

Conference
Preventing sexual abuse of children
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The Parliamentary Network to stop sexual violence against children

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Summary

Parliaments united in combating sexual violence against children

Mr Ghiletschi is a Deputy of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova. He is the First Vice-chairperson of the PACE Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development and a member of the Network of contact parliamentarians to stop sexual violence against children. As rapporteur of that committee, he prepared a report on fighting “child sex tourism”.

A living Network of contact parliamentarians: the will of the Assembly to make the fight against sexual abuse of children a political priority

The Assembly decided to commit itself to the fight against sexual violence against children and created a Network of contact parliamentarians involved in the ONE in FIVE Campaign to stop sexual violence against children. To date, the Network comprises 53 parliamentarians representing nearly all the 47 member states of the Council of Europe, as well as members of *l'Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie* and parliamentarians from Mexico and Morocco.

The strong commitment of parliamentarians

Prevention and awareness-raising at all levels is of great importance. Parliamentarians are of course promoting the Lanzarote Convention in their own parliaments, but they are also very much involved in campaigning to the general public. A lot of activities were developed by national parliaments and parliamentarians. They are listed in the compendium of actions and good practice of the Assembly.

As a topical example, the Greek parliamentarian Eleni Rapti had a lot of meetings with the Greek authorities, including with the Prime Minister. She is the coordinator of the ONE in FIVE Campaign in Greece. She herself organised so many events all over Greek cities, stands of awareness-raising with young children and adolescents and large audience TV shows on every channel of the public TV.

The recent activities of the Network of contact parliamentarians

The Network has held an extraordinary meeting in Geneva on 13 November 2013 to discuss the theme “Taking the fight against sexual violence against children to the world – Sharing the European experience”. The aims of the meeting were inter alia to

exchange good practice with a view to stimulating legal and political action to stop sexual violence against children at European and international levels, and to raise awareness amongst the international community of the importance of ratifying the Lanzarote Convention and of other measures possibly to be taken at European and international levels.

Some meetings of the Network focused on prevention, such as on young sex offenders and children with sexual behaviour problems or on sexual abuse of children by their peers. The next meeting of the Network will be held on 29 January 2014 on “sexual exploitation of girls”.

To complete the campaign tools, the young promising filmmaker Roland Edzard was asked to create a video-spot for adolescents. Children and adolescents facing sexual abuse within their family are being encouraged to “break the silence” and speak out about it in a powerful new short video www.assembly.coe.int/oneinfive/video.

The involvement of the Parliamentary Assembly: two reports debated in the plenary during the April part-session.

The Assembly unanimously adopted two texts on 23 April 2013:

In its Resolution 1926 (2013) on “fighting “child sex tourism””, the Assembly called on Council of Europe member states to protect children against all forms of sexual exploitation, both within their borders and beyond. In particular, Council of Europe member states should enact laws enabling them to prosecute “child sex tourists” for acts committed abroad (extraterritorial jurisdiction).

In its Recommendation 2013 (2013) on “Parliaments united in combating sexual violence against children: mid-term review of the ONE in FIVE Campaign”, the Assembly underlined that the biggest success of the campaign so far has been the significant increase in the number of ratifications of the Lanzarote Convention, which reached 29 to date, and recommended adequate financing.

Useful link:

Short video “The Lake” <http://www.assembly.coe.int/oneinfive/video/default-EN.asp>