



Building a Europe for and with children

**Children and young people's preparation seminar
Monaco
2-3 April 2006**

Prepared by the Council of Europe's European Youth Centre in Budapest

CONTENTS

Introduction 5

I. Children’s rights 7

II. Corporal punishment 11

III. Corporal punishment 21

IV. Sexual abuse in the cyber-era 25

V. Conclusions 29

Appendix 31

1. Evaluation

2. Programme

3. The young people

Introduction

The programme “Building a Europe for and with children” of the Council of Europe aims to promote the rights of the child and to protect children from all forms of violence. It was decided upon by the Third Council of Europe Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Warsaw, Poland, in May 2005.

The programme aims to assist decision-makers and other stakeholders in the governmental and non-governmental sectors to develop and implement policies and concrete measures in favour of the promotion of children’s rights and in particular their right to be protected from all forms of violence.

The programme’s launching conference was held in April in Monaco, upon invitation from the Principality of Monaco. The two day conference welcomed 17 young people¹ in order to reinforce another objective of the programme: the active participation of children and young people in matters of their concern in order to develop sustainable measures in their favour.

The launching conference provided a unique opportunity for follow up to the Europe and Central Asia Regional Consultation for the UN Study on Violence against Children which was held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in July 2005. Following the collaborative experience in Ljubljana between the Council of Europe, Unicef and Save the Children, the same interagency group, together with the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) took responsibility for organising the Preparation Seminar for the Launching Conference. This was regarded as an obvious and pivotal next step in continuing and strengthening interagency collaboration to promote children’s rights and address violence against children.

The child and youth participants for the launching conference were selected through a transparent process: around half of the places were accorded to young people who had participated in the Ljubljana consultation the previous year, in the spirit of following up on their work with the United Nations study to date. A call for interest for the remaining places was published through the NGO channels and networks of the three organisations. The participating children and young people, all having experience in voluntary activities in favour of children’s rights, were accompanied by adults, who themselves were committed representatives of NGOs in the field.

For the young persons participating in the conference a preliminary preparation seminar was organised so they could prepare themselves for the four main subjects of the launching conference and be able to actively participate in the panel discussions articulating their opinions on the subjects. The methods used were strongly participatory: different interactive activities were used from *Compass – a manual on human rights education with young people*, and various sessions were held on the subject of violence prevention. The accompanying adults had parallel sessions on the conference subjects and served as resource persons for the children and young people. The preparation seminar also served as an opportunity for the children and young people present to select their own representatives for the Children’s Consultation on the UN Study on Violence against Children which was held subsequently in

1.Children and young people are used interchangeably in this report. The definition of “children” is from 0 to 18 years of age, following United Nations usage. The ages of the children participating in this conference ranged from 15-18. See the appendix for a complete list.

New York on 23-26 May. Three young participants were duly selected to represent the group in the New York consultation.

The participants were working on the key subjects of the conference and developed their specific contribution in the following subjects:

- promotion of children's rights, awareness raising and information: designing a European strategy
- children's participation: guaranteeing access to information and developing consultation and participation processes
- violence against children: identifying priorities and co-ordinating efforts
- combating sexual abuse in the cyber-era

Facilitator's team

The children's seminar was organised in partnership with the following international organisations.

The **Council of Europe**, organisers of the launching conference, promotes democracy and human rights Europe-wide. It develops common responses to social, cultural and legal challenges in its 46 member states. The youth sector promotes and develops youth policies and encourages young people to play an active role in strengthening civil society.

Unicef has been a global force for children for 60 years, working in partnership with a broad coalition of other United Nations' agencies, governments, NGOs, and local grass-roots organisations to help build a world where the rights of every child are realised. Unicef's work is guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Save the Children is the world's largest independent organisation for children. The fundamental purpose of Save the Children is to create lasting, positive change in the lives of children.

The **National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children** (NSPCC) is the United Kingdom's leading charity specialising in child protection and the prevention of cruelty to children since 1884. The NSPCC provides an independent campaigning voice for children. It works to influence government on legislation and policy affecting the lives of children and families and runs public education campaigns to raise awareness of, and encourage action to prevent, child abuse.

The expertise in the planning team was enriched through the contributions of the young members involved.

I. CHILDREN’S RIGHTS

The objective of the first session of the seminar was to prepare participants for the first of four panel discussions at the conference: “Promotion of children’s rights, awareness rising and information: designing a European strategy”.

Preparation started with an activity from *Compass: a manual on human rights education with young people*.²

Diamond-ranking of children’s rights

The objective of the children’s rights exercise was to provide knowledge about the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC), to review information critically and relate it to everyday experience and to stimulate discussions about the implementation of children’s rights as part of a European strategy.

Firstly, participants were helped to revisit the main contents of the CRC. They then formed groups, each of which received nine cards with different statements from the CRC. Members of each group had to arrange the cards in a diamond pattern in order of importance – reached by consensus through a process of discussion and negotiation in each group. The most important right was placed at the top of the diamond formation and the least important was placed at the bottom.

