

Mid-Term Review Conference of the Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027)



**SPEAKERS'
BIOGRAPHIES**

**Agora Building
Council of Europe
Strasbourg, 3-4 April 2025**

Organised by the Children's Rights Division
of the Council of Europe, under the
auspices of the Luxembourgish Presidency
of the Committee of Ministers

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PRÉSIDENTIE DU / PRESIDENCY OF
LUXEMBOURG
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE / COUNCIL OF EUROPE
11/2024 - 05/2025



High-level opening session



Najat Maalla M'jid

Dr Najat Maalla M'jid, a medical doctor in paediatrics, has over the last four decades devoted her life to the promotion and protection of children's rights. She was Head of the Paediatric Department and Director of the Hay Hassani Mother-Child Polyclinic in Casablanca. Dr. M'jid was a member of the Moroccan Council on Human Rights and founder of the nongovernmental organization Bayti, the first programme addressing the situation of children living and working in the streets of Morocco. From

2008 to 2014, she served as United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. Dr. M'jid also worked as an Expert-Consultant for national and international projects, strategies and policies relating to child rights' promotion and protection. She has vast experience in the development of national policies on the protection of the child, and has worked with several governments, non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations. She also worked as a lecturer in Moroccan and international universities on child rights' protection, promotion, programming and monitoring, as well as social and development policies. A member of several regional and international non-governmental organizations and networks working for children's rights, Dr. M'jid was also involved in the training of social workers, law enforcement, teachers, judges and medical staff. Dr. M'jid holds a Doctorate in general medicine from the University of Rabat, a specialization in paediatrics and neonatology from the University of Bordeaux II and a Master's of Human Rights from the Human Rights Institute, Geneva. She is the recipient of numerous awards and honours for her strong commitment to protecting the rights of the child.

Minister Claude Meisch

Minister of National Education, Representative of the Luxembourg Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, Luxembourg. Claude Meisch joined the government as Minister of Education, Children and Youth, Minister for Higher Education and Research on 4 December 2013 and reappointed in 2018. In late 2023, he was appointed Minister of Education, Children and Youth and Minister of Housing and Spatial Planning. A member of the Democratic Party (DP) since 1994, he was elected to Parliament for the first time in 1999 while standing for the DP in the district South. He was re-elected in 2004, 2009 and 2013. In Parliament, he assumed, among others, the roles of vice-chairman of the Finance and Budget Committee from 2009 to 2013 as well as vice-chairman of the Committee for Family, Youth and Equal Opportunities from 2004 to 2006 and from 2009 to 2013. Claude Meisch has a degree in financial mathematics from the University of Trier, in Germany.



Marja Ruotanen

Over 30 years of professional experience in several intergovernmental sectors of the Council of Europe, involving co-operation, monitoring and standard-setting, as well as in the Parliamentary Assembly. She has worked as Director in the field of legal co-operation, judicial reform and efficiency of justice. During her career she provided political advice to the Council of Europe leadership (Director of SG Private Office), led intergovernmental co operation, developed and implemented multi-disciplinary and multi-annual strategies.

Presently Director General of Democracy and Human Dignity (DG2), her areas of responsibility include children's rights, trafficking in human beings, gender equality, violence against women,

addressing intolerance and discrimination, freedom of expression, media, civil society and youth participation, education, culture and cultural heritage.

Session 1: Protecting children from violence through age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education



Sara Alaoui

Sara Alaoui is an expert in sexual abuse, specialized in long term effects of (childhood) trauma in adult life. Sara is the Founder/Director The Safe Space Club a Dutch non-profit organization that supports women in processing sexual trauma. She is also the Co-founder/President The Global Collaborative.

Helen Beckett

Helen is a Professor of Social Policy and Social Work at the University of Central Lancashire, UK. She has 25 years' experience of researching in the field of children's rights, with a particular focus on learning from children and young people themselves. For the last 15 years, her work has particularly focused on children's experiences of violence and abuse and how responses, including preventative initiatives, can be improved. She also leads programmes of work on ethically engaging children in research and researcher wellbeing, and trains and consults on her areas of expertise.



Meghan Campbell

Meghan Campbell is a Reader in International Human Rights Law and Deputy Director of the Oxford Human Rights Hub. She has published in leading academic journals on the right to equality, focusing on a wide range of issues including poverty, education, climate change and access to justice. She was appointed an Independent Expert Consultant to the Council of Europe with respect to comprehensive sexuality education. She was awarded a British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship. Her next monograph *Hanging in the Balance: The Function of Justification in Achieving Women's Equality* will be published in 2025.

