



## Annual Report

### Working Group for Co-operation on Children at Risk (WGCC) & Children's Unit July 2008 – June 2009

**Chair:** Sweden: Representative from the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Deputy Director Ms Agneta Björklund

**Vice Chair:** Denmark: Representative from the Danish Board of Social Services, Director Mr Bertil Mahs

The Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk, WGCC, consists of ten members; all member countries to the CBSS except Latvia have appointed senior officials to the group. The WGCC consists of representatives from the line ministries dealing with children's issues, mainly ministries of social affairs, ministries of education and designated child ministries. The group consists of six women and four men. The European Commission has not assigned a member to the WGCC. Chairmanship of the WGCC is rotated among the members to the group and does not follow the CBSS presidency. The group is from May 1<sup>st</sup> 2009 called the Expert Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk, EGCC.

### ***Meetings of the WGCC***

The WGCC, has had two meetings, one in Oslo on September 30<sup>th</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup> 2008 at the invitation of the Norwegian Ministry of Health and one in Tallinn on March 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> 2009 at the invitation of the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs. Reports from the meetings of the WGCC are published on the Childcentre website.

During the year, the sub group of the WGCC consisting of the representatives from Sweden, Denmark, Estonia and Lithuania has worked together with the secretariat to detail the actions taken regarding the rights of children in institutions.

During the year the Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk has agreed on a new priority document guiding the work for the next two years. For the years 2009 – 2011 the focus will be on

- **The protection of children from all forms of sexual exploitation** including
  - Unaccompanied and trafficked children
  - Children abused by being offered money or other forms of remuneration in exchange for sex
  - Children and online sexual exploitation
- **The protection of children from all forms of sexual abuse and sexual violence**
- **The rights of children in institutions and in other forms of out of home care.**

The WGCC also decided to rename itself the Expert Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk, the EGCC, following the reform of the CBSS. The group officially renamed itself and adopted the new priority document on **May 1<sup>st</sup> 2009**. The members of the group will continue to be appointed by the ministries responsible for children's issues in the member states and the European Commission is invited to appoint a member to the group.

During the year the following major activities have been arranged by the WGCC. Many of the activities have been made possible through the close cooperation with governmental agencies, NGOs and IOs. The WGCC sometimes takes on the role of facilitator or coordinator, allowing organisations to join with other experts and organisations in the region. The WGCC aims at supporting professionals in the region with new tools and the most recent knowledge available.

## ***Priority A: Protecting Children from all Forms of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation***

### **Sexual Exploitation of Children**

**Expert input:** The secretariat co-authored the background paper "Child Pornography and online Sexual Exploitation of Children" prepared for the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Congress against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents. The WGCC was invited to the world wide consultation on the paper held in Bangkok.

**Financing:** ECPAT international, 100%.

#### **Outcomes:**

- a. Background document on Internet related exploitation of children published in English and in Russian.

**Preparatory meetings:** The WGCC and the secretariat were part of the preparatory process leading up to the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Congress, including the planning meeting in Florence, major presentations at the regional European preparatory meeting in Geneva and the thematic preparatory meeting in Florence.

**Financing:** Geneva meeting: ECPAT international. Florence meetings: WGCC budget and national budgets.

#### **Outcomes:**

- a. Input to the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Congress preparations leading to the WGCC presenting at 4 different workshops during the congress.

**Participation and contribution at the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Congress:** Members of the WGCC and the Secretariat presented the work of the group at four different workshops during the World Congress:

- WGCC programme on Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children in the Region of the Baltic Sea States
- Child abuse on the Internet with a focus on victim assistance. WGCC work in the area of protection of children on the Internet.
- Child Friendly Forensic Investigations.
- The BSR regional study on Adolescent Sexuality.

**Outcome:** The WGCC and the CBSS demonstrating what regional cooperation can achieve to the world countries.

**Financing:** National budgets and ECPAT international (Secretariat attendance).

**Conference:** Children and online Sexual Violence.

**Financing:** The World Childhood Foundation and Telia Sonera, through the Online project at Linköping University, 50 % and the Swedish Children's Welfare Foundation, 50 %. Through

a grant from SIDA Baltic Sea Unit, Linköping University could invite experts from several CBSS countries that would not otherwise have been able to participate.