Diamonds and explanations of the four groups were the following:

Group 1

Standard of living
Right to be heard Freedom of expression
Rest/leisure/play Education Non-discrimination
Parental responsibility Children in conflict with the law
Protection from sexual abuse/exploitation

The standard of living is most important – no rights exist without this. It is significant to the majority of children. The right to express your views means you can change your situation. Rest/leisure/play, education and non-discrimination are a more general set of rights. Parental responsibility and children in conflict with the law – we know about them and they are important, but we feel they are less important than some other rights. Protection from sexual abuse/exploitation is important, but does not affect the majority of children.

Group 2

Education
Freedom of expression Right to be heard
Standard of living Non-discrimination Rest/leisure/play
Parental responsibility Protection from sexual abuse/exploitation
Children in conflict with the law

2. *Compass – a manual on human rights education with young people*, 2002: Council of Europe Publishing.

We are talking about the right to education in general, not just through schools. It means how we learn values – education helps us to learn and decide what is good and bad. Parents, teachers and key adults have a role to play in education. Freedom of expression and opinion are important because it is the way of finding out from children if children’s rights are being respected according to children’s needs.

Standard of living will depend on the right to education because education gives children more chances in life.

Discrimination is very important because it relates to equality of chances – everyone having the same opportunity.

Rest/leisure/play is important for our development.

Parents are obviously very important but we have situations where children do not have parents, so it is important to also talk about adult responsibility in a broader sense.

Protection from sexual exploitation is important because it is about violence against children, but it is lower down in the ranking because it affects fewer children. Education is also important for preventing sexual exploitation. Children in conflict with the law can be children who have not done the right thing but they still have rights.

Group 3

- Education
- Protection from sexual abuse/exploitation
- Standard of living
- Freedom of expression
- Parental responsibility
- Rest/leisure/play
- Non-discrimination
- Right to be heard
- Children in conflict with the law

Education is the key to knowing about your rights. It is more than just school. It is also about culture, art and development.

Protection from sexual exploitation is important because it is a manifestation of violence against children.

Standard of living is important for the good development of the child.

The rights of children in conflict with the law are ranked lower but are still important.

Group 4

- Non-discrimination
- Education
- Protection from sexual abuse/exploitation
- Freedom of expression
- Right to be heard
- Standard of living
- Children in conflict with the law
- Rest/leisure/play
- Parental responsibility

Each group in turn explained its priorities and gave reasons for the order in which they had ranked the rights. The diamond formations were then compared and differences and similarities were made. Participants explained their different opinions and made some general comments.

General comments on diamond ranking

It is not easy to rank rights according to importance because we come from different countries and have different contexts. We felt that the diamond should be spun, so that each right gets a turn to be at the top – they are all important. You could also write the last right upside down so that it can be read both as the highest and the lowest ranking.

We feel that there should be awareness-raising campaigns to stop traditional practices of violence against children.

Some of us were shocked when sexual exploitation was ranked the least important.

It is important to highlight that education is not only formal and academic education, but we also learn from parents and other key adults in our lives.

Following the general discussion on the diamond ranking exercise, participants were asked to consider and discuss which rights they felt were not respected and why.

Our least respected rights

Protection from sexual abuse: Because of taboos, sometimes sexual experience is considered to be immoral. Religion can also play a role in making sexual abuse hidden.

In other countries sexuality is not a taboo subject but sexual abuse is still hidden.

Sexual exploitation can lead to early and forced marriage. Sometimes girls are kidnapped and forced to marry. There is no participation in families and parents are taking decisions about the marriage of their children.

Non-discrimination: It can be based on racial differences. People are attacked because of their skin colour. This is also happening in schools. There is also discrimination against different nationalities in countries, who do not have the same rights and treatment and cannot express their opinions.

There can be discrimination based on religion. There is also discrimination against minorities, who do not have the same rights.

Protection from corporal punishment: There is corporal punishment in homes and in the schools and there should be legislation against it in both places. If teachers humiliate you in school where do we go to complain and get help? Violation of children's rights and complaint and reporting mechanisms need to be monitored. We need to make sure that children have access to these monitoring systems. Governments must do something about this.

Freedom of expression and opinion: We are allowed to say our opinions but they are not respected and acted upon. The idea of participation exists and we have protection from

physical and mental violence and social protection but the idea of equality of participation and real representation does not exist. Children should be included in every process and be given a place in every level of decision making. Our opinions matter and are important.

As a final part of the discussion, participants exchanged views. The conclusions were the following.

How can children's rights be implemented as part of a strategy to promote children's rights?

