

Press Release

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PACE Social Affairs Committee urges respect for children's international adoption rights and refutes the 'right to a child'

Strasbourg, 8.11.2007 - "The point of international adoption is to enable a child to find parents, with respect for his or her rights, not to satisfy the parent's wish to have a child at all costs: there is no such thing as the right to a child!" This was the conclusion reached today by Ruth-Gaby Vermot-Mangold (Switzerland, SOC), speaking on behalf of the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee, at a meeting of the committee in Paris.

In her report, which is based on fact-finding visits to Ukraine and Moldova, Mrs Vermot-Mangold firmly condemns the increasing use of alternative circuits that can encourage the disappearance of newborn babies for illegal adoption in Europe. She denounces the fully-fledged traffic in babies in Moldova, where 61 cases came before the criminal courts in 2006. In Ukraine the Rapporteur had noted cases of children disappearing at birth, with hospital administrators telling their mothers that they were stillborn, whereas in fact they are presumed to have been sold for adoption.

These practices of stealing and selling children, particularly newborn babies, have been facilitated by the lack of strict civil status regulations in some countries. The Committee said today when adopting Mrs Vermot-Mangold's report on the disappearance of new-born babies for illegal adoption in Europe.

This is why the committee is calling for, at national level, the introduction of clear laws governing family rights and, at international level, a review of the Convention on Intercountry Adoption, bearing in mind the interests and rights of the child, in order to establish mechanisms for the strict control of adoption rules. "In the absence of national solutions, this will ensure a better life for quite a few children, and avoid situations such as recently occurred in Chad," said Mrs Vermot-Mangold.

The report is due to be discussed by PACE at its winter session (21-25 January 2008).

The Parliamentary Assembly brings together 318 members from the national parliaments of the 47 member states.

President: René van der Linden (Netherlands, EPP/CD); Secretary General of the Assembly: Mateo Sorinas.

Political Groups: SOC (Socialist Group); EPP/CD (Group of the European People's Party); ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe); EDG (European Democratic Group); UEL (Group of the Unified European Left).