Simon Hackett

With over three decades of experience in the field, Simon has conducted extensive research and authored numerous publications on harmful sexual behaviours in childhood. He is the primary author of the NSPCC's operational framework for responding to children exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours and a co-author of the AIM3 assessment model. Recent reports on this subject include expert reviews for the UK's Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse and a 2024 evidence review for the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on Violence against Children. Simon is President Elect of ATSA, the Association for the Treatment and Prevention of Sexual Abuse.





Lorna Muscat

Lorna began her career in law with a special focus on children's rights in 2009 where she was responsible for working on the legal ratification of Malta to the Lanzarote Convention. Over the span of her career Lorna also served as a member on Malta's first board responsible for the drafting of Malta's National Children's Policy, legal secretary of the National Commission on the Abuse of Drugs, Alcohol and Other Dependencies for many years and also board director of Malta's College of Arts, Science and Technology. Lorna also represented the voice of children on the national working group for the Crime Prevention Strategy of the Maltese Islands (2017-2021). She is presently Head of Office at the Commission for Children in Malta, where she is able to advocate

for children's rights and directly consult with government and other stakeholders on national legislation and policy that affects children. She is the Maltese representative on the Lanzarote Committee, a role she is truly passionate about.

Elina Stenvall

Elina Stenvall has a PhD in administrative sciences. She works as Director of Preventive Work in SOS Children's Villages Finland and is specialized in children's participation. She has developed and researched participation in different settings and with different children and youth. She has also been part of national and international participatory programs such as National Finnish Child Strategy. She has also co-authored (with Adjunct Professor Pauliina Rautio) a book Social, Material and Political Constructs of Arctic Childhood, that was published by Springer and been author in several books considering children's participation.



Catherine O'Sullivan

Dr. Catherine O'Sullivan is a senior law lecturer in U.C.C. whose main research interests lie in Criminal Law, Criminology, Gender and the Law, Children's Rights and Law and Popular Culture. She is the Chair of the Sexual Violence Centre Cork Board of Directors and has provided Bystander Intervention workshops and Consent workshops for third level students. She has co-authored the first national survey on stalking in Ireland (2023), two student textbooks, and authored articles in national and international publications including the Irish Jurist, Dublin University Law Journal, Northern Ireland Legal Quarterly, Legal Studies and Human Rights Quarterly.

Lolita Rivé

Lolita Rivé was a journalist for 10 years for French television before becoming a teacher 6 years ago. She teaches to children between the ages of 3 and 10. She started teaching comprehensive sexuality education since her beginnings, out of necessity, without knowing that it had been a mandatory law in France since 2001.





Agnes von Maravić

As Head of the Council of Europe's Children's Rights Division, Agnes von Maravić oversees the implementation of the organisations' Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2024-2027. Agnes is also Executive Secretary of the Lanzarote Committee, which works on the Convention on the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. Since she joined the Council of Europe in 2006, Agnes has worked for many years on children's rights, but also on judicial reform, family policies, national minorities, and on the organisation's programme and budget. She holds a degree in public policy and administration from Potsdam University (Germany) and studied at Science Po Lille (France).

Young delegates

Adriana, 15, member of the National Council of Girls and Boys of the Italian Ombudsperson for Children

Elodie, 15, Child Rights Connect, Northern Ireland

Dion, 14, Child Rights Connect, Albania

Denis, 16, Child Rights Connect, Bulgaria

Jose-Maria, 15, Child Rights Connect, Spain

Lana, 13, Child Rights Connect, Croatia

Loris, 15, member of the National Council of Girls and Boys of the Italian Ombudsperson for Children

Rinti, 18, Comhairle na nÓg - Irish Youth Council

Tori, 18, Comhairle na nÓg - Irish Youth Council

Session 2: Combating child poverty and promoting social inclusion of all children

Arian Amirali

Amirali Arian entered care at age 15. He is a researcher, public speaker, and advocate committed to improving policies and opportunities for young people. As an Advisory Board Member at the National Children's Bureau (NCB), he contributes to national policy discussions and has had the opportunity to represent young people's voices in Parliament. An advocate for children's rights, Amirali has spoken at events such as Doughty Street Chambers, sharing insights on child welfare policy. At the University of Oxford's Rees Centre, his research focuses on understanding what success means for care leavers and how to support them better. With a background in Genomic Medicine, he has also researched molecular biology and bioinformatics at Swansea University Medical School. Amirali is passionate about using research, collaboration, and lived experience to help create a fairer system where every young person has better opportunities to thrive.