- Through awareness raising campaigns in all countries
- Through television and radio adverts
- We can use the media to reach children
- We can have forums on the Internet where children can talk about their rights
- We can use cell phone technology and text messaging
- We can have debates in the media to make adults aware of children's rights
- We can have Internet campaign against the sexual exploitation of children
- We can have peer to peer education, which could be supported by NGOs
- We can teach children's rights at school, but it has to be made more child friendly and relevant to children. If we go into schools and "teach" children about their rights, we know it does not work. We have to make it more relevant to the things children do and make them aware about their rights
- Through Education Centres we could reach the non-school places – children who are not in school and also adults, including future educators
- It is the responsibility of adults to also come on board and make sure our rights are promoted, protected and that we can participate
- Children should be consulted on issues concerning them. One way of doing this is by doing surveys of children's opinions
- There should be a person who represents children in every country
- There should be sanctions against governments who violate children's rights and stricter monitoring and follow-up. Experts can help governments to develop plans for this.

II. PARTICIPATION

In the second session of the day participants prepared for the second panel discussion: “Children’s participation: guaranteeing access of information and developing consultation and participation processes”.

Where do you stand?

Participants played an adapted version of the game **Where do you stand?**³ The game’s objective was to stimulate thinking, inspire a debate and confront opinions about participation on the basis of controversial statements. This game was reproduced at the conference as part of the children’s presentation: “Building a Europe for us children”.

During the exercise different statements were shown to the participants, and they were asked to decide whether they agreed or disagreed with the statements. According to their decision – to agree or disagree – they had to take up positions at opposite ends of the room. Participants were then asked to explain to each other why they had positioned on the agree/disagree side. People were free to change their position after listening to the arguments made by participants on both sides.

Statements discussed:

- Children don’t need to hear about children’s rights. They need respect from adults
- Children’s rights are a luxury only rich countries can afford
- You can’t enjoy children’s rights unless you have enough to eat
- Only outspoken and older children have the right to participate
- Children don’t need to know about their rights as parents know better
- Participation is unsafe for children because it can expose children to risk
- Participation interferes with children being children
- Children in trouble with the law have no rights to participate

In most cases there was a lively debate about the statements. Once all the questions had been discussed, participants returned to their small groups to reformulate some of the statements in such a way that they could all agree to – without changing the issue the statement addressed.

As a result, the following statements were formulated.

3. The game “Where do you stand” was first published in 1999 in the Intercultural learning T-kit of the Council of Europe.

We all agree that:

- Not only rich countries have the possibility to ensure that children's rights are fulfilled
- Participation is also important within the family because parents do not always know best
- All children, and not just the outspoken and older children, should participate
- Children need to know about their rights, adults need to know that children have rights and they need to respect them
- Participation can be unsafe for children because it can expose children to risks
- Participation may interfere with children being children, in both a positive and negative way
- You have rights even though you are hungry.

Discussion groups on participation

The next session was also part of the preparations for participation in the second panel discussion: "Children's participation: guaranteeing access of information and developing consultation and participation processes".

For this session, four young people were identified to assist with facilitation.

The session had three objectives:

- to prepare young people for participation in the plenary discussions at the launching conference
- to provide the two young panel participants with material for participation / presentation in the panel discussions
- to provide the young people with some material to contribute to their 40 minute presentation on the 1st morning of the launching conference

The session was divided into two parts. The young people were divided into four groups and a young person was identified as a lead person to move the discussion forward. Four adults were also allocated to each group to assist with the documentation of the discussions.

The young people were asked to think about a series of questions in each of the settings and to make contributions based on their own experience and the experience of other children and young people. The settings were based on those addressed by the UN Study on Violence against Children – the school, the home and family, the community and institutions.

After considering each setting the participants were then asked to give examples of actions taken by children that have made adults aware of children's rights and respond to children's

recommendations, both locally and at national level. The participants were finally asked to brainstorm some ideas for their 40 minute collective presentation on the 1st morning of the launching conference.

It is envisaged that the Council of Europe will be able to learn from these experiences and use the information to inform the development of their mechanisms for children's participation in the programme "Building a Europe for and with children".

The following ideas were collected.

Participation: makes children and young people feel valued and gives them a sense of belonging in each of the settings:

School

Why is it important for children to participate in decision making?

There are many reasons why we, children and young people, should be involved in decision making in the school setting. First of all because we are the beneficiaries and, in addition, because:

- It is an institution for us and a big part of our lives
- It is a place where we are the main members and it's like our second family
- By participating we can make our environment better and feel like we belong
- The quality of education can determine our experiences and opportunities for the future
- It helps us to take responsibility, including for our own decisions
- We can play a part in building our own education systems
- Being involved in decision making keeps us happy and motivated

How have we participated in decision making?

