

UN endorses statement issued by European Ombudspersons for Children

The United Nations have endorsed the recommendations put forward by the European Ombudspersons for Children on tackling violence against children in Europe.

A joint statement to that effect has been issued by the UN and the European Ombudspersons for Children on the eve of the signing of the Sustainable Development Agenda last weekend in New York. Ending violence against children is one of the goals on this Agenda.

In a joint statement formulated over the past few days during their annual summit, the European Ombudspersons for Children are calling on European leaders to make every effort to combat violence against children. The statement issued by the ombudspersons has been endorsed by Marta Santos Pais, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children.

Child maltreatment is a major problem in today's society. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children have the right to grow up without violence. Nevertheless, it is estimated that ten million European children (approx. one in ten) experience domestic violence at some point during their childhood. Such abuse can have life-long consequences for the victims. Violence against children increases the risk of poor performance in school, unemployment, poverty, criminal behaviour, radicalization, and health problems like diabetes and depression.

In their joint statement, the ombudspersons recommend ten measures that European governments can take to combat violence against children. These recommendations are derived from a report published by the Dutch Ombudsman for Children on a Europe-wide approach to combating child abuse. They call for such measures as encouraging positive parenting, training professionals to detect child abuse, and providing better support to victims.

Last week, the European Ombudspersons for Children convened for their annual summit, which was held in Amsterdam and The Hague and focused in particular on violence against children. This is the first time that a statement issued by the European Ombudspersons for Children has been endorsed by the United Nations.