Emma Archbold

Emma Archbold joined the Children's Rights Alliance in 2018 and is the Campaigns and Communications Director, overseeing the Alliance's communications and media outputs and the implementation of our campaign strategies. In her time with the Alliance, Emma has spearheaded two national campaigns focused on Ending Child Poverty and Online Safety for Children and Young People. The campaigns have built strong coalitions with leading child rights organisations and successfully delivered monumental changes for children including a dedicated child poverty unit in the Department of Taoiseach and the establishment of Ireland's first Online Safety Commissioner. In 2022, Emma was awarded the Emerging Leader Award at the Charities Institute Ireland Excellence Awards for her online safety campaign leadership, recognising achievements beyond her years' experience.



Karolína Babická

Karolína Babická is a human rights lawyer, specialized in international law and EU law, especially the rights of migrants and refugees, children's rights, rule of law, ESC rights, counter-terrorism and rights of persons with disabilities. In the Europe and Central Asia programme of the ICJ she carries out research, legal analysis and strategic litigation and coordinates the work of the programme mainly in the European Union.



Rafael Cid

Lawyer, co-founder and Legal Director of Gentium, a Spanish non-profit organisation, whose goal is to improve access to justice for victims of human rights violations. His work focuses on defining effective legal tools and representing victims before judicial and extra-judicial national and international courts/treaty bodies to protect and advance human rights. He has taken cases related to the protection of rights of children, Roma people, migrants, refugees and other victims of civil and social rights violations.



Olivier de Schutter



Olivier De Schutter is the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, and since 2025 a member of the European Committee on Social Rights. Prior to those appointments, he was member of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2015-2020) and the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food (2008-2014). A professor at UCLouvain and Sciences Po (Paris), he held visiting professorships at Columbia University, Yale University, and UC Berkeley. His most recent book, *The Escape from Poverty. Breaking the vicious cycles perpetuating disadvantage* (co-authored, Policy Press, 2023) was awarded the ASAP Book of the Year award of the Yale Global Justice Program.

Pierre-Alain Fridez

Mr Fridez is a general practitioner; member of the Swiss Socialist Party and national councillor since 2011. Pierre-Alain Fridez is a member of PACE since 2016, active in the Committee on Migration (chair in 2020 and 2021) and Social Affairs, author in particular of the report 'Eradicating extreme child poverty in Europe: an international obligation and a moral duty'. Finally, he is a member of the Monitoring Committee and co-rapporteur on Moldova.



Saskia Kluit



Saskia Kluit is a Dutch politician and member of the GroenLinks-PvdA faction in the Senate. She is committed to sustainability and social justice. Saskia has a background in environmental conservation and has contributed to sustainable policy development at national and international levels. In the Senate, she is known for her persuasive advocacy and collaborative approach. She holds a master's degree in political science and is fluent in both Dutch and English. Outside her political career, she is involved in community initiatives and strives for a more just world.



Aoife Nolan

Aoife Nolan is President of the European Committee of Social Rights. She is also Professor of International Human Rights Law and Director of the Human Rights Law Centre at the University of Nottingham. Her professional experience in children's rights straddles the legal, policy, practitioner and academic fields. Professor Nolan has acted as an expert advisor to a wide range of international and national entities working on children's rights issues, including governments, UN treaty bodies and Special Procedures, IGOs and NHRIs. Her numerous publications on child poverty and child rights include *Protecting the Child from Poverty: The Role of Rights in the Council of*

Europe (COE, 2019). She is an Academic Expert member at Doughty Street Chambers, where she co-leads the Children's Rights Group.

Mieke Schuurman

Mieke Schuurman has been a prominent advocate for child rights for over 25 years. Since 2016 she works for [Eurochild](#), where she provides strategic leadership to Eurochild's key priorities in respect of children's rights, including the digital environment and children's right to participate in decision-making processes. She has been instrumental in shaping child-focused policies and influencing decision-makers at the European level. Through her work with Eurochild, she strives to ensure that children's voices are heard, and their rights are protected. She has a master's in law and European Studies.



Benoit Van Keirsbilck

Benoit Van Keirsbilck is the Director of the Belgian section of Defence for Children – International (DCI). He is Chief Editor of the Journal of Children's Law (Belgium) and member of the Advisory board of the UN Global Study on children deprived of liberty. He is a member of the Interdisciplinary Center for the Rights of the Child, which organises academic courses and develops research. He has been elected as a member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2021-2024 and 2025-2029).