We have been involved in making decisions in our schools in a number of ways. This has been both through participating in formal school structures and through the organisation of our own activities. These include:

- Student strikes
- Activities that succeeded in changing the food available in the school cafeteria
- Talking to teachers about issues that concern us
- Representing the class at school through a class president

- Organising different activities (plays) on key issues
- Protests by student councils
- Advising on the decoration and cleaning of schools
- National student councils
- Writing reports to governments about – for example, the importance of youth participation and participation models, suggestions and recommendations about ways to improve youth participation, suggestions on how to improve communications and relations between adults, local authorities and children, suggestions for improving a national strategy on youth participation, the impact of youth participation on youth policies and the community
- President of children’s committees
- Developing and having projects – for example, media projects (newspapers and school radio stations) which have allowed young people to be informed, to express their views and achieve positive change in their communities and societies. In Moldova for example the Youth Media Centre has offered small grants to support youth media projects. These have been given to youth groups willing to create a radio station or produce a newsletter in their community. The grants support them to start their media activity (equipment for radio stations and support for the printing of newsletters)
- Student parliaments
- Making petitions
- Evaluating – for example, in 2004 Unicef issued a report on the evaluation of youth participation in Moldova “Youth evaluate participation”. The evaluation offered proof that young people are able to carry out research concerning their own activities when trained and empowered to do so.

Who has helped us to participate in decision making?

Adults can both help and make it difficult for us to participate in decision making in the school setting. Those who help and support include:

- Ministries of education
- Teachers
- Staff
- Administration
- Parents / family

- Principals
- Students

Who or what has made it difficult for children to participate in decision making?

The same people who help us to participate can also make it difficult. We feel that one of the greatest obstacles to our participation is the reluctance of adults to share power with us. We have identified some possible solutions to overcome these difficulties.

- Ministry of education
- Teachers
- Staff
- Administration
- Parents / Family
- Principals
- Students

Some possible solutions which we recognise need to be monitored continually for their effectiveness:

- A box that students can use to highlight their concerns. Some of us feel this was a solution. Others know this had been tried and didn't work. An "independent" person should check it which will help our concerns and ideas to be heard
- Hotlines
- Make it illegal to physically and verbally abuse children
- Bringing in expert psychologists and counsellors
- Official recognition of the power of student organisations by schools and governments

Family

Why is it important for children to participate in decision making?

We recognise that the family is the most important place for us, where we grow up and learn our basic life skills. We also recognise the family as the place where we are potentially the

most fragile and vulnerable members. We feel that our participation in decision making in the family is crucial for a number of reasons:

- We have the right to participate because we are equal members of the family
- It's a place where we can express our needs and where our parents can show that they respect and listen to us
- It's a place where we learn contact and experience and it's our first step to the wider world
- Families are a microcosm of the wider world and participation in decision making in the family prepares us for participation outside of the family
- It helps us to formulate good relations with the family and to learn how to make compromises
- Participation also has emotional benefits for us, it develops our self worth and makes us feel valued.

How have you participated in decision making in the family?

In a way, we participate every day. We use different ways of participating in decision making in our families. Most of our participation is through verbal communication and this includes the following:

- We debate issues with our families, explain the reasons for our views to try and reach a compromise
- We sometimes argue with our families when there is a disagreement. This could be about relationships, responsibilities or activities. But we also know it sometimes works to talk things through.
- We have successfully participated in making decisions with our families about the following issues:
 - how we would like to spend our free time;
 - choosing what we want to eat, sometimes even choosing which school you want to attend;
 - how we split tasks in the family;
 - resolving family problems;
 - organising family events.

What or who has helped you to participate in the family?

There are different individuals who can help us to participate in the family. These include people both inside and outside our families:

- Our friends

- Members of our families that care about hearing our views
- Social worker/psychologists/teachers, etc.
- School programs which encourages dialogue within the family

What or who has made it difficult for you to participate in decision making in the family?

Although there are individuals that can help us to participate in the family, there are also things and people that can make it difficult.

- Sometimes we fear that taking part in decisions may lead to bad relationships with other family members
- Our schedules sometimes mean that we do not have enough time to participate in our families
- In some of our families the atmosphere is not as we would wish to feel that we can participate. This can be a result of misunderstandings or conflict between generations
- Some of us have no family with which to participate
- Because we respect our parents we do not want to damage the home atmosphere.

Institutions

Why is it important for children to participate in decision making in institutions?

Children and young people in institutions need to feel that they belong in society and need to have a connection with the outside world. They are a special group of children, but we can help them if we know about them. We feel that children in institutions should participate with us in activities and organise their own activities.

- They can tell what they need and they know best what their concerns are
- It is an advantage for the institutions to listen to the children, because institutions are made for children and children have to live in them and live with the decisions taken there.
- Participation helps them to influence the change for the better
- Participation gives them a sense of worth

How have you reached and worked with children in institutions?

- We have worked with children in reception centres
- We have had meetings with children in institutions
- We have worked as volunteers in NGO programmes who work with these children
- Sometimes children in institutions are part of children's organisations
- We can also make media articles for distribution in institutions
- We can make films about the problems in hospitals and prisons
- We can try to establish legal services to liaise between children and courts

What/ who has helped you to reach and work with children in institutions?

