

SEMINAR FOR NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES ON  
THE PACT OF TOWNS AND REGIONS TO STOP SEXUAL VIOLENCE  
AGAINST CHILDREN

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CONCLUSION DOCUMENT

The challenge to Europe's towns and regions when dealing with sexual violence against children is to raise awareness of the issue and to develop and implement community-based activities with services and action that are respectful of children's rights, which put the child's best interest first, and which enable children's voices to be heard.

The Congress launched in 2012 the Pact of Towns and Regions to stop sexual violence against children, inviting local and regional authorities to sign the Pact and develop their child welfare related services. A first seminar was organised in 2015 in North Brabant in the Netherlands, in which representatives of national associations of local authorities, cities and regions have participated.

The participants of this second edition of the seminar held in Belgrade today, take note of the necessity to review the strategy of the Congress to promote the Pact so as to further develop awareness on the question in all member States and to increase the impact on local government activities, by:

- calling on all national associations of local and regional authorities to encourage the local authorities in their countries to use the occasion of the European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual exploitation and Sexual abuse held on 18 November every year to organise awareness raising activities, in particular in schools, targeting children, the professionals who work with them and parents at the same time;
- inviting local authorities in member States to create specific websites for children's welfare that will give the public access to multi-agency information, coming from various sources such as social workers, the police, ministries and NGOs working with children;
- alerting local authorities to their responsibilities as regards the situation of children affected by the refugee crisis who are at risk of sexual abuse and violence;
- inviting the local authorities to sign up to the Pact and to keep on promoting activities which increase the visibility of the Pact and the Lanzarote Convention, and to disseminate the Congress toolkit.