Session 3: Children's rights in the era of digital technologies and artificial intelligence



Manon Baert

Manon Baert is the Senior EU Affairs Officer at 5Rights Foundation, advocating for a better digital world for children, by design and by default. She previously worked in EU affairs within a non-profit and a consultancy, focusing on human rights and sustainability, as well as at the EU Delegation to the Council of Europe, where she followed the negotiations for EU accession to the ECHR and on the Convention on AI. Manon graduated from the College of Europe and holds a LLM from Maastricht University.

Morgan Briggs

Morgan is a Senior Research Associate at The Alan Turing Institute, and a Visiting Research Fellow at the Digital Environment Research Institute (DERI) at Queen Mary University of London. Trained as a data scientist, she works on a variety of projects relating to responsible AI, human rights, and child-centred AI. Morgan has experience leading cross-disciplinary teams, partnering with organisations like UNICEF, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, and the Global Partnership on AI. Her team recently hosted the first Children's AI Summit, where 150 young people shared their messages for world leaders on what the future of AI should look like.



Patrick Everard

After 15 years in the IT industry, I went back to university to study Educational Sciences. The BASE1 Makerspace, an offer by Service National de la Jeunesse, where I work now, is the place where all this comes together. I'm responsible for creating and managing non-formal education workshops for young people between 8 and 30 years old. We sit in between arts, crafts and new technologies with a strong focus on creativity.

Cathy Hoffman

Cathy Hoffmann worked as a lawyer before joining the BEE SECURE Helpline and Stopline team in October 2024. As a lawyer, she was specialised in family law and juvenile law. She regularly assisted and represented minors in court as a children lawyer. Furthermore, she assisted and represented victims in criminal cases.





Matthias Kloth

Matthias Kloth is the Head of the Council of Europe's Digital Governance and Sport Department. He has previously worked in the Council of Europe as Adviser in the Office of the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General, as Executive Secretary of the Committee on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL) and as lawyer in the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights. Prior to joining the Council of Europe, he worked as legal officer in the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs. He holds a doctorate degree in public international law.

Elise Laera

Elise has spent her career in education, from medical training to digital safety awareness. With a background in psychology and extensive experience in pedagogy, she now works at BEE SECURE, focusing on internet safety and digital literacy. Born and raised in Luxembourg with Belgian and Italian roots, she speaks five languages and brings a multicultural perspective to her work. At the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF), she leads a workshop on artificial intelligence, exploring its impact on children's rights and online safety.



Minister Claude Meisch

Minister of National Education, Representative of the Luxembourg Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, Luxembourg. Claude Meisch joined the government as Minister of Education, Children and Youth, Minister for Higher Education and Research on 4 December 2013 and reappointed in 2018. In late 2023, he was appointed Minister of Education, Children and Youth and Minister of Housing and Spatial Planning. A member of the Democratic Party (DP) since 1994, he was elected to Parliament for the first time in 1999 while standing for the DP in the district South. He was re-elected in 2004, 2009 and 2013. In Parliament, he assumed, among others, the roles of vice-chairman of the Finance and Budget Committee from 2009 to 2013 as well as vice-chairman of the Committee for Family, Youth and Equal Opportunities from 2004 to 2006 and from 2009 to 2013. Claude Meisch has a degree in financial mathematics from the University of Trier, in Germany.

Steve Muller

Steve is a tech enthusiast with a passion for new technologies, cybersecurity, and coding. Steve enjoys the challenge of making complex concepts easier to understand. Through his numerous training sessions and conference talks, he strives to empower people, helping them to build confidence in their digital skills. (Steve loves self-made cookies but rejects browser cookies.)





Barbora Okruhlanska

Graduated from the Faculty of mass media at UCM in Trnava, worked as an editor-in-chief, professional editor or marketing specialist. She is the director of PS:Sunrise, a digital and event agency in Košice. For several years she has been lecturing and editing on media education in the digital world. She is the co-founder of the project DIGITAL PARENTS popular in Slovakia.

Jen Personn

Jen Persson is a current contributor to the Council of Europe digital citizenship working group on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and education which published a report in November 2022, Artificial Intelligence and Education: A critical view through the lens of human rights, democracy and the rule of law and she supported the Committee of Convention 108 in the drafting of Council of Europe Guidelines for Data Protection in Education Settings, adopted in 2020. As founder of the not-for-profit organisation, Defend Digital Me, Jen also campaigns for children's privacy and digital rights in the field of UK education and the wider public sector and has researched the application of AI in areas of biometrics, encryption, safety tech and Edtech with a focus on the education sector.