- Civil society – NGOs, the organisations we work with
- In one country, the Ministry of Health offered funds and gave permission for entering hospitals
- People who like or respect us and are working in those institutions or persons who can influence the institutions (Save the Children, Unicef and so on)
- Representatives of institutions

Who/ what has made it difficult for you to reach and work with children in institutions?

- The institutions' personnel
- People who don't see children in institutions as equal human beings and who don't respect them
- The solution to governments who don't admit the problems could be bringing in international experts to monitor the situation of children in institutions
- Media who present children in institutions in a bad light

Community

Why is it important for children to participate in decision making in the community?

We are part of the wider community in the same sense as adults are, because of this many of us feel that participation is not only a right, but something we must do as members of the community. Our participation is a matter of democracy – when it comes to issues that concern ourselves we know best what does not work, where the problems are and what should be done about them. We can show adults other points of view.

Our participation in the community can offer fresh ideas about:

- Necessary changes and development
- Highlighting and resolving problems
- Making the community a place for all its members (make the community look like you)
- How to meet new people with respect
- Linking members of the community to the government
- How to achieve a healthy society.

How have you participated in decision making in the community?

In different ways, all of us have tried to make the community a more child friendly place and tell our opinions to adults. Many young people are volunteers in community work. In many countries children have a voice in the community and local governments. Sometimes we can work through our regions to make decisions, including by making petitions to the government.

Some of the activities we have taken part in include:

- Raising awareness about hospitals
- Media promotion of community activities
- Organising youth centres
- Young people and experts working at hotlines
- Focus groups for children and young people
- Children's parliaments

What or who has helped you to participate in the community?

Many individuals and groups have helped us to participate in the community, especially people that work for and with youth – NGOs, adults and representatives from local authorities. Politicians can sometimes help us to participate in community.

Other important individuals or groups that have made our participation in the community possible can be found among our friends, our parents and peers from the same region.

What or who has made it difficult for you to participate in decision making in the community?

Many things and/or individuals make it difficult for us to participate in decision making in the community. We feel that authorities do not want problems to be brought out into the open. Democracy means that you can elect other people to participate. Authorities also tend to get involved with NGOs that have power. For many people, children's participation is a threat since they are afraid of losing power.

Other things which make it difficult for us to participate are:

- Teachers and school
- Young people who vandalise, although if they are invited to join in building the community in the first place, they are less likely to destroy it
- Children lack people to talk to who listen to them
- Laws regulate many things in society, and not least age regulations can make it harder for us to participate
- Bureaucracy is more likely to exclude young people than adults.

III. CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Children are physically punished and deliberately humiliated in almost all societies, and across all cultures. Corporal punishment is a violation of children's human rights to physical integrity, human dignity and equal protection under the law. In many cases, it can also threaten their rights to education, development, health and even survival, and without a doubt it can cause serious physical and psychological harm to the child. The legitimacy of corporal punishment makes protection of children difficult, by implying there are some forms or levels of violence against children which are legitimate. It promotes a double standard saying that there are two categories of citizens – children and adults.

Today, just a few countries in the world have a ban on corporal punishment in all societal settings, including the family. A prohibiting law is one of the most concrete measures in order to show that all forms of violence are unacceptable, and that corporal punishment is nothing but a form of violence. The purpose of this exercise was for young people to give their views on what issues to prioritise and what concrete actions to undertake in order to prevent corporal punishment of children in the different settings of society.

Family

Priorities:

- to help parents learn about bringing up their children without corporal punishment – educational seminars for parents
- parents' education (trainings, psychologists in the family)
- child help centres (NGO + institutions + governments)
- awareness raising via hotlines for children to call; alert the public to report; show how violence is not good
- every country should have a law banning chastisement

Actions:

- participating in developing parents' educational programmes
 - make adults know that corporal punishment is not a solution to problems
 - inform children where they can report (and be safe)
- * experience of young people's participation: awareness raising campaigns, training on parental education

School

Priorities:

- ban corporal punishment in schools by law
- young person representative to monitor / talk to
- educational talks by school councillor
- formal system for making complaints
- educating and helping teachers and school staff on other ways of practising discipline
- fighting peer-to-peer corporal punishment
- inform children where they can report violence in school

Actions:

- make the school authorities listen
- developing programmes / magazines / journals (TV) / campaigns in schools
- reports from conferences
- lobby the government (write letters, campaigns, strikes)
- sports activities between teachers and pupils to build a relationship
- make public announcements that violence is wrong, use media to air views
- initiate campaigns and workshops in schools to prevent corporal punishment
- experience of young people's participation: students' lawyer, cooperation with school consultant, student national council, children's advocate.

