



## **Reaching the heights for the rights of the child**

### **Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2016-2021**

#### **High-Level Launching Conference**

**Sofia, 5-6 April 2016**

#### **Statements**

**Ms Sevinj Fataliyeva**

**General Rapporteur on Children**

**Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe**

**(absent)**

Dear Excellencies,  
Highly respected experts,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Colleagues,

I feel very honoured to greet you at the opening of this important conference on behalf of the Parliamentary Assembly, given that our new President, Pedro Agramunt, cannot be with us today.

As a parliamentarian, I can assure you that children's rights and child protection are not yet another issue on the political agenda. They are a fundamental concern for our societies, thus all our European parliaments. And also as a parliamentarian, I can tell you that, over the past years, I have always been profoundly shocked of how many different forms of violence against children can be observed and which terrible new forms of abuse and exploitation have emerged. So, in terms of violence against children, what we need to have on our political agendas, are some of the vicious crimes perpetrated against them and the new responses needed to them.



**Bulgarian Chairmanship**  
Council of Europe  
November 2015 – May 2016  
**Présidence de la Bulgarie**  
Conseil de l'Europe  
Novembre 2015 – Mai 2016



Just two examples:

1. Who would have imagined, three decades ago, to which extent children would be abused by the production and dissemination of online child abuse images? In 2013 only, INHOPE - a collaborative network of 51 hotlines in 45 countries worldwide - registered 5236 URLs, thus single webpages, of suspected commercial Child Sexual Abuse Material.
2. Who of us would have imagined to what extent in many of our countries children would simply go missing during a humanitarian crisis such as the current refugee crisis? Europol recently estimated that of the 270,000 children who had arrived in Europe in 2015, roughly 10,000 had disappeared from official asylum systems. Some of them might have joined their families; many others are probably being trafficked and exploited for sexual abuse or domestic slavery.

I am therefore content to see that both the issues of children in migration and children in the digital environment are high priorities at the present conference and within the new Council of Europe strategy debated today.

In the past five years, the Parliamentary Assembly has been an active partner in the ONE in FIVE Campaign to stop sexual violence against children, one of the most successful initiatives aimed at achieving legislative and political progress in favour of child protection - in this case through ratification and implementation of the "Lanzarote Convention" which has today been ratified by 40 out of 47 Council of Europe member States.

I would like to encourage us all to follow the positive example of this campaign by keeping our eyes open with regard to areas where children need our protection and support, and by stimulating relevant measures in our respective spheres of influence and responsibility. I will certainly continue to do so as a parliamentarian and a mother. In this spirit of common sense, I wish us all two fruitful days of discussion helping us to deploy new ideas to the benefit of our children.