



**PARLIAMENT OF MONTENEGRO**  
**Committee for Human Rights and Freedoms**



**PARLIAMENT OF MONTENEGRO**  
**Delegation of the Parliament of Montenegro in the  
Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe**

**THE SECOND REGIONAL MEETING OF PARLIAMENTARY WORKING BODIES RESPONSIBLE FOR  
HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD WITH THE OMBUDSMEN FOR CHILDREN OF  
COUNTRIES IN THE REGION**

**ON**

**“THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD – IMPROVEMENT OF THE STATUS OF THE CHILDREN IN ORDER TO  
PROTECT THEM FROM ALL FORMS OF EXPLOITATION”**

Upon the completion of the Second Regional Meeting of Parliamentary Bodies responsible for human rights and the rights of the child with the Ombudsmen for Children of countries in the region, on the topic of “The rights of the child – improvement of the status of the children in order to protect them from all forms of exploitation“, which was organised by the Committee for Human Rights and Freedoms of the Parliament of Montenegro with the Delegation of the Parliament of Montenegro in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms of Montenegro, and held on 21 and 22 January 2014 in Danilovgrad, the delegations of:

- Serbia: National Assembly – the Committee on Human and Minority Rights and Gender Equality and the Protector of Citizens of the Republic of Serbia – Deputy Protector and the Head of Division for Children’s Rights
- Croatia: Croatian Parliament – The Committee for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities and the Ombudsperson for Children
- Slovenia – Deputy Ombudsman
- Republic of Srpska – Ombudsperson for Children and Deputy Ombudsperson
- Montenegro – the Parliament of Montenegro – the Committee for Human Rights and Freedoms, Delegation of the Parliament of Montenegro in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms of Montenegro and Deputy Protector

have adopted the following

## JOINT STATEMENT

Participants of the Meeting:

- Welcome the organization of this Regional Meeting, pointing out that the establishment of cooperation and its continued promotion is the best way to take aiming at democratic transformation of the countries in the region in the field of protection of all forms of human rights, with special emphasis on the protection of children's rights in their best interest;
- Agree that the cycle of holding such meetings, hosted by each country of the region and held on certain pre-defined topics, should continue;
- Take note of the importance of exchange of experiences and good practice with a view to strengthen the mechanisms and procedures that ensure work efficiency and implementation of the competencies of the parliamentary bodies, through the intensification of the activities with the Ombudsman institutions;
- Taking into account the seriousness of the problem of:
  - Child begging and the consequences and risks carried by life on the street for both the community and the child and society as a whole,
  - Sexual exploitation and abuse of children,
  - Abuse of children on the Internet, and
  - All forms of exploitation of children,

Jointly state that all of these are serious problems whose suppression and resolution requires the involvement of all government institutions within the area of their competencies, contributing to their resolution, where the cooperation between the institutions is very important and so is the cooperation with the countries of the region;

- Pointed to deficiencies common to all countries in the region as the key gaps in the protection of children from various forms of abuse and exploitation:
  - Most professionals are not familiar with the rules (definitions) of various forms of child abuse, which indicates that state authorities and services lack highly specialized staff for work with children that are victims of abuse and exploitation,
  - Lack of records, and databases, as one of the measures that can contribute to the monitoring of this phenomenon, as well as to the flow of information between professionals which would contribute to better protection of children and systemic tracking of the problem of child abuse and exploitation,