Institutions

Priorities:

- quality of employees in institutions (they should be professionals) – training of staff to be aware of child rights and adopt violence-free solutions to conflict
- monitoring, intervention and checking institutions by experts and media (which does not take advantage of the children's situation and which has a constructive approach)
- confidential system, monitored by a child-friendly and independent person
- external institution to deal with complaints

- be aware of the vulnerability of children in institutions
- need to control media – to have a dialogue with them, contact and educate them in order to prevent spreading wrong information
- more planned “excursions” with councillors who are not related to the institution
- laws that prohibit violence

* military school – a form of corporal punishment

* experience of young people’s participation: working with different reception centres, with refugees, placements centres, with children who experienced violence, through rehabilitation programmes

Actions:

- meeting with young journalists
- work with and support children from institutions
- volunteer and talk at institutions
- make issue more present in media and outside institutions
- peer-to-peer youth workers

Community

Priorities:

- enforce punishment for the offenders
- need of experts in the community (for transparency)
- increase media interest on fighting corporal punishment
- confidential system to complain
- more seminars for people in public jobs
- more community officers
- recognise that children have equal rights no matter what

Actions:

- children’s lawyer
- react / let the authorities know about corporal punishment in the community

- local meetings, active monitoring
 - get involved in campaigns
 - “It’s ok to start with you own family first.”
 - make authorities aware of the situation
 - involve yourself into community organisations
 - organise seminars and activities preventing corporal punishment
 - don’t provoke (for example a policemen)
- * experience of young people’s participation: lobby for enforcing laws (public demonstrations), civil presentations in front of national parliament

IV. SEXUAL ABUSE IN THE CYBER-ERA

Sexual abuse is one of the worst forms of violence against children in all settings. It is often hidden. It involves adults who take advantage of children's trust and confidence and it is rarely spoken of due to a vicious circle instigated by fear and a feeling of guilt. It has happened throughout the centuries, in all societies and leaves life-long consequences, often perpetuating a cycle of violence and abuse by those who were once subject to it. However, the modern era bring new challenges: by creating powerful means of communications in cyber space, which while they are a huge asset and opportunity for sharing and exchanging information and cultures, also open dangerous entries into the shady world of organised crime and exploitation.

The purpose of this exercise was to share information on various forms of sexual abuse that are encouraged or aided through the Internet, to explore why this kind of abuse is happening and what can be done to prevent and stop sexual violence against children in cyber space. Adult and youth responsibilities were explored in addressing these challenges. A shared responsibilities approach was taken as a starting point for future action.

Why the cyber-era?

- Internet is a main medium for communication
- Everybody can go on it (criminals and children)

What kind of sexual abuse are you aware of?

- Pornography
- Incest
- Child trafficking (by giving info in chat rooms)
- In churches—priests take advantage of young children
- In swimming pools and other sports centres
- Cyber sex
- Videotaping
- Sex tourism
- Prostitution
- Young girls marry old men (as a part of a tradition)

Why do these abuses happen?

- Children do not want to talk about it (they are afraid, silence, etc.)
- Teachers are not prepared to deal with it (lack of awareness)
- Lack of interest (care) of parents
- Internet is not safe (there is no control)

Why do people do it?

- Negative tradition or habits
- Poverty
- Want to buy expensive things
- Some young people do it for fun
- Older people who accept this behaviour are abusing children by using them

Why does it happen?

- People do not use their real identity on Internet
- Easy access to Internet
- Lack of awareness of the parents and teachers
- In some countries, police and government do not have interest in what is going
- Lack of specific actions
- Children are afraid to speak up not to abuse confidence of abusive friends or family members
- It is not advertised as a problem enough on the TV (unlike other problems like smoking, drugs, alcohol)—lack of propaganda about cyber problems
- Some popular lyrics are wrong (sending wrong messages)
- Child protection mechanisms are not good
- Some people do not react because they know the abusers, and want to protect them
- Lack of the responsibility (child protection services, teachers, principals, etc.)

How to solve it?

- Better preparation of adults who work with children
- Raise the countries authority's interest in this problem
- Better background checks of people applying for jobs
- Share good practices of developed countries
- Strengthening the control in cyber space:
 - responsibility of the Internet providers—introduce security measures;
 - hiring the administrators of the websites who check for violations;
 - more secure checking of identity on Internet;
 - active net police;
- Campaign about the awareness of this problem
- TV and video messages
- Filters for bad websites
- Campaigns of raising self-confidence
- Child friendly websites who address this issue
- Child friendly alerts
- SMS—advertise to apply to receive these messages
- Some of the popular websites should have alerting messages about child abuse

What can young people do?