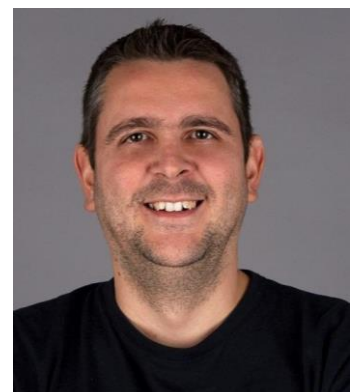


Merlin Rastoder

Merlin Rastoder is a member of the pedagogical team at BEE SECURE/SNJ, responsible for coordinating freelance trainers, organising parent-focused initiatives, and managing interactive activities like escape games. With a passion for digital safety and education, Merlin ensures engaging and effective learning experiences for diverse audiences. The role of BEE SECURE involves strategic planning, collaboration, and innovation to promote cybersecurity awareness.

Peter Sebo

Peter has been working professionally in the online environment and advertising since 2006. Currently he runs his own agency PS:Digital, which is spontaneously the most famous digital marketing agency in Slovakia. He also lectures at Slovak and foreign conferences and teaches at universities. He is the co-founder of the project DIGITAL PARENTS popular in Slovakia.





Carmen Weyer

Carmen Weyer, a pedagogue and adult educator by training, as well as a clinical hypnotherapist, has been working for 30 years in the social sector (development policy, counselling and further education, vocational reintegration, teacher training and in the field of ADHD) in Luxembourg. She joined the BEE SECURE Helpline and Stoptline team in 2023 and is also responsible for the Cyberdesk.

Young delegates

Adriana, 15, member of the National Council of Girls and Boys of the Italian Ombudsperson for Children

Loris, 15, member of the National Council of Girls and Boys of the Italian Ombudsperson for Children

Rinti, 18, Comhairle na nÓg – member of the Irish Youth Council

Tori, 18, Comhairle na nÓg – member of the Irish Youth Council

Session 4: Advocating for the rights of children in contact with the law

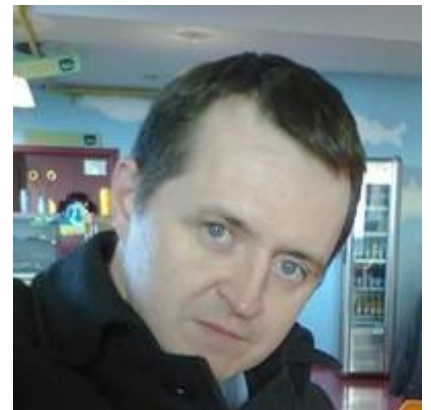


Myriam De Hemptinne

In the court of appeal of Brussels, M. de Hemptinne specialised in the juvenile and family litigation. She dedicated herself to the support and the training of Belgian and European judges in the field of international cooperation for the protection of minors and vulnerable adults, becoming a member of the European Judicial Network (EJN) and the International Hague Network of Judges (IHNJ) and, since 2019, in the frame of a secondment to the HCCH. She coordinated the roll out in Belgium of the CFJ-tool of the Council of Europe. She is a member of the Belgian High Council for the Judiciary.

Andrej Del Fabro

Andrej Del Fabro is a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology – Human Resource Management and a Master of Arts in Political Science. He finished trainings for the State Internal Auditor and ISO 9001: 2008 Lead Auditor. Currently serving as the Head of the Child Friendly Criminal Justice Department and at the Ministry of Justice. His extensive background includes roles such as Director General of the Family Affairs Directorate and as Secretary General of the Ministry of Health. Furthermore he is also a dedicated member of the Committee of Experts on access to child-friendly justice through multidisciplinary and interagency services and the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child.



Mariama Diallo

Mariama Diallo is a Lawyer specialised in Private International Law. She is the first Coordinator of the Child Friendly Justice European Network (CFJ-EN), a dynamic Network based in Brussels, composed of 35 organisations, experts and academic institutions which defend the rights of children in contact with justice systems across Europe. Mariama played a leading role in setting up groups of “Young Justice Transformers” in various European countries. Mariama has over 19 years of professional experience working in international cooperation, in Europe, Africa and Asia. Mariama’s areas of expertise include a special focus on child justice and child protection.

