



**Working Group for  
Co-operation on Children at Risk,  
WGCC  
Council of the Baltic Sea States**



***Annual Report***

***1<sup>st</sup> of July 2007 – 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2008***

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# Introduction

## By the Chair of the Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk

I am delighted to introduce the WGCC annual report for the period of July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 to June 30<sup>th</sup> 2008. The primary objective of the report is to provide an overview of the WGCC activities according to its priorities. Over this period I have had a great opportunity to witness the actions actuated by the priority focusing on unaccompanied and trafficked children. The training seminar as well the follow-up seminar of Baltic Sea Region Comprehensive Assistance to Children Victims of Trafficking, the BSR CACVT confirmed the importance of exchanging experiences, knowledge, tools as well resources needed in working with child victims of trafficking or unaccompanied children. I truly hope that we are able to maintain and expand an established network of trained experts in the member and neighbouring countries to prevent and reduce the problem of child trafficking. I also hereby acknowledge the contribution of Mr Svante Weyler in the mapping of cases of children victims of trafficking in the region and writing the report “The Frail Chain”.

It has also been a very welcoming development in the WGCC activities to have more emphasis on antisocial behaviour in children and juvenile offending. An expert meeting and knowledge seminar on the above mentioned topic organised in St. Petersburg, Russia is a good example of such development. This achievement would not have been accomplished without cooperation with the Russian Ministry of Education and Science. The meeting enabled to provide a fertile ground for future actions to enhance cooperation in various fields relating to young offenders and crime prevention.

As the Chair of the WGCC for the report period I would like to acknowledge the contribution of our Norwegian colleagues in promoting the rights of children in institutions and in other forms of protection by taking up a task to develop a training programme for professionals monitoring children’s institutions. However, these developments would not have evolved without a contribution of experts from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden.

Cooperation with a wide variety of organisations (e.g. CBSS Task Force Against Human Trafficking, Council of Europe, OSCE, SIDA, FICE, NGOs etc), experts and participation in other events has been an invaluable aspect of the WGCC’s development and activities. Furthermore, one cannot underestimate the contribution of national coordinators who the WGCC is to contact first when organising different kind of events and meetings. Such cooperation reflects a policy level discussion of the WGCC considering the context and different agents involved in working with children and promoting their rights and well-being. Moreover, by drawing together empirical research, effective practices and policy perspectives in the cross-cultural context the WGCC sustains and promotes activities that children and professionals working with children could benefit the most. I wish the WGCC and everyone involved in its work persistence and diligence in passing the test of morality of a society – that is, what it does for its children.

Anniki Tikerpuu

Tallinn, September 2008

## **The Working Group for Co-operation on Children at Risk 2007 - 2008<sup>1</sup>.**

The 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

### ***Members of the working group for Co-operation on Children at Risk:***

#### **Chair**

##### **Estonia**

**Ms Anniki Tikerpuu**, Head of Department, Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Social Affairs.

#### **Vice Chair**

##### **Sweden**

**Ms Agneta Björklund**, Deputy Director, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

##### **Denmark**

**Mr Bertil Mahs**, Head of Department, National Board of Social Services, Ministry of Social Affairs.

##### **Finland**

**Ms Anne Hujala**, Senior Adviser, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

##### **Germany**

**Ms Simone Franke-Müller**, Senior Principal, Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

##### **Iceland**

**Mr Bragi Gudbrandsson**, General Director, The Government Agency for Child Protection.

##### **Latvia**

**No representative appointed.**

##### **Lithuania**

**Ms Audra Mikalauskaitė**, Head of Children and Youth Division, Ministry of Social Security and Labour.

##### **Norway**

**Mr Björn Bredesen**, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Children and Equality.

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<sup>1</sup> Contact details of the WGCC members can be found at <http://www.childcentre.info/iFID330.html>

## **Poland**

**Ms Joanna Michalak**, Head of Unit, Department of General Education, Special Education and Social Prevention, Ministry of National Education. (Until February 2008)

**Ms Małgorzata Skórka**, Major specialist, International Cooperation Department, Ministry of National Education. (From February 2008)

## **Russian Federation**

**Ms Alina Levitskaya**, Director, Ministry of Education and Science

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

The Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk, the WGCC, has had two meetings, one in Stockholm on October 22 – 23 2007 at the invitation of the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs and one in Helsinki on April 1 – 2 2008 by the invitation of the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. At the meetings of the WGCC the national representative from the TFOC Expert group on Human Trafficking has been present. Reports from the meetings of the WGCC are published on the Childcentre website<sup>2</sup>.