- Be more aware of the problem
- Not to be afraid to talk about these problems
- Sex education (peer to peer support and education)
- Ask children about their opinion of how to solve these problems
- Hotlines for children (children working on the hotlines)
- Campaign for children by children

Examples of actions taken by children and young people that make adults aware of children's rights and respond to

Children's recommendations:

- Children's parliament
- Student's lawyers
- National forum of volunteers
- Children and youth councils
- International meetings
- Changing aspects of educational system (number of levels, student's rights and obligations)
- Working with authorities and NGOs
- Protect children's rights! (campaign)
- Ljubljana actions: Children say NO to violence! Hands are not for hitting!
- Lobbying – 'If we want it we can have it'! Lobbying with help from the media
- Projects
- School students organised a national strike in Norway because the government wanted to publish the results of school tests on the Internet and in newspapers (so that schools could be ranked according to the results of the tests). The government initiative was stopped as a result of the students' action
- Press (youth organisation linked to Save the Children Norway) – worked together with young asylum seekers for five years to pressure the government to treat them as equals and to protect them as other Norwegian children are protected. Finally, it worked.

V. CONCLUSIONS

As a result of this preparation seminar the 17 children and young people were successfully able to participate in every debate and panel discussion of the conference together with governmental representatives and representatives of specialised international NGOs. They also produced a 40-minute interactive children's presentation about the conference subjects with the title: "Building Europe for us with children", which was presented on the first day of the launching conference. The children's presence was both visible and relevant at every single stage of the conference. This contributed significantly towards ongoing efforts to promote and support children's meaningful and ethical involvement in such processes and to build on and demonstrate good child participation practice.

During the preparation for the conference and the five-days joint work at the seminar the partnership between Unicef, Save the Children and the Council of Europe became stronger and the harmonisation of working processes was further developed. Joint efforts for the promotion of meaningful children's participation were highly evaluated in the team and among the participants.

APPENDIX

1. Evaluation

The following comments were taken from the sheets.

The most useful aspects of the meeting were:

- the fact that we could really prepare ourselves for the main conference and discuss the main subjects before the conference
- the sharing of different opinions and experiences
- working together efficiently, teambuilding
- every participant was very active compared to the event in Ljubljana (Europe and Central Asia Children and Young People consultation on “UN Study on Violence Against Children , Ljubljana, 2-3 July 2005)
- learning new things about children’s rights
- we were from different corners of Europe and we had a wonderful opportunity to share our experience
- meeting great people (children and adults) and participating in building a Europe for us
- being able to participate in debates concerning children’s rights
- games, energisers, discussion
- work in groups
- workshops, meetings
- this time children (young participants) were more active and in focus

The least useful aspects of the meeting were:

- evaluations
- energisers
- games, warm-ups
- not enough time for discussions
- we were slow in making decisions

The workshops helped me in the following ways:

- To prepare for meetings with other children, to prepare for the conference
- To learn about new sides of things from other participants
- They educated us and made us understand things
- to be less shy and to get to know other participants, to become more active
- to make things better in connection with children's rights
- gave me practical experience in formulating views in relation to violence against children
- to prepare for future participation, to get new ideas
- to express my opinion, to gain a bigger knowledge in children's rights and human rights
- to become interested in humanitarian actions and children's rights
- to find out what is presently done by the NGO-s to protect the children's rights
- to get a bigger perspective
- to get the opportunity to talk freely and participate actively

Did you feel there was a space for you to actively participate?

- yes, very much
- yes, sometimes more when the adults left
- especially in the workshops
- there was not enough space for me because everybody was so active

Do you have any comments on the facilitators or facilitation styles?

- fine, good, great, superb, wonderful, awesome
- very well-organised, everyone felt they can or have to participate
- it was dynamic, fun, child-led
- facilitators were interactive and proactive

- maybe there were too many things to do
- accompanying adults should be with us all the time because we didn't know what they were doing

Any suggestions for the future?

- more free time
- we are working on children's rights, but we are doing our job from 9.30-19.00
- more days of work with less hours per day
- fewer issues so there would be more time to discuss
- more time to rest because it is pretty hard to follow if you are tired
- three days of preparation to properly get presentations ready
- it could be longer so that we could get to know each other better
- more young people
- to be more in focus
- to have more this kind of meetings

Summary of the evaluation sheets:

The feedback received in connection with the preparation seminar was very positive. The biggest amount of answers was given for the question about the most useful aspects of the meeting. The majority of the young participants found that the meeting was extremely useful for going through the topics and thus preparing for the main conference. The possibility to be active also ranked highly among the replies. The exchange of ideas before taking part in the panels was also named as a helpful aspect. Games and energisers were considered useful by some participants whilst others mentioned them as the least useful ones. Other things mentioned as the least useful aspects were the evaluations and the lack of time for discussions.

The answers for the question about the workshops somewhat overlapped with the replies for the first question about the most useful aspects of the meeting. Once again the participants found that the workshops helped them to prepare for the main conference, gave them a possibility to be active and exchange ideas. In addition to this some participants mentioned that the workshops gave them practical knowledge how to formulate ideas and express their opinion and helped them overcome their shyness. Getting new information about the children's rights was also mentioned several times.

All the children found that there was enough space for them to participate actively and some found that they could feel that especially in the workshops. As suggestions for the future most

of the participants noted that they need more time, either for relaxing, discussing or for preparing their presentations. Many children suggested the preparatory meeting to last for three days instead of two, so that they would not be under time pressure. However many of them expressed their wish to take part in such meetings in the future.

