



Resolution:

Creation of a pan-European Union child protection vetting agency

Adopted at the YEPP Seminar in Madrid on 29th September 2012

Recognising:

- That continued disclosures suggest that child protection systems across the European Union have failed our youth and that the continued evidence that certain cross-border institutions in religious, sporting and educational fields have abused their positions of responsibility and trust in society, thus putting children at risk.
- That the above were not isolated or individual cases, but prolonged and excessive abuses that arose from a culture of neglect within state agencies to develop the required oversight of child protection.
- That, due to agreements in place under current EU law, such as the Schengen travel arrangement, it has never been easier for EU citizens to work and cross borders with only limited controls. This has led to numerous issues in the protection of children from new workers who have not been properly vetted due to the lack of information sharing and information consolidation from previous their countries of work and/or origin.
- That, under the current system, EU citizens may effectively leave criminal pasts behind upon entering a new country and can easily resume working in a role providing them with access to children, thereby potentially endangering children.
- This agency should make sure to follow the rule of law and give legal certainty that the people registered in this record are convicted offenders. Also these records should only be accessed for authorities who have a legitimate reason for using it.
- That certain institutions in Europe were historically able to move persons who posed a risk to children across borders, which allowed them continue identifying and particularly targeting vulnerable youth, due to the lack of information sharing amongst respective police forces who conduct vetting processes.

Acknowledging:

- That preventative measures would allow for greater transparency for all citizens in the management of their employment, in addition to reassuring parents of children and all EU citizens that the EU is committed to the welfare of families and children.
- That *The Convention on the Rights of the Child* is the most widely ratified international treaty in history. This is a strong indication of depth of the unified international commitment to provide children with safety and stability in their lives.
- The commitments made by the EU in their *Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child* for the protection of children.
- The commitments made by over 140 countries in ratifying *The Convention on the Rights of the Child* by, notably in Article 3, where it provides that what is in the best interest of the child should be of primary concern.
- That, while national police forces have access to limited information held by Interpol and Europol records, they do not have right of access to crimes committed in localities which are recorded by local or regional police forces. This can lead to persons who pose a risk to children using legal and jurisdictional loop-holes to go unnoticed when crossing international borders.

YEPP calls for:

- The establishment of a central EU-wide vetting agency that can be accessed by any official or registered organisation wishing to screen potential staff that may have access to children, in respect with human rights, and in particular the right to privacy
- This agency to be administered by EUROPOL so that it is granted access to criminal records held by other EU police forces and law-enforcement agencies. This will allow for any citations that suggest that a person may be a legitimate danger to children to be made known to the relevant international authorities and dealt with accordingly in vetting those working with or having access to children.
- This agency to be funded through the Freedom, Security and Justice, and Citizenship budget.
- The enshrining into EU law that organisations where staff have access to children must properly vet any new employees coming from outside the jurisdiction. These prospective employees must be vetted through this new EU agency in order to protect the interest of the child.