the impact of the new Aliens Law regarding trafficking of children, sexual abuse of minors, family reunification and integration, return policies etc. calls for a special attention in respect of the best interest of the children.

Arrangements concerning voluntary repatriation are adopted in order to promote the return of refugees, especially in the context of the actual situation in Sierra Leone and Angola, following the tendency of the peace agreement process in both countries. In 2002 14 asylum seekers decided to return to their country of origin, with the support of IOM, responsible for the Voluntary Repatriation Programme.

ROMANIA: The system continues, meaning that once a separated child has applied for asylum he/she is placed in an accommodation centre, age assessment is carried out, a guardian is appointed, social and legal services are provided by NGOs. All separated children are included in the national school system and special activities are organised for them.

SLOVAKIA: As by mid 2003 the refugee accommodation centre in Brezova pod Bradlom has been chosen by the Migration Office to be dedicated to accommodate separated children who enter the asylum procedure and also families with children and other vulnerable groups of asylum seekers.

UK: Two local authorities, Kent, who have very high numbers of newly arrived separated children, and Manchester, who have relatively few, have engaged in a pilot safe case transfer project. In practice this means that Kent are

transferring responsibility, and with it the allocation of a specific central government grant based on a per child formula, to Manchester. The significance of this is that it is the first time in the UK where case responsibility has been transferred in relation to separated children. All local authorities with large numbers of separated children will doubtless be watching this pilot project with interest.

A small number of local authorities, where separated children make their entry or asylum claim in the UK, together with the relevant government departments are developing a new model for the reception and assessment of needs of separated children. This is being referred to as the ‘intake model’ and – if it to be implemented – is likely to be based on a small number of key authorities making initial assessments pending case placement with other authorities.

The Home Office has yet to implement its policy of interviewing more separated children though this is still clearly part of their future plans.

Government ministers have also stated that they want to look seriously at developing facilities that would enable the return of separated children whose asylum applications have been refused. It is understood that the Policy section at the Home Office has been asked to develop this over the coming year.

In April the Home Office replaced the discretionary status of Exceptional Leave to Remain with two alternatives: Humanitarian Protection and Discretionary Leave to Remain.

Statistics

The following statistical information on arrival of separated children is based on non-standardised reporting from the SCEP NGO Network. It is an attempt to make the information comparable, but in some cases the figures cover the number of arrivals, in

others only the presented number of asylum applications.

Country	2001	2002	2003 provisional
Austria	1.741	2.400	-
Belgium	747	*277	-
Croatia	-	227	-
Denmark	-	137	36
Finland	-	70	27
Germany**	-	873	-
Greece	-	147	74
Ireland	600	287	94
Luxembourg	-	-	22
Netherlands	5.950	3.232	-
Norway	-	-	146
Portugal	-	8	-
Romania	-	-	4
Slovenia***	-	165	3
Spain****	-	6.329	-
Sweden	-	550	-
UK*****	-	5.945	-

* January - June

** under the age of 16 – 77% of all separated children are 16-17 years old

*** including illegal immigrants

****represents the total entrances in reception centres, not individuals

***** excluding age dispute cases reported by A-CID

The EU Commission has adopted a communication to present an action plan for the collection and analysis of EU Statistics in the field of migration.

The action plan includes measures to improve the quality, timeliness and comparability of these statistics and to ensure that information and analysis are available to all. The Commission intends to introduce Community legislation that will define the statistical information that needs to be supplied by national authorities. This national level information will then be compiled and published by Eurostat. More information on europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/news/intro/news_120503_en.htm

Conferences, seminars, events

Held

In December 2002 asylum co-ordination Austria organised a two-day seminar for NGOs and authorities on caring for separated children.

In Slovenia on January 21 a seminar 'Separated children' was organised for field workers (social workers) by Slovene philanthropy, UNHCR and Office for immigration and refugees.

In March 2003 UNHCR held a two-day seminar in Austria on separated children. The training was for staff from youth welfare agencies and staff from the Bundesasylamt.

In Spain on March 14-15, the national network of NGOs who work with separated children met in Valencia to follow-up on their last meeting in Barcelona in October 2002. The next biannual meeting will be in Madrid, most likely in October.