2. Programme

Saturday, 1 April 2006

- Arrival of participants in Monaco
Transfer to hotel, registration at Hotel Alexandria
- 18.30h Welcome, technical information
- 20.00h Welcome evening
Get to know each other games – “Meet and greet”
Teambuilding exercises
- 21.30h Parallel meetings
Meeting of Children and Young People on their expectations to the seminar
Meeting of accompanying adults (briefing)

Sunday, 2 April 2006

- 9.30h Opening of the seminar
Get to know each others' names
Graffiti wall
- 10.00h Introduction to the programme of the seminar
- 10.15h Official welcome by a representative of the Council of Europe
Child friendly presentation of the Council of Europe,
The Launching Conference and the programme
“Building a Europe for and with Children”
- 10.30h Revisiting expectations of participants (interactive exercise)
- 11.30h Children's rights
Diamond ranking activity from Compass – a manual on Human Rights
Education for Young People
- 14.00h Children's participation
Where do you stand – activity for preparing for the Conference
- 16.30h Child-led sessions about children's participation
- Why do we want to participate?
- What is the special contribution children can make?
- Do we meet obstacles to participation of children?
- 17.30h Plenary meeting
Exchange of experience, conclusions for message to the Conference
Clarification of participants interests regarding the themes of the panels of
the conference
- 18.30h Evaluation of the day in small groups

20.30h Social evening

Monday 3 April 2006

9.30h Introduction to the day's programme
Technical announcements

9.45h Theme: "Violence against Children"
Working Group A: Combating sexual abuse of children
Working Group B: Combating corporal punishment of children

11.30h Plenary meeting

Exchange on most important points raised in the working groups

Conclusions

12.15h Preparation for the contributions of children and young people
to the programme of the conference

14.00h Visit of the Grimaldi Forum, venue of the launching conference

16.15h Finalisation of children's and young people's contribution to the conference

Practical preparations

17.30h Information on future events on children's rights and
child participation

18.00h Evaluation of the day

3. The young people

Country	Name and age of young person	Organisation	Name of accompanying adult
Armenia	Ms Maneh Tonoyan 16	Unicef	Ms Naira Avetisyan
Croatia	Ms Zvijezdana Posavec 16	SOS Children's village Croatia	Željka Ivandic
Denmark	Ms Hanne Wolsgard 17	Frivilligt Dreng- OG Pige forbund, FDF (Volunteers Boys and Girls Organisation)	Mr Esben Shane Hansen
Georgia	Ms Tamar Dekanoside 17	Tiblisi Youth House Foundation	Ms Tata Sakhelashvili
Italy	Ms Camilla Smerieri 16	Scout C.N.G.E.I. – Italy – Cremona	Mr Filippo Bonali
Lithuania	Mr Julius Lukošius 17	Save the Children Lithuania	Ms Jevgenija Paltanavičienė
Moldova	Ms Tatiana Toporovschi 14	Youth Media Centre (YMC)	Ms Roxana Teodorciuc
			<i>Continued...</i>

Monaco	Ms Daphné De Sigaly 15		Mr Thomas Fouilleron
Monaco	M Alan Brianti 16		Mr Thomas Fouilleron
Norway	Ms Tirill Sjovoll 18	Press Redd Barna Ungdom	no accompanying adult
Poland	Ms Agata Parasiewicz 17	Chance / Szansa	Ms Anna Lechowksa
Romania	Ms Ioana Barbu 18	Salvati Copiii Organisation	to be confirmed
Serbia and Montenegro	Mr Milos Vojnovic 17	CCC "Mastaliste"	Ms Nevena Drakulic
Slovenia	Ms Katarina Mekis 16	ZPMS	Ms Jana Zelenovic
Slovenia	Mr Martin Breskvar 18	Unicef Slovenia	Ms Jana Zelenovic
"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"	Ms Sengjul Osmani 17	Centre for human rights "Amos" Bitola	Mr Biljana Temelkova

United Kingdom	Ms Ellena Cruse 18	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to children (NSPCC) and the Children's Rights Alliance England (CRAE)	Ms Serena de Cordova, also member of preparatory group
----------------	-----------------------	--	--

Facilitator's team

Ms Zsuzsanna Szelényi
Deputy Executive Director, European Youth Centre Budapest, Council of Europe

Ms Diane Widdus
Officer in Charge HIV/AIDS and Young People, Health, Development and Participation; Unicef Regional Office for CEE/CIS

Ms Clare Feinstein
Global Child Participation Advisor for Save the Children

Mr Rasa Sekulovic
Country Manager, Save the Children UK
South East Europe Programme, Serbia Country Programme

Ms Serena de Cordova
Children and young people participation officer, National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)

Special thanks to Ms Monika Sarajarvi for her support in compiling the report.