**Outcome:** 170 participants at the conference, some 20 workshop presentations. CD ROM including presentations and papers. [www.childcentre.info](http://www.childcentre.info) carries the presentations, some of which are video presentations.

### ***Priority B: Street children and children without a family***

During the year the WGCC has not implemented activities under this priority.

### ***Priority C: The Rights of Children in Institutions and in Other Forms of Protection***

Following the recommendations from the Conference on the topic held in Stockholm in 2006, the WGCC has set up a sub group working on the practical implementation of the suggested activities. The subgroup consists of the Swedish chair to the WGCC, the Danish vice chair and the Estonian member to the WGCC. The secretariat is also participating in the subgroup meetings and the Lithuanian member to the WGCC is part of the preparatory group for the planned conference in the fall of 2009.

**Training for professionals monitoring children's institutions:** Two Norwegian experts from the County Governor of Hordaland developed and conducted a four day pilot training of staff supervising and auditing children's institutions. This was the first time that the training was conducted with experts from different countries. The training was evaluated and scored exceptionally high on usefulness in the daily work of the expert participants. The WGCC will consider if this kind of training is one that should be continued.

**Financing:** The Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, 100 %.

**Outcome:** 17 experts from Estonia, Lithuania, Denmark and Latvia trained in systemic auditing methods.

**Conferences and networking:** The secretariat gave input to the Council of Europe Expert Committee on Children and Family policy and to the Eurochild's 5<sup>th</sup> annual conference.

**Financing:** The WGCC budget and SOS Children's Villages.

**Outcome:** Council of Europe and SOS Children's Villages in discussions with the WGCC in co-organising conference on children leaving care planned to be organised in Vilnius during the Lithuanian presidency to the CBSS.

**Publication of the mapping Keeping the door open:** The study commissioned by the WGCC mapping available support measures in place in the member countries for young people leaving institutional care was printed and published. The report: Keeping the door open is now available in English and in Russian.

**Financing:** SIDA Baltic Sea Unit, 100%.

**Outcome:** The report is published in English and in Russian both in hard copy and on the web site.

## ***Priority D: Young offenders and Self Destructive Behaviour of Children***

During the year the WGCC has not implemented activities under this priority.

## ***Priority E: Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children***

**National Contact Points on Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children** are appointed in all CBSS member states except Germany and Russia. Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova take part in the implementation of the programme and have also appointed National Contact Points, NCP.

### **5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of National Contact Points and National Coordinators.**

**Financing:** The Danish National Board of Social Services.

**Outcome:** The National Contact Points, the National Coordinators, WGCC members and representatives of the experts trained in the BSR CACVT training met to discuss information sharing and hands-on assistance to unaccompanied and trafficked children. Report published on the [www.childcentre.info](http://www.childcentre.info)

**Expert input:** The secretariat gives expert input to three actions in the Swedish government's plan against prostitution and human trafficking, Save the Children Denmark's NCM financed project preventing trafficking by media productions and to Save the Children Norway's knowledge seminar.

**Financing:** Swedish government, Nordic Council of Ministers, Norwegian Ministry for Children and Equality through Save the Children Norway.

**Outcome:** WGCC and CBSS input.

## ***Children's Unit***

The secretariat function of the WGCC is carried by the Children's Unit staffed by the Head of Unit 100% and a Project Officer 20%.

The Children's Unit operates on a separate budget built on member states' voluntary contributions. All member states except Latvia and Russia contributed to the Children's Unit in 2008. The Project Officer is a part of the follow up process to the Oslo ministerial meeting which is financed partly by the Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality.

## ***The Childcentre web site***

The website [www.childcentre.info](http://www.childcentre.info) has been updated during the year including mirror sites in all 11 regional languages and English. The Secretariat and the National Coordinators in the different countries are responsible for the updating of information on the site. The hosting of the childcentre website has been moved to a shared hosting site meaning that the cost of hosting has been reduced considerably.

**Funding:** The update of the childcentre website was accommodated within the WGCC budget.

### ***Associated Expert Group to the NDPHS***

The WGCC is associated expert group to the Northern Dimension Partnership on Health and Social Wellbeing. The WGCC meeting in Oslo on September 30<sup>th</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup> was both a joint meeting of Expert Groups and Associated Expert Groups to the NDPHS and a meeting of the WGCC. All WGCC activities and plans are presented to the NDPHS at meetings of the CSR of the NDPHS and at the NDPHS web site.