During the year, a sub group of the WGCC consisting of the representatives from Norway, Sweden and Estonia has worked together with the secretariat to detail the actions taken regarding the rights of children in institutions. The subgroup has met on four occasions during the year, twice in Stockholm, once in Oslo and once in Tallinn.

## **National Co-ordinators**

The National Co-ordinators, the NCs, are the backbone in the co-operation on Children at Risk. Each NC is appointed by the ministry responsible for children's issues in the country and is given the authority to publish events, material and also details of NGOs or other organisations. The Childcentre website focuses on publishing material in English, even though the site makes room for publications in the different languages spoken in the cooperation. The NC can in this way serve the professional community in his or her country also with important publications and materials that would otherwise go unnoticed. Other tasks of the NCs are numerous: They are the first point of contact for the WGCC when organising events, conferences, meetings and expert meetings. They are also the node for the cooperation on the whole and are kept updated on the plans for the cooperation. When the WGCC decides to focus on a topic the NCs are contacted in order to find relevant experts in their country on the specific issue and to prepare for expert participation and to identify research developments in their country. Countries with no appointed NC usually do not participate in expert meetings. A major task for the WGCC during the year has therefore been to support the national ministries in their efforts to identify the most appropriate organisation to carry out this important task. All countries in the cooperation have now identified NCs except for Latvia..

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.childcentre.info/archive/workinggro/>

## ***Appointed National Coordinators are<sup>3</sup>:***

### **Denmark**

Ms Anne Melchior, National Board for Specialist Counselling and Social Service

### **Estonia**

Ms Lemme Haldre, Tarttu Child Support Centre

### **Finland**

Mr Heikki Sariola, National League of Child Welfare

### **Germany**

Ms Sabine Herzig, DJI - Deutsches Jugend Institut.

### **Iceland**

Mr Bragi Gudbrandsson, The Government Agency for Child Protection.

### **Latvia**

Not appointed

### **Lithuania**

Mr Evaldas Karmaza, NGO Child House

### **Norway**

Mr Svein Mossige, NOVA – Norwegian Social Research.

### **Poland**

Ms Joanna Michalak, Ministry of National Education (Until February 2008)

Ms Małgorzata Skórka, Ministry of National Education. (From February 2008)

### **Russian Federation**

Mr Vassili Yermoloff, Yaroslavl Youth Information Centre

### **Sweden**

Ms Ingrid Åkerman, National Board of Health and Welfare

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<sup>3</sup> Names and contact details of the National Coordinators are published and updated at <http://www.childcentre.info/nationalco>

## **WGCC activities according to the priorities:**

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

#### **Internet related abuse of children**

**Expert meeting:** In cooperation with the World Childhood Foundation and Linköping University in Sweden, the WGCC organised a meeting of researchers on support to children abused in internet related settings. 30 experts from the region and outside of the region met in London.

**Participation/Contribution:** Researchers and experts from Sweden, Norway, Germany, the European Commission, the UK, the US, Ireland and the Argentine participated representing institutions and organisations such as Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre, (UK), the National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, NCMEC, (US), University of Linköping, (SE), University College Cork, (IE), Crimes Against Children Research Centre at the University of New Hampshire, (US), Save the Children Europe Group, (NO), ECPAT, (AR), Innocence in Danger, (DE), National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, NSPCC, (UK), STOP it Now!, (UK), Safer Internet Programme, DG INFSO, (EC), the World Childhood Foundation, (SE) and the WGCC. All organisations represented described in their interventions ongoing research and knowledge expansion on how children can best be protected online and assisted when abused in an online setting.

**Financing:** The World Childhood Foundation: Travel and accommodation for all participants.

#### **Outcomes:**

- a. Written report from the meeting.
- b. Researchers at the meeting are presently involved in drafting a proposal to the EU Safer Internet Programme developing the strands discussed.

**EU – Russia meeting:** In December 2007 the secretariat was invited to present the WGCC activities in relation to Internet related abuse of children at the EU – Russia meeting in Luxembourg on the topic.

