

Krakow Statement

East-Central European Forum of NGOs on Child Issues on the Tenth Anniversary of the Convention on the rights of the Child organised by the Polish Forum on Children's Rights on the initiative of the "Children's Letters to the World" Foundation Decjus Villa. Krakow, 18-21 November 1999

This Forum was held to bring attention to and exchange experiences from the first ten years since the Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly and to pay tribute to its creators, promoters and all those who care about the harmonious future development of children.

Participants from children's rights organisations from Belarus, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Yugoslavia, and various districts of Poland reported on their efforts to promote children's rights. Additional presentations were made by experts from the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United States, as well as members of local and national governments. Child representatives from Swidnica, took part in discussions about expectations for children in the 21st century.

The Forum addressed the impact of the Convention in general and in particular on East-Central Europe during the difficult times of political, social and economic transformation and how to ensure governmental respect and support for the rights of the child in the 21st century.

A major goal of the Forum was the establishment of national and regional coalitions for the rights of the child among countries in East-Central Europe and their future collaboration with existing children's rights coalitions in the European Union. The Forum's discussions also gave consideration to the important role that governments and politicians must play in the successful implementation of the Convention and the desirability of their close co-operation with non-governmental organisations.

Participants in the Forum unanimously approved the following:

- We appeal to other organisations in East-Central Europe to join in co-operative relationships for the purpose of exchanging information and promoting the rights of the child,
- We appeal to local and national governments to work co-operatively with non-governmental children's rights organisations in setting priorities,
- We appeal to international organisations, including the Council of Europe, the European Union, and the Organisation on Security and Co-operation in Europe to consider the specific needs of children in their policy development,

We urge all governments to undertake these initiatives:

- Achievement of full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child,
- Integration of a child impact statement into all legislation, especially as applies to economic proprieties,
- Establish child friendly economic policies,
- Recognise the vital importance of creating an independent office of Ombudsman for Children as described in the 1999 resolution of ENOCH,
- Ban recruitment and participation of children in the military,
- Create mechanisms that allow for the views of children to be heard on all matters affecting them,
- Work toward the elimination of all forms of physical punishment of children in homes, schools and institutions ,
- Promote awareness of the Convention on the Rights of the Child among adults and children alike,
- Endeavour to eliminate child poverty and discrimination against children of minority and ethnic groups,
- Protect children from work that constitutes of danger to their health,
- Devise educational and other programs that will enable all children to realise their full potential ,
- Take legislative measures to reduce violence in child-rearing and the elimination of sexual abuse.

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