In Bucharest on March 20-22 Separated Children in Europe Programme held a regional Workshop on Age Assessment and Identification. Salvati Copiii was local co-organizer and support was given by Save the Children Sweden. Participants were NGOs and government officials from Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. The main objectives of the workshop were competence building to strengthen capacities on separated children related to age assessment and identification and to promote cross-border co-operation and a common understanding of the issues across borders. A report from the workshop will soon be available on www.separated-children-europe-programme.org

In Greece a meeting took place April 16-18 in Thessaloniki between the representative of the Albanian Ministry of Public Order (Department of Action against Human Trafficking) and the competent police and legal authorities together with the social services of the city. The aim of the visit,

which materialised with the support of the Albanian Section of Unicef and included representatives of Arsis and Terre des Hommes, was the promotion of a more intensive co-operation between the authorities for a common and more effective dealing in combating children's trafficking.

On April 28-29 there was a conference in Santander, Spain, hosted by the *Plataforma de Organizaciones de Infancia*. The focus of the conference was "proposals of a social protection strategy for children." Save the Children Spain spoke on the condition of separated children in Spain.

On May 7 was a meeting for 56 associations working with separated children in Belgium. They all got funding from the King Baudouin Foundation to start a project focusing on separated children. The purpose is for all these actors to meet, share expertise and build a network.

On May 13-14 Belgian and German associations met to share expertise and difficulties regarding separated children issues. The participants were psycho-social and legal workers.

On May 22 SOS Kinderdorf organised the conference „To live and learn to live in nowhere-land“ (Leben und Lernen im Niemandsland) focusing on the possibilities and barriers in education and vocation for separated children in Austria.

Upcoming

On the June 10 the UK Home Office National Refugee Sub-group for Unaccompanied Refugee Children is hosting a conference in Birmingham looking at the issues of separated children and social exclusion.

June 16-22 is Refugee Week in UK and the theme this year is young people. Go to www.refugeeweek.org.uk for information, inspiration, free specialist resources and classroom materials. The Refugee Week is a partnership project between the Refugee

Council, Refugee Action, UNHCR, UK for UNHCR, Save the Children, British Red Cross, Amnesty International UK and Arts Council England.

Salvati Copiii (Save the Children Romania) in co-operation with UNHCR has started a training programme for future guardians. The training programme includes three stages: beginner, intermediate (one month practice in refugee accommodation centres) and advanced. The beginner training was organised in May 2002. The 21 participants were psychology, sociology and law students, all volunteers. The advanced training for future guardians will be held between July 31 – August 2 2003. It is expected that in September a network of minimum 12 guardians will be established.

In Lithuania on September 14-16 2003 a NGO Conference will be held on separated children and competence development.

In Germany a National conference of the Federal Association will take place in Bad Segeberg from October 8-10 2003. One topic will be on trafficking of children in the Baltic Sea region. More information on www.bundesfachverband-umf.de

An International Interdisciplinary Course on Children's Rights takes place in Ghent, Belgium, December 11-18. The course is for professionals working in the area of child welfare in a context of children's rights on a national or international level. Working language is English. For further information and application form, contact Kathy Vlieghe, Children's Rights centre University of Ghent, phone +32 9 264 62 85 or Kathleen.Vlieghe@Ughent.be

Publications

The first report by a group of independent experts on the protection of fundamental rights in the Union was published in May 2003. The report does not merely monitor the existing situation; it also makes

recommendations for the future to the Community institutions. Its annual publication thus provides an opportunity for an exchange of best practice and information concerning the protection of fundamental rights in Europe. Can be downloaded from europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/fsj/rights/network/rapport_2002_en.pdf

In autumn 2002 “Handbuch Unbegleitete Minderjährige Flüchtlinge” (handbook on separated refugee children) was published in Austria. This book, which was produced with support from the SCE Programme, describes the situation of separated children in Austria and reflects the international and national frame of laws and agreements. ISBN 3-85476-076-0

The Belgian Senate has published a report on separated children, based on the results of a hearing held at the Senate on November 22 2002 for the international children's rights day. Separated children were invited by a group of Senators to explain the difficulties they face and to make recommendation for better protection of separated children. This document is available on www.senate.be

Save the Children Denmark has published teaching material for schools on separated refugee children, consisting of a textbook 'Børn på flugt' (Children on flight) and a complimentary web site www.boernpaflugt.dk

In Finland, The Unaccompanied, a documentary film of separated children with English subtitles has been released. Along with it is published a small leaflet which tells the basics on separated children in Finland.