**Participation/Contribution:** Experts from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of the Interior, the Russian Research Center of Internet-Resources, the Russian Federal service for control of the media, communication and protection of cultural heritage, the Russian permanent mission to the European Communities, Norwegian Criminal Police, Microsoft, Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre in the UK, German Internet Service Providers' Organisation, the Internet Watch Foundation of the UK, INTERPOL, DG JLS and DG INFSO of the European Commission and the WGCC all presented current activities protecting children online and prosecuting online perpetrators.

**Financing:** The European Commission

**Outcome:** The WGCC in continued dialogue with Russian Ministries of Foreign Affairs, of Education and Science and of the Interior on the organisation of a Moscow based EU-WGCC – Russia conference on Internet related violence against children.

#### **The Baltic Sea Regional Study on Adolescents' Sexuality**

The report from this research was launched in Oslo by the Norwegian Minister for Children and Equality at a press conference. The press conference was held in a school in Oslo with

young people attending the school participating. The Norwegian WGCC member and the Head of the Children's Unit also participated.

**Participation/Contribution:** Norwegian Minister for Children and Equality Ms Carita Bekkemellen, Mr Svein Mossige and for the WGCC Mr Lars Lööf.

**Outcome:** All major Norwegian Newspapers and TV channels reported on the research and had interviews with both the Norwegian Minister, the main researcher and with young people commenting on the results of the study.

### ***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 the WGCC has set up a sub group working on the practical implementation of the suggested activities. The subgroup consists of the Estonian chair to the WGCC, the Swedish vice chair and the Norwegian member to the WGCC. The secretariat is also participating in the subgroup meetings.

#### **Developing training for professionals monitoring children's institutions:**

The WGCC has commissioned the development of a training that shall increase the skills and competence of staff monitoring, supervising and auditing institutions caring for children.

**Contribution/Participation:** Two Norwegian experts from the office of the County Governor of Hordaland.

**Financing:** The Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality.

**Outcome:** A training manual is under development.

**Expert meeting:** The WGCC gathered experts from the region to a meeting to discuss and assess the plan developed by the commissioned experts and to give input to the discussions of the WGCC on the training.

**Contribution/Participation:** The Norwegian experts from the County Governor's office in Hordaland presented the plans for the meeting. The network of National Coordinators had assisted the WGCC in identifying researchers and practitioners from the member countries that were invited to the meeting. Experts from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden contributed to the discussion together with the Deputy County Governor of Hordaland and members of the WGCC subgroup working on developing the programme on the Rights of Children in Residential Care.

**Financing:** The Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs and the Norwegian Ministry for Children and Equality.

**Outcome:** Written report from the meeting submitted to the WGCC. Recommendations on how the training of professionals monitoring child care institutions can best be implemented including input to the Norwegian experts in their continued development of the training manual.

**Mapping of resources available for children leaving institutional care:** The WGCC has commissioned a study mapping available support measures in place in the member countries for young people leaving institutional care. The mapping is finalised by the

end of June 2008 and will document programmes implemented by public agencies as well as projects implemented by NGOs in the member countries.

**Participation/Contribution:** A Lithuanian expert is commissioned to carry out the study. The members of the WGCC and the network of National Coordinators have all assisted in writing the country reports included in the study as well as facilitating contacts between the author and national agencies, NGOs and experts implementing programmes supporting children leaving institutions.

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

**Outcome:** The report will be published in English and in Russian. The WGCC intends to follow up on the report with a seminar in 2009, where the best practices and current programmes will be shared with experts and policy makers in the region.

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

**Expert meeting:** In November the WGCC organised an expert meeting and knowledge seminar on the topic of assistance to and rehabilitation of children that commit crimes in cooperation with the Russian Ministry of Education and Science.

**Participation/Contribution:** The State Secretary Mr Kjell Erik Øie from the Royal Ministry of Children and Equality in Norway opened the meeting that saw experts from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden, i.e. all member states to the CBSS. A number of programmes and best practices from Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Norway, Sweden and Russia were presented and discussed.

**Financing:** The Russian Ministry of Education and Science financed accommodation and all meeting costs.

**Outcome:** Full report from the meeting published on the childcentre website<sup>4</sup>. To follow up on the topic of children committing crimes, the WGCC is currently conducting a review of methods used in supporting these children in the member countries and is also looking at how the rights of children in secure institutions in the region are protected.