Susanna Greijer

Dr Greijer works internationally as an independent research-, legal- and policy consultant. She is an independent expert to the Council of Europe and collaborates with a wide range of organisations such as UNICEF, ECPAT, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Sale and sexual exploitation of children, the UNCRC Committee, Children's Ombudspersons, Governments and EU agencies. Dr Greijer's work focuses on violence against children, child-friendly response services for child victims and witnesses of crime, and child participation. Dr Greijer holds a PhD and an LL.M. in International Law from the EUI and a Master's degree in International Affairs from Sciences Po Paris.



Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou

Dr. Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou is a member of the Governing Board and Vice Director of the Marangopoulos Foundation for Human Rights, a human rights INGO established in 1979, with participatory status with the UN [ECOSOC, DPI], UNESCO and the Council of Europe. As an independent expert, she provides consultancy services to the Council of Europe on human rights issues, with focus on children's rights, women's rights, the European Convention on Human Rights and its execution mechanism. Since 2016 she is the CoE HELP Info Point for Greece and provides human rights training in cooperation with international and national stakeholders. She has served as Chair of the CDENF, CAHENF and CAHENF-VAC, as well as a member of the Consultative Board of the HELP Programme and has authored approximately 50 publications.

Astrid Podsiadlowski

Astrid Podsiadlowski is focal point on Rights of the Child and Head of Sector on Social Rights in the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Her areas of expertise include child-friendly justice, child participation, child poverty, social inequalities (multiple discrimination, ageing, ethnicity and national origin, gender and LGBTIQ+), migration and integration and research methodologies (both quantitative and qualitative, including fieldwork research with children). She is a social and cross-cultural psychologist by education and before her work at the Agency held academic research and teaching positions in Europe as well as New Zealand and the USA. In her personal capacity she is actively engaged as author, facilitator and volunteer supporting refugee children and their families.



Leo Ratledge

Leo Ratledge is the Co-Director of the Child Rights International Network (CRIN). He leads on legal and policy work within CRIN and is jointly responsible for the organisation's strategy and direction. He has worked internationally on the human rights of children since 2010, particularly specialising in access to justice for children as well as children's rights within the criminal justice system.

Ambassador Gabriel Revel

H.E. Mr Revel is a graduate of Sciences Po Grenoble and the École Nationale d'Administration (Georges Clémenceau class of 2017–2018), he began his diplomatic career at the Permanent Representation of Monaco to the Council of Europe. Following several years with the International Law Section at the Department of Legal Affairs in Monaco, he returned to the Permanent Representation in Strasbourg in 2021. H.E. Mr Revel has chaired the Rapporteur Group on Legal Cooperation (GR-J) since October 2024. He also chairs the Statutory Committee of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport.



Marie-Cécile Rouillon

Marie-Cécile Rouillon has been the European Commission Coordinator for the Rights of the Child in the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers since March 2022. She oversees the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Rights of the Child and is charged with integrating children's rights across EU policies, collaborating closely with international, civil society organisations and stakeholders. She has worked at the European Commission since 2006 on challenging files, in the areas of Home Affairs and Migration, Employment & Social inclusion, Research & Innovation, Education & Culture. Graduated from Sciences Po. Paris, she started her career in the management of international festivals in Europe and in Japan.



Angelica Russu

Angelica Russu is a highly experienced project coordinator in the field of child protection with a proven track record of success in leading and coordinating complex projects for a variety of international organizations. She has a deep understanding of the challenges facing children in the Republic of Moldova and is committed to developing and implementing innovative solutions to protect them from violence and abuse. Starting from 2022, in her current role as Senior Project Officer at Council of Europe Office in Chisinau, Ms. Russu is responsible for the co-operation project on strengthening the government of Moldova's response to violence against children and ensuring child-friendly justice, through wide range of activities, including legal review, capacity building of professionals and awareness raising campaigns.



Benoit Van Keirsbilck

Benoit Van Keirsbilck is the Director of the Belgian section of Defence for Children – International (DCI). He is Chief Editor of the Journal of Children's Law (Belgium) and member of the Advisory board of the UN Global Study on children deprived of liberty. He is a member of the Interdisciplinary Center for the Rights of the Child, which organises academic courses and develops research. He has been elected as a member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2021-2024 and 2025-2029).