- Lack of prevention programmes aimed at informing the general public about the problems of abuse and exploitation of children and encouraging children to report the cases of abuse and exploitation to competent services,
  - Lack of specialized services for work with child victims aimed at their full recovery and reintegration in most of the countries in the region;
- Agree that in order to improve the effectiveness of protection of children from all forms of exploitation and neglect, it is necessary to:
    - Determine the cause of exploitation of children,
    - Take a multidisciplinary approach to the problem,
    - Amend the legislation in order to better protect the rights of children,
    - Strengthen the role of the social welfare centres and counselling centres for parents,
    - Take measures to raise awareness of children, citizens, professional public.
  - Stressed the recognition of importance of family as the basic starting point in which a child should have the highest security, by pointing to the necessity of its economic empowerment and improving legislation through the implementation of the provisions of Lanzarote Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence;
  - Agreed that the MPs and their national parliaments, particularly the working bodies for human rights and children's rights and ombudsman institutions, as a primarily preventive mechanism, bear the responsibility to provide, through the measures of continuous application of the instruments of parliamentary oversight, for the best way aimed at democratic transition of society in all scales of the system, with a view to protecting children and their rights to a safe and healthy development in their best interest;
  - Concluded that as much work as possible should be done on education:
    - Of children, starting from an early age, about the harmful effects of all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation of children and the risks they carry,
    - Of educational workers and all persons who work directly with children about ways and various forms of violence, abuse and exploitation of children,
    - Of all professionals who come into contact with child victims of various forms of violence, abuse, and exploitation,
    - And raising the awareness of parents and the general public about all aspects of child abuse, the harmful effects of all its types on the child's development, and the manners of protecting children from these effects, as well as responsibility of the media in promoting and protecting children's rights,

- Aimed at taking the necessary actions and measures to secure a greater degree of cooperation between parents and educational institutions in order to strengthen and improve the parental role in the child protection process;
- Concluded that only clearly set objectives aimed at strengthening the capacities of social institutions can deal with these problems and enable them to provide adequate protection to children and families;
- Agree that the key to improving efficiency in this area lies in keeping records of these cases, particularly records at the inter-regional level, which is why the participants of the Regional Meeting called for closer cooperation and information exchange in order to promote a proactive approach and establish effective mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of established policies in the field of children's rights and progress achieved, for the purpose of sharing good practice;
- Agree that the priority areas of action identified in the First Regional Meeting of the parliamentary bodies responsible for human and minority rights and gender equality, held in Belgrade on 29 and 30 October 2013, remain valid in the future period:
  - Rights of national minorities,
  - Solving the problems of refugees and displaced persons,
  - Economic rights, primarily the right to work,
  - Protection of persons of different sexual orientation,
  - Rights of Roma and, in this regard, support for the Regional Project of Roma Inter-Parliamentary Organization,
  - Women's rights and gender equality,
  - Protection of children's rights, especially protection from child pornography and cyber crime
- Express gratitude to Save the Children, UNICEF, OSCE and the Delegation of the European Union to Montenegro for their cooperation, support and assistance in the implementation of regional parliamentary cooperation on issues of human rights and children's rights.

Participants of the Second Regional Meeting:

- On behalf of the Committee on Human and Minority Rights and Gender Equality of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia

\_\_\_\_\_ signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Zlata Đerić, a member of the Committee

- On behalf of the institution of the Protector of Citizens of the Republic of Serbia

\_\_\_\_\_ signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Gordana Stevanović, Deputy Protector

- On behalf of the Committee for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Croatian Parliament

\_\_\_\_\_ signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Ivanka Roksandić, a member of the Committee

- On behalf of the institution of the Ombudsperson for Children of the Republic of Croatia

\_\_\_\_\_ signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Mila Jelavić, Ombudsperson for Children

- On behalf of the institution of the Ombudsman of Slovenia

\_\_\_\_\_ signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Tone Dolčič, Deputy Ombudsman

- On behalf of the institution of the Ombudsperson for Children of Republic of Srpska

\_\_\_\_\_ signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Nada Grahovac, Ombudsperson for Children

- On behalf of the institution of the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms of Montenegro

\_\_\_\_\_ signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Šučko Baković, Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms of Montenegro

- On behalf of the Committee for Human Rights and Freedoms of the Parliament of Montenegro

\_\_\_\_\_ signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Halil Đuković, Chairman of the Committee for Human Rights and Freedoms

- On behalf of the Delegation of the Parliament of Montenegro to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

\_\_\_\_\_ signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Zoran Vukčević, Head of Delegation