Publications in Finnish can be found on www.yksinsuomessa.net, e.g. a report based on Statement of Good Practice and a guide book for guardians (to be continuously updated) will be published in June 2003(in Finnish).

The National Coalition in Germany has published a report on their conference held in

Berlin on March 21-22. The title is “Children without a German Passport – Children without rights?” ISBN 3-922975-67-4

A Greek report on “Child victims of trafficking from Albania to Greece” is available on www.tdh.ch

A book about the integration of separated children in the Netherlands: *Ama's onderweg (Separated Children on their way)* by Hester Radstake and Maja Dekovic. 2002. ISBN 90 6665 471 6

The Dutch book *Het VN-Verdrag inzake de Rechten van het Kind en de Nederlandse Rechtspraak* by Geeske Ruitenbergh, published April 2003, has looked at every occasion where the CRC is appealed until 31 December 2001.

On April 9 2003 Human Rights Watch published the report "Fleeting Refuge: The Triumph of Efficiency Over Protection in Dutch Asylum Policy" on the Aliens policy (also concerning children) in the Netherlands – with conclusions such as “the Netherlands violates human rights”. Available on www.hrw.org/europe/netherlands.php

In Romania a colouring book on separated children's issues was elaborated in 2002. The colouring book was distributed to 1,200 school children aged between 6-11 in 5 primary schools in Bucharest.

In Slovenia is published *V zoni prebežništva: Antropološke raziskave prebežnikov v Sloveniji*, Oddelek za etnologijo in kulturno antropologijo Filozofske fakultete, Ljubljana 2002

In Sweden a book on children's reasons for seeking asylum has been published by Save the Children: *Barns egna asylskäl*, by Karin Juhlén. Rädda Barnen, 2003. ISBN 91-7321-072-2. Article no. 2932. More publications in English on separated children can be found at www.rb.se/bookshop

A series of guides for professionals working with young separated children has been

published by Save the Children England Programme, Young Separated refugees Project. The subjects of the guides are The rights and entitlements of separated refugee children, Working with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children at ports, Setting up youth groups for young refugees in the UK, Setting up mentoring schemes for young refugees in the UK and Providing emotional support to young separated refugees. Copies can be ordered by e-mail at c.macarthur@scfuk.org.uk

PICUM recently published the first volume of its “Book of Solidarity” project. The book aims to make visible the solidarity that is extended to undocumented migrants residing within Belgium, Germany, the United Kingdom and The Netherlands. Volume II will cover France, Spain and Italy, and Volume III will cover Austria, Sweden and Denmark. The book can be ordered at info@picum.org

Human Traffic, Human Rights: Redefining victim protection is a report from Anti-Slavery International. It looks at measures to protect trafficked people in Belgium, Colombia, Italy, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Poland, Thailand, Ukraine, the UK and the US. It includes case studies and documents good and bad treatment by authorities. Concludes with recommendations on areas such as investigation and prosecution, residency status, protection, in-court evidentiary protection, support and assistance, and legal redress and compensation. Can be downloaded from www.antislavery.org/homepage/resources/humantraffichumanrights.htm

Web sites

www.enscw.org is the site of European Network on Street Children Worldwide with the main aim to support NGOs, governments and the media in addressing the rights and needs of street children.

www.asyl.at/projekte/umf.htm was re-launched in April 2003. The site contains various useful information on separated children in Austria.

www.bundesfachverband-umf.de is the web site of Bundesfachverband UMF, Germany. Here you can order the documentation of the National Conference held in Stuttgart December 6-8 2002

www.ris.ie is the web site of the Irish Refugee Information Service

www.cpr.pt is the web site of the Portuguese Refugee Council – in Portuguese. Here you can find information, legislation and links concerning activities and the focal points on refugee issues.

www.iomvienna.at, launched by IOM Vienna - Mission with Regional Functions for Central and Eastern Europe, contains a database on migration legislation under the section 'Migration resources'.

www.unhcr.sk contains information about refugee issues in Slovakia.

This Newsletter has been produced by Sergio Kristensen and Lise Bruun for the Separated Children in Europe Programme.
For more information, please contact:

Sergio Kristensen, Programme Co-ordinator
sk@redbarnet.dk
tel: +45 35 24 85 12

Lise Bruun, Associate Programme Manager
LBR@redbarnet.dk
tel: +45 35 24 85 24

Save the Children Denmark
Rantzausgade 60
DK-2200 Copenhagen N

Web site: www.separated-children-europe-programme.org