

Regional Discussion on Children's Rights and Alternative Care

Council of Europe's Contribution to the UNCRC Day of General Discussion 2021



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Council of Europe's Contribution to the UNCRC Day of General Discussion 2021

*Organised under the auspices of the
Hungarian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers*

Tuesday, 1 June 2021 (09:30 – 17:00 CET)

Online

SPEAKERS' BIOGRAPHIES



Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou, Chairperson of the CDENF

Dr. Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou is a human rights lawyer at the Supreme Court of Greece and a consultant of the Council of Europe on human rights issues, including children's rights. She is the Chairperson of the Council of Europe Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF) and previously was the Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Council of Europe for the Rights of the Child (CAHENF) and Chairperson of the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Responses to Violence against Children (CAHENF-VAC). She is also member of the Consultative Board of the European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) of the Council of Europe. She holds a PhD (summa cum laude) from the Faculty of Law of the

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and four Masters' degrees from the Faculty of Law of the University of Athens. She is the author or co-author of around 40 publications on human rights issues.



Elda Moreno, Head of the Children's Rights & Sport Values Department, Council of Europe

She oversees the European programmes for the protection of children's rights, the promotion of human rights in and through sports as well as for the fight against doping, match fixing and violence in sport.

Elda Moreno designed and coordinated the Council of Europe Programme "Building a Europe for and with Children", participating in the development and promotion of European treaties, policies, campaigns and strategies to prevent and respond to violence against children and women, to achieve gender equality and combat trafficking in human beings. From 2014 to 2016, she was the Director of the Office of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General on Violence against Children in NY.

As a member of the Private Office of three different Secretary Generals, she has advised the Council of Europe leadership on human rights issues and on the Organisation's reform. Before joining the Council of Europe in 1995, she was an attorney in Spain specialised in human rights.



István Kovács, Deputy Secretary of State for International and EU Affairs, Hungary



Bragi Gudbrandsson, Member of the United Nation Committee on the Rights of the Child

Former Director General of the Icelandic Government Agency for Child Protection 1995 to 2019. Mr. Gudbrandsson has actively worked within the framework of the Council of Europe for more than two decades. He has been involved in the drafting of numerous recommendations and guidelines including the Rec 5(2005) on the rights of children in residential institution; Rec 19(2006) on positive parenting, and Rec

12(2011) on child-friendly social services. He is the former Chair of the Council of Europe Lanzarote Committee 2014 to 2016. Mr. Gudbrandsson is the author of the CoE publication on Rec5(2005) (2007): Children at risk and in care.



Ksenija Turković , Judge and Vice-president of the European Court of Human Rights

She graduated from the Faculty of Law in Zagreb (1987), holds an LL.M. and a J.S.D. from Yale Law School. She worked as Legal Counsel for Hunton & Williams (New York) and was an Associate in General Corporate Practice Sullivan & Cromwell (New York). Judge Turković has been lecturing on criminal law, criminology, victimology and health law at the University of Zagreb since 1987, becoming full professor in 2008. She was Vice-Dean for Faculty Affairs at the Zagreb Law School and Vice-Rector for International and Legal Affairs at Zagreb University. She was head of an expert team drafting the new Croatian Criminal Code (2009-2012), as well as Vice-president of the Committee of Experts on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (2006-2007) and Vice-president of the Group of Specialists on Child Friendly Justice at the Council of Europe (2009-2010). She has published books and papers in the areas of criminal law, medical law and ethics, criminology, victimology and human rights.



Seamus Carroll, Chair of the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on the Rights and the Best Interests of the Child in Parental Separation and in Care proceedings (CJ/ENF-ISE)

The Committee has now reached an important stage in its work and it intends to present proposals for an instrument in the form of a recommendation with guidelines on both parental separation and care proceedings in due course. Mr Carroll has worked for many years in the Civil Law Reform Division of Ireland's Department of Justice and has been a member of the Council of Europe's Committee on Legal Cooperation (CDCJ). Previously, he was Chair of the Group of Specialists that prepared the Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on child-friendly justice.



Dr Maeve O'Rourke, Barrister and Lecturer in Human Rights at the Irish Centre for Human Rights

She is co-director of the survivor-and adopted person led, multi-award winning evidence-gathering and advocacy initiative, the 'Clann Project' (www.clannproject.org). She has worked for more than a decade as a pro bono lawyer on behalf of survivors of Ireland's 'historical' institutional and family separation abuses and is a lead lawyer in the ongoing UN Committee Against Torture case of Elizabeth Coppin v Ireland. In February 2021 she was appointed by the Northern Ireland Executive to co-design with survivors and relatives the framework for a state inquiry into Magdalene Laundries and Mother and Baby Institutions, including their cross-border adoption practices.



Dr. Naira Avetisyan, International expert in child development

She has Doctoral degree in Developmental Paediatrics, specialisation in Child Neurology/ Genetics and training on Public Policy, Advocacy and Partnerships for Children's Rights. Naira is Chief of Child Protection Programme in UNICEF Ukraine since late 2017. In the past, she worked with UNICEF from 1999 to end 2012 in Armenia, Moldova, Vietnam and Syria. In 2013, she joined the Council of Europe Office in Armenia as Deputy Head of the Office and in mid- 2016 moved to UNICEF East Asia/Pacific Regional Office. Prior to her international career, Naira was involved in clinical and academic programmes serving children.



