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**MEETING IN WORKING GROUP ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN IT-NET WORK CONCERNING CHILDREN AT RISK IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION- STOCKHOLM 14 APRIL 1999.**

At The Ministerial Conference on Children at Risk in the Baltic Sea Region in Stockholm on 17 March, Sweden launched a proposal to set up an IT Net Work to facilitate contact among/between child specialists, experts and other interested parties in the region, by creating a Meeting Place on the Internet for continuous contact, exchange of information and experience, meetings and discussions.

Sweden also offered to arrange a meeting of regional experts to elaborate the more specific technicalities and contents of such a Net Work. The proposal was favorably received, and was supported in particular by Norway. An informal Swedish working group was therefore established, and the CBSS Secretariat was invited to participate together with other interested parties, including a representative from Norway. (See annexed List of Participants).

The task of the working group is to produce a Project Proposal on "IT-facility for Regional Cooperation on actions against child abuse" to be submitted to the CSO for discussion, as well as to prepare the meeting of regional experts which will further elaborate the Project. The Chairman of the WG, Ambassador Bo Henriksson, will report the first discussions of the working group to the CSO meeting in Reykjavik on 29-30 April 1999.

After having explained the background for the meeting, Ambassador Henriksson declared that he anticipated that 2-3 meetings in the frame of the working group would suffice. He intended to present a sketch proposal at the CSO meeting in Reykjavik to get the preliminary reaction of the members. The further direction of the work would depend on the reactions of the CSO, presumably positive. It was a Swedish intention to finalize the work in time for the Ministerial Session in Palanga, but should this fail, a possibility was to let the incoming Norwegian chairmanship take over the project.

The Swedish Minister for Social Security Mai Inger Klingvall (who is also responsible for children's issues), will for the time being support the work with money and people (The Swedish Special Group?) as the Swedish side believes that as of now, the CBSS Secretariat does not have the necessary capacity to undertake this task. However it is the Swedish view that in a somewhat longer perspective, this work should be channeled into the CBSS Secretariat.

Ambassador Henriksson referred to his recent meeting in Scotland with the Special Rapporteur of the Conference on Children at Risk, Stewart Asquith, which provided many interesting thoughts about possibilities and features of such a net work/meeting place.

Using modern technology would not only be up-to-date and farsighted, but also a very cost-effective solution compared with cost of travelling to meetings etc. It would also in a good way respond to the Lithuanian wish, - expressed at the Tallinn Conference, to have mobile expert units.

It would be logical and natural to connect the network to the already existing homepage, the BALTINFO. The net work would be designed to have one open informative area, then another area with different access routes for e.g. police, doctors, social workers, teachers, journalists etc., depending on a special clearance procedure installed on a national level for instance through a focal point/node. This focal point could also be responsible for input of data, information, and translation to national language, which makes it important with anchoring on the governmental level.

The technical experts in the working group stated that 2-3 important questions need to be addressed already from the beginning:

1. To what extent will a high level of security be needed?
2. What will be the language(s) of this virtual meeting place?
3. To what extent will pictorial information be used?

It is important to consider early the organization also on a national level and to reflect upon which authorities and organizations that should be part of such a project.

One way of visualizing the Net Work concept could be to see it as a (children's) "house" with different rooms, to which different experts or interested parties have access.

Ambassador Henriksson asked the technical experts to formulate a Pilot Project till the next working group meeting on 22 April 1999. He felt that the form of a Pilot Project with a few participants might be a feasible way to start. His ambition was to include five countries in the Pilot project, besides Norway and Sweden, - also Russia, Lithuania, and Estonia.

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**Deltagare i arbetsgruppsmöte ang IT-nätverk den 14 april**

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