



European Day of Civil Justice in Slovenia

To celebrate the European Day of Civil Justice the Supreme Court of the Republic of Slovenia organised on the 21st of October a debate entitled Child in court (Otrok pred sodiščem). The purpose of the event was to raise the awareness of the issues connected with children that participate in court proceedings and to individualise the specific problems that practitioners face in their everyday work with children.

The speakers (10) as well as the participants at the event (almost 140) were professionals from different institutions and environments. After the introduction of the president of the Supreme Court, Mr. Franc Testen, the first two speakers were judges that deal with family law at the District and Higher court of Ljubljana. Next, the deputy of the Human Rights Ombudsman presented the analysis of different problems children and their parents face when dealing with the court – namely the questions of pronouncement of their opinions, injunctions and their temporal validity, the right of trial without undue delay, the right of parents to decide on the upbringing of the child together as well as the enforcement of judicial decisions. The representative of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social affairs presented the proposed changes for the Family Code, while a representative of the social work centres described their role and experiences.

In the second part of the debate the speakers were representatives of different civil initiatives – the association for the protection of victims, friends of youth, the association against sexual abuse and the one of foster parents. The debate was concluded by the presentation of the Information commissioner that spoke about children in the media. After highlighting the main features of the different circles and categories of privacy she listed some actual court cases in which journalists and publishers were found liable of violating the right of privacy of children.

The presentations of the speakers were followed by lively and interesting debates of the participants. One of the points on which everyone agreed is the need to inform the participants in the judicial proceedings of their rights and describe the situation to children in an appropriate and understandable manner. For this reason the Supreme Court in connection with other institutions will prepare brochures for children that come to court.