Rita Mendes, Director of the Childcare Department of Casa Pia

Graduated in Psychology in the Educational area with a post-graduate degree in psychology of emotions, she works directly in the Independent Living Apartments of Casa Pia. She participates in Personal and Social Skills development projects for specialized residential care, namely, for pre-autonomy homes, family reunification models, independent living apartments and after-care support.



Dainius Pūras, Professor of child psychiatry and public mental health at Vilnius University

Since 2018 he is a director of the Human rights monitoring institute – NGO based in Lithuania. Among positions he was holding, Dainius Pūras was a President of Lithuanian Psychiatric Association and Dean of Faculty of Medicine of Vilnius University. Dainius Pūras was a member of the UN Committee on the rights of the child (2007-2011) and a UN Special Rapporteur on the right to physical and mental health (2014-2020).



Dagfinn Mørkrid Thøgersen, Clinical Director of Youth Program Development at The Norwegian Center for Child Behavioural Development

He has led several national implementation projects of evidence-based treatments for adolescent behaviour problems in both Norway and Denmark. He has served on the board of the European Implementation Collaborative (EIC), and has a continued focus on European collaboration related to the implementation of evidence-based treatment programs. He has published several articles and book chapters on research-based interventions for adolescent behaviour problems, and has presented at numerous international conferences.



Knut Taraldsen, Psychology specialist and Senior Advisor at The Norwegian Center for Child Behavioural Development

For the last 20 years he has been at the national implementation team, with a nation-wide responsibility for evidence-based methods for adolescents with serious behaviour problems. He has been board member at The European Implementation Collaborative, as well as advisory board member for the Global Implementation Conference. He has published research articles on Multisystemic Therapy and on implementation, and is co-arranger of the bi-annual European MST Research Collaboration Event. He lectures on adolescent behaviour problems at the University of Oslo, and has presented internationally on multiple occasions.



Dr. Margrét Sigmarsdóttir, Specialist in clinical child psychology

After many years as a Scientific Psychologist, Clinical Director, and implementor of Evidence-Based Practice she is now an Assistant Professor at the University of Iceland – School of Education. Dr. Sigmarsdóttir is also a senior mentor in Parent Management Training for Implementation Sciences International, Inc. (ISII). Her research has been in relation to implementation and testing of Evidence-Based Practice with international focus.



Dr. Gérardine Goh Escolar, First Secretary at the Permanent Bureau of the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH)

She has primary responsibility over the 1980 Child Abduction Convention, the 1996 Child Protection Convention, and the project on Family Agreements involving Children, as well as joint primary responsibility over the International Hague Network of Judges. She is also responsible for the portfolio on international commercial and financial law, in which she is responsible for the 1985 Trusts and 2007 Securities Conventions, as well as developments with respect to the private international law implications of the digital economy.

Joëlle Schickel-Küng, Co-Head of the Private International Law Unit at the Federal Office of Justice in Switzerland

In this function, she is the Head of the Swiss Federal Central Authority under the 1996 Hague Child Protection Convention as well as the 1993 Hague Intercountry Adoption Convention. She holds a master's degree in law from the University of Fribourg in Switzerland, where she was also admitted to the bar.



Albert O'Donoghue, Principal Officer of the EU and International Unit, Ireland

Mr O'Donoghue has worked as a civil servant for over 2 decades. A qualified Engineer, he has had a wide, interesting and varied career and worked in policy areas related to telecommunications, IT, finance, recruitment, Social Welfare law, ECEC, adoption, early intervention programmes and, most recently, alternative care. Currently heading up the EU and International Unit, he led on Ireland's negotiations on the text of the EU Child Guarantee.

Albert is currently a member of both the EU informal expert group on the rights of the Child and the EU informal expert group on children in migration.



George Nikolaidis, the national representative of Greece to WHO for CAN-related issues

He was a member of the Council of Europe's Lanzarote Committee for more than a decade, for which he was elected Member of its Bureau (2014-2016), Vice-Chair (2016-2018) and became Chairperson (2018-2020). His scientific interests are in issues of Child Abuse and Neglect, Child Protection, Public Health Sciences and Epidemiology. His work encompasses roles as Scientific Coordinator and Principal

Researcher in research, training and clinical projects related to child protection, violence and epidemiology. In 2005 he became Head of Department of Mental Health and Social Welfare of the Institute of Child Health and between 2014 to 2020 he was Scientific Coordinator for the NGO Day 'Smile of the Child' Day Center providing treatment to children victims of abuse/neglect. Between 2014 and 2019 he was the Advocacy and Networking Consultant of Lumos project in Greece coordinating the deinstitutionalization programme and an emergency intervention project for children with disability.



Regína Jensdóttir, Council of Europe Coordinator for the rights of the child, Head of the Children's Rights Division

Holds a law degree from the University of Iceland and a post graduate degree (D.E.A.) from the University of Strasbourg in international public law. Since 1998 she has been working for the Council of Europe and since 2010 acts as the Council of Europe Coordinator for the rights of the child and heads the organisation's Children's Rights Division. She has also led the strategic development of the Council of Europe work on children's rights in several areas such as violence against children, equal

opportunities, child participation, child-friendly justice and children's rights in the digital environment.