Young delegates

April, 25, CFJ-EN (Child-friendly justice European network)

April is a dedicated Experiential Expert and Social Worker with a deep passion for youth prevention and empowerment. Having personally faced injustice as a child and navigated various institutions, out-of-home placements and secure youth care facilities, she now uses her lived experience to make a meaningful impact. Through training, workshops and awareness programmes, April works closely with both young people and professionals to promote understanding, challenge existing systems and drive positive change. Her mission is to raise awareness and advocate for a more supportive and inclusive environment for young people at risk.

Joana, 17, CFJ-EN (Child-friendly justice European network)

Session 5: Promoting children's participation in decisions about their health



Lucy Bray

Lucy Bray has worked within acute children's nursing for over twenty-five years, specialising in children's procedures and surgery. She works as a Professor in Child Health Literacy in the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Medicine at Edge Hill University in the UK. Her research interests include the education, information needs and preparation of children, young people and their parents for surgery, procedures and interventions with a particular focus on how we can reduce the use of holding and restraint within paediatric practice. She leads the international ISupport collaboration who have developed rights-based standards for children having tests, treatments, examinations and interventions. The majority of Lucy's research is based on qualitative research approaches and uses innovative methods which aim to facilitate the involvement of children and young people.

Maria do Céu Machado

Maria do Céu Machado is a MD, PhD, Paediatrician with a degree in Health Management, National Coordinator for Rare Diseases, and retired Full Professor of Pediatrics - Faculty of Medicine of the University of Lisbon where she graduated, President of Astra-Zéneca Foundation and President of the Society of Medical Sciences (Portugal). She was President of the Disciplinary Board of the College of Medicine (2020-2023), Member of the National Council for Ethics and Life Sciences, President of INFARMED (2017-2019), High Commissioner for Health (2006-11), Clinical Director of Centro Hospitalar Lisboa Norte (2013-2014), Head of the Department of Pediatrics of Hospital Santa Maria (2011-2017) and Hospital Fernando Fonseca (1996-2006), President of the National Committee for Children and Adolescent Health. She has degrees in Neonatology and Health Management. She received eight research grants, three awards (Prémio BIAL de Medicina Clínica in 2002 and in 2006, Prémio da Qualidade Maria Amélia de Mello in 2005), and has published nearly 200 articles and 13 books.



Andrew Clarke

Andrew Clarke is a Senior Health Advisor for the NGO Save the Children and is a paediatric nurse and public health specialist by background. He supports clinical and public health programs for children and families in countries including Yemen, Bangladesh, Nepal, Ethiopia and Malawi. He also oversees a research portfolio to trial new approaches to long term challenges in child health and is an Honorary Clinical Researcher at Lancaster University. Andrew has worked in the field of child rights, health equity and quality of care for over twenty-five years, including the development and integration into practice of early models using child rights-based Standards. He also undertakes advisory roles on child rights and health for organisations such as the Council of Europe and the World Health Organisation.

Imelda Coyne

Professor Imelda Coyne is a leading authority in children's nursing and healthcare research, with a distinguished career dedicated to enhancing the lives of children, young people, and families. She is Professor in Children's Nursing and Director of the Trinity Research in Childhood Centre at Trinity College Dublin, as well as a Fellow of Trinity College Dublin, a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing, and of the European Academy of Nursing Science. Professor Coyne has made significant contributions to child health, family-centred care, and shared decision-making in paediatric healthcare. A strong advocate for participatory research, she has been instrumental in ensuring that children's voices are heard and valued in healthcare decision-making. She has led numerous high-impact research initiatives, including key consultations with children and young people that have influenced government policy in Ireland. A prolific author, Professor Coyne has published extensively in peer-reviewed journals and contributed to key texts in paediatric nursing.



Laura Palazzani

Full Professor of Philosophy of law and biolaw at Lumsa University, Rome; Italy's delegate to the Council of Europe Steering Committee for Human Rights in the fields of Biomedicine and Health (CDBIO); member of the ethics committee in clinical practice at Bambino Gesù Hospital in Rome and vicechair of the committee at Meyer's Hospital in Florence.



Amalini Simon

Amalini Simon is a clinical psychologist, Doctor of Psychology specialising in multilingualism in children. She heads the Centre Babel (Paris, France), a leading centre for transcultural issues. She is the coordinator of a university diploma in Psychiatry and transcultural skills (University Paris 13) and is responsible of transcultural consultations.



