

Press Release

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Council of Europe launches pan-European campaign against corporal punishment of children

Zagreb, 15.06.2008 – The Council of Europe launched a Europe-wide initiative against corporal punishment of children in Zagreb, Croatia on Sunday, 15 June.

The initiative, under the slogan "Raise your hand against smacking" aims at achieving full prohibition of corporal punishment of children, promoting positive parenting and raising awareness of children's rights throughout Europe.

"The European Convention on Human Rights is for everyone and there is no footnote in it which says that the human rights are for adults only," said Council of Europe Deputy Secretary General Maud de Boer-Buquicchio at the launching ceremony.

"Abolishing corporal punishment against children is not a matter of opinion polls; it is a matter of vision and political leadership," she continued.

"Why is it that if we hit an adult we are liable to prosecution, and if we hit a child nothing happens? It is up to the adult world to ensure that this changes," she concluded.

Emphasising that Croatia was one of eighteen European countries that have abolished corporal punishment, Jadranka Kosor, Deputy Prime Minister of Croatia and Minister of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity said: "It is not enough to have a legal ban on corporal punishment of children. It is equally important to challenge society's perception of this problem and to change the mentality and attitudes of people: to move from smacking to positive parenting, nurturing and love."

The event also provided a platform for the representatives of governments and international organisations, parliamentarians, local authorities, ombudspersons, NGOs, and child network professionals to discuss ways to eliminate corporal punishment of children.

The colourful and interactive launching ceremony was held at an exceptional venue – the Zagreb Puppet Theatre – and was also attended by young people and families with children who enjoyed the Magic Flute puppet show following the official ceremony.

Further information on this Council of Europe initiative is available at www.coe.int/children

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