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

The WGCC has during the year finalised the two year training:

#### **Baltic Sea Region Comprehensive Assistance to Children Victims of Trafficking, the BSR CACVT**

**Training seminar:** One training seminar on reintegration of child victims of trafficking was held in Stockholm on September 13 – 14 2007. 47 participating experts.

**Participation/Contribution:** The Swedish Minister for Elderly Care and Public Health Ms Maria Larsson presented the Diplomas to the experts. The Swedish Ambassador on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Mr Anders Oljelund, Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Swedish National Contact Point Ms Erica Neiglick from the Swedish Ministry of Justice and the WGCC chairperson, Ms Anniki Tikerpuu from the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs all made welcome remarks to the expert participants. This training programme trained 47 professionals from 10 countries in the region, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania,

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.childcentre.info/projects/perpetrators/dbaFile15527.html>

Poland, Sweden, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova. The final training seminar focused on reintegration of child victims of trafficking and two experts from the Bulgarian Counter Trafficking Response Programme and the NGO Animus Association led the training.

**Follow up seminar:** A follow up seminar to the training was held in Druskininkai, Lithuania on January 22 – 23 2008. To this meeting the National Contact Points were invited.

**Participation/Contribution:** Twenty four of the trained experts representing 7 of the countries participated and presented the current national situation regarding unaccompanied and trafficked children. National Contact Points from Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, i.e. five member countries, participated in the meeting and contributed to the presentations of the national situation.

**Financing of the BSR CACVT training programme:** European Commission Daphne II programme – 42%, Save the Children Sweden – 32%, Oak Foundation – 26%.

**Outcome:**

- An established network of 47 trained experts in 10 member countries and neighbouring countries.
- Contact details of trained experts in the 10 countries available to the National Contact Points and the WGCC members.
- A CD Rom including resources, tools and reports for professionals to use when meeting with child victims of trafficking or unaccompanied children. Tools and reports are in Russian and in English.
- Tools and resources are also available at the Childcentre website<sup>5</sup>.

**Mapping cases of children victims of trafficking:**

The WGCC has commissioned a mapping of cases of children trafficked in the region. The report from the mapping, The Frail Chain, including interviews with affected children was published in English and in Russian. The report was launched at a press seminar in Stockholm on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2008 and at a meeting with the Estonian network fighting trafficking in Tallinn on the same day.

**Participation/Contribution:** The Swedish author and journalist Mr Svante Weyler was commissioned to write the report. The National Contact Points, the National Coordinators, the WGCC members and the experts participating in the BSR CACVT training all assisted in setting the author in contact with support organisations and agencies in the member states as well as supplying the author with statistics and data available in the participating countries.

**Financing:** European Commission Daphne II programme: 100%.

**Outcome:** The Frail Chain – Support to Child Victims of Trafficking in the Baltic Sea Region. Report published in English and in Russian.

The report is used as a resource as the WGCC presently formulates the 2<sup>nd</sup> Plan of Action on Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children in the Baltic Sea Region.

**Joint evaluation meeting:**

The WGCC met together with the CBSS Task Force Against Human Trafficking to discuss lessons learnt from the BSR CACVT training and documentation projects. The meeting was hosted by the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs and was held back to back with the WGCC meeting in October 2007.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.childcentre.info/traffickin>

**Participation/Contribution:** The evaluation report from the training was presented to the WGCC and the CBSS TFTHB. Save the Children Sweden, one of the co-funders of the BSR CACVT training programme contributed to the meeting with a presentation and as did the Women's Forum, a Swedish based NGO with experience in the field of counter trafficking measures.

**Financing:** The Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs.

**Outcome:** Report from the joint meeting published on the web site. The two groups decided to continue to develop their cooperation.

### ***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. The NCPs have during the year not had a designated meeting on their own. All NCPs were invited to the follow up seminar of the BSR CACVT training held in Druskininkai, Lithuania on January 22 – 23 2008 in order to meet with and share the expertise of the network of trained experts in the region. NCPs from Denmark, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Poland participated.

**Financing:** The National Contact Points participating financed their own travel and accommodation. Interpretation and venue were financed through the EU Daphne grant.

### ***Dissemination of the WGCC programme on Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children***

The WGCC programme has met with interest from several states and international organisations.

In September 2007 the WGCC programme was presented at the Council of Europe conference in Yerevan: "Action against Trafficking in Human Beings: Measures to Prevent, Protect and Prosecute".