Young delegates

Elodie, 15, Child Rights Connect, Northern Ireland

Dion, 14, Child Rights Connect, Albania

Denis, 16, Child Rights Connect, Bulgaria

Jose-Maria, 15, Child Rights Connect, Spain

Lana, 13, Child Rights Connect, Croatia

Leonardo, 14, Child Rights Connect, Italy

Sarah, 15, Child Rights Connect, Northern Ireland

Session 6: Access to education for children of Ukraine in Council of Europe member states



Leyla Kayacik

Former staff member of the Council of Europe, Leyla Kayacik specialised in the protection of human rights and the rule of law. After having occupied various positions, including at the European Commission of Human Rights, the secretariat of the Social Charter, the field, the Private Office of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the Secretariat of the Committee of Ministers, Leyla Kayacik was a special representative of the Secretary General on migration and refugees from 2022 to 2025. During her mandate, she carried out fact-finding missions in many of the countries neighboring Ukraine and drew attention to the issue of access of education of children of Ukraine. After completing her service at the

Council of Europe, she continues to actively engage as human rights expert, with a focus on matters related to migration and refugees.

Oksana Kovalenko

Oksana Kovalenko is a Leading specialist of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. She is responsible for cooperation with the Council of Europe in the field of secondary education and for the development of the national framework, curricular and creation software, educational, scientific and methodological support for secondary schools. She is member of the Steering Committee in Education Council of Europe.



Iryna Grynishak

Iryna Grynishak is the coordinator of Spilno Hub Gdynia – a support centre operating in cooperation with UNICEF and the City of Gdynia. The centre provides psychosocial, educational, and integration support to refugees from Ukraine and fosters connections with local communities. Iryna holds a master's degree in mining from the Ivano-Frankivsk National Technical University of Oil and Gas and previously worked on international technical projects. After the outbreak of the war, she co-created a municipal crisis helpline for refugees in Gdynia. Today, she applies her project and cross-sector experience to build inclusive programs, strengthen community resilience, and collaborate with local institutions, NGOs, and international partners.

Frederic Smets

Frederik Smets is the Education Officer for UNHCR's Regional Bureau for Europe and manages and coordinates refugee education policies and programmes in the region. He has over a decade of experience at UNHCR in various communications, policy and emergency management roles and has focused intensively on education of refugees from Ukraine since the outbreak of the full-scale war in February 2022. Frederik started his career as a newspaper journalist and worked among other in the European Parliament, in public service in Belgium and as a consultant in Brussels.



Olena Styslavska-Doliwa

Olena Styslavska-Doliwa is a consultant for the Council of Europe Education Department projects: European Space for Citizenship Education, Digital Citizenship Education, Engaging Youth in the Decision-Making Processes in Schools and Communities. She is an author of a mapping study on Ukrainian children's access to Education in the Council of Europe Member States commissioned by the Council of Europe Consultation Group on the Children of Ukraine. She is coordinating development of an anti-bullying programme with UNESCO Poland and is engaged in research project Structure and Agency. Transnational and School Transitions of Forced Migrant Children from Ukraine in Poland at the SWPS University.

Benoit Van Keirsbilck

Benoit Van Keirsbilck is the Director of the Belgian section of Defence for Children – International (DCI). He is Chief Editor of the Journal of Children's Law (Belgium) and member of the Advisory board of the UN Global Study on children deprived of liberty. He is a member of the Interdisciplinary Center for the Rights of the Child, which organises academic courses and develops research. He has been elected as a member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2021-2024 and 2025-2029).



Young delegates

Amina, 17, Ukrainian high-school student

Lilah, 17, French high-school student

Closing session



Ružica Boškić

Mag. Ružica Boškić is a Slovenian child rights expert and Chair of the Steering Committee on the Rights of the Child. She began her career in an NGO as a counsellor for victims of violence before spending a decade as a researcher at the Social Protection Institute of Slovenia, focusing on family policy and child rights. Since 2013, she has worked at the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities. A committed advocate for human rights and a member of the EU Child Rights Network, her recent focus is on promoting child participation. She holds a master's degree in sociology.

Ambassador Patrick Engelberg

Patrick Engelberg is a career diplomat who has been Luxembourg's Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe and Consul General of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg in Strasbourg since August 2021. After studying history and political science, he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg in 1993, where he has since held a number of posts, including helping to prepare for the Presidency of the EU Council in 2005. Appointed Head of Government Protocol and Director of the Chancellery in 2005, he then joined the Grand-Ducal Court as Head of Cabinet. After holding the posts of Director-General of Defence and National Director of Armaments, he was appointed Ambassador of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg to the Court of St James and non-resident Ambassador to Ireland and Iceland. Before taking up his post in Strasbourg, he was Representative to the EU Political and Security Committee in Brussels.



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