



Reaching the heights for the rights of the child

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Statements

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Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in this panel. The ombudsman puts a specific focus on the protection of the rights of the child. However the protection could never be efficient if children are victims of violence. We are confronting a big challenge in the endeavour to eliminate all forms of violence against children by 2030. This goal also means to go beyond the issue of violence, to get rid of violence and thus concentrate on a broader and complex issue – the well-being of the child and go even further – ensure the right of the child to be happy.

How can children be happy in a violent environment? They can't.

Violence leaves permanent scars on the entire life of a child, it marks deeply its life as an adult and its entire personality. And violence could be everywhere in the schools, in the family, on the street, in the institution.

In my intervention I shall put an accent on three aspects of violence, based on the experience we have with complaints addressed to the Ombudsman: violence in schools, violence in the family and the violence in the institutions for children.

The complaints for violence in the schools have increased twice in less than an year despite of the measures taken, despite of the newly adopted law and despite the policies adopted by each school to



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prevent violence. We urgently need the Centers for support of the development of the personality as provided by law, to put an accent to security issues such as video control, admission to school buildings. This is also crucial in the context of new threats of terrorism in Europe we all confront. In addition, it is very important to stress on the prevention: trainings to identify violence and aggression, trainings involving parents, teachers, children, society.

It is a sad fact that children very often confront violence in their own family. The family environment is the place where the child personality is developed, however in the family a child is the easiest target of violence. The ombudsman takes as its priority to work to prevent this problem. It is important to learn to identify the violence in the family and not to be indifferent, to unify the understanding of what violence actually is (not only physical aspects), to provide information and give means to efficient protection. We need zero tolerance to the violence on children. And finally, we need efficient mechanisms to ensure overcoming the traumas of violence and support the victims.

Last but not least, the children in institutions. As National Prevention Mechanism according the Facultative protocol to the UN Torture convention, the Ombudsman monitors all institutions where children are placed. The monitoring unambiguously indicates that institutions are deeply, incurably marked by violence. We are concerned by this violence as it is a form of cruel, inhuman and humiliating treatment, most of the time done by officials working there. The greater part of these institutions should be closed and deinstitutionalization is an immediate goal.

The Ombudsman is committed to the protection of children and made it its priority for 2016. As mentioned in the report, no violence against children is justifiable, but all violence against children is preventable. We have called our campaign "In our Hands", because the present and the future of the children, their wellbeing and happiness are in our hands.

Thank you for the attention.