**Financing:** Council of Europe

In October 2007 the programme was presented at the OSCE regional conference in Vilnius: "Preventing Trafficking in Human Beings: Challenges and Solutions" jointly organised by the Government of Lithuania and the OSCE under the UN Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking.

**Financing:** WGCC participation: In budget.

In November 2007 the WGCC was invited to organise a half day seminar at the Swedish embassy to Washington under the Children First! theme: The seminar was titled: The Fight Against Trafficking in Children – Surviving Child Trafficking – Building a Future.

**Participation/Contribution:** HRH Princess Madeleine of Sweden honoured the seminar with her presence. The Swedish Ambassador to Washington, Mr Jonas Hafström opened the seminar that saw contributions from the Swedish Ambassador on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Mr Anders Oljelund. Ms Laura Lederer, Senior Advisor on Trafficking in Persons with the US Department of State contributed to the seminar together with among others the author of the "Frail Chain" report. A comprehensive presentation of the WGCC programme was made. The event was coordinated with the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

**Financing:** The Friends of the House of Sweden in Washington financed travel and accommodation for the experts presenting.

In January 2008 the WGCC programme was presented at a conference in Madrid organised by the Spanish Ministry of the Interior and Save the Children Spain: “Child trafficking: How to improve victim identification and protection”

**Financing:** The conference organisers.

In April 2008 the WGCC programme was presented at the conference in Minsk “Violence Against Children, Challenges and Ways of Prevention” organised by the Belarusian Ministry of Interior in cooperation with OSCE, SIDA and others.

**Financing:** Board and Accommodation were financed by the organisers.

In April 2008 the WGCC work against trafficking in children was presented at the Conference: Cooperation to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings between North-West Russia, Baltic states and Nordic Countries, organised in St Petersburg by the Nordic Council of Ministers and Russian NGO Stellit.

**Financing:** WGCC budget.

In June 2008 the WGCC programme against trafficking in Children was presented at the FICE conference in Helsinki.

**Financing:** WGCC budget.

## **WGCC participation in advisory groups**

The WGCC is represented in the reference group on the project on children without documents in Sweden, a project implemented by Save the Children Sweden.

The WGCC is represented in the reference group to the Online Victimisation project implemented by Linköping University and financed by the World Childhood Foundation.

The WGCC is represented in the reference group to the follow up of the Swedish Governmental Plan of Action against the Sexual Exploitation of Children, implemented by the Swedish Children’s Welfare Foundation and financed by the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs.

The WGCC is a partner to the project: “Story Enhancing Skills” implemented by Tromsø University, Norway and financed by the EU Leonardo programme.

## **Summary of WGCC participation in other events**

Presentation at high level conference: Modern Approaches in Prevention of Bullying and Violence in Schools, organised by the Lithuanian Child Ombudsperson in cooperation with several other institutions and agencies. H.E. The president of the Republic of Lithuania, Mr Valdas Adamkus opened the conference.

The WGCC participated as an advisor to the Barents Euro Arctic Regional Cooperation, more specifically on the new programme Children and Youth at Risk in the Barents Euroarctic Region at the first meeting of the steering group to the said programme.

At the meeting of the Council of Europe Expert Group on Children and Families in April 2008, the work of the WGCC in the areas of fighting trafficking of children, promoting the rights of children in institutions and online violence against children was presented.

UNICEF Sweden and the Swedish Board for Health and Welfare have developed a manual to assist in the identification of children that have been trafficked. The launch of the manual took place in the Swedish Parliament, organised by the parliamentary group on children's issues. The WGCC was represented by a presentation and by the participation of the Swedish WGCC member

The WGCC participated at the CBSS Task Force Against Human Trafficking meeting in Jurmala, Latvia, in May.

## **Children's Unit in the CBSS secretariat**

The secretariat function of the WGCC is carried by the Children's Unit staffed by the Head of Unit 100% and between January and December 2008 a Project Officer 20%.

**Financing:** 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 2007.

## **The Childcentre web site**

The website [www.childcentre.info](http://www.childcentre.info) publishes regional information on programmes, projects, research and events of interest to experts and practitioners working with children at risk in the region. The website is updated by the network of National Coordinators in the member states.

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

The WGCC is associated expert group to the Northern Dimension Partnership on Health and Social Wellbeing. As such, all activities and plans are presented to the partners at meetings of the CSR of the NDPHS and at the NDPHS web site.