

Stockholm Congress Regional Meeting: Europe

There was unanimous agreement to seize the momentum created by the World Congress and to accord the highest political priority to children and the problems of CSEC. Comments were made on practically all the chapters of the Agenda for Action:

Coordination and cooperation

It was proposed that national governments report on the implementation of the Agenda for Action and encourage the widest possible dialogue between governments, NGOs and others. To that effect, and subject to the agreement of Member States, the Council of Europe court offers to host, with UNICEF, a regional meeting to allow governments to report on the follow-up of the Agenda for Action.

Council of Europe Member States who had not yet done so were encouraged to report on the implementation of Recommendation 91 (11).

Speakers called for local, national and international coalitions and coordination. Coalitions should include NGOs, the travel and tourism sector, business, trade unions, the military, the police, the judiciary and parliamentarians.

The need for coherent action was emphasized, a concern that could be addressed through the European Strategy for Children drawn up by the Council of Europe and UNICEF.

The meeting called for the greatest possible coherence in following up the Fourth UN Conference on Women (Beijing, September 1995) and the Agenda for Action adopted at the Stockholm World Congress.

Prevention

Calls were made for the widest possible harmonization of legislation on CSEC.

Education on children's rights should be a priority. The CRC should be included in formal and non-formal education programmes for communities, families and children. Peer education programmes and monitoring networks to counter commercial sexual exploitation should be set up. Specific programmes should be set up for the police, the military and other government officials.

Protection

It was proposed that children's rights should form part of the work of the European Union's Inter-Governmental Conference.

Recovery and reintegration

The importance of social, medical, psychological assistance and counseling programmes was stressed, along with other forms of support aimed at promoting self-respect, dignity and the rights of the child.

Child participation

Many participants stressed the importance of children's participation, especially as advocates of their own rights. According to their capacity, children should be included in developing and carrying out government and other programmes that concern them.

Finally, the meeting called for a clear identification of who would lead the follow-up action: a partnership including the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, UNICEF and other relevant UN bodies, the NGO Group for the CRC, ECPAT, Interpol and, at regional level, the Council of Europe and the European Union.