

## **European Ombudspersons for Children establish taskforce to protect rights of refugee children**

Europe should ensure that all children on the move reaching the continent enjoy the safety and security and receive the education and healthcare to which they are entitled. This is the position of the European Ombudspersons for Children as formulated during their annual summit, held in Amsterdam and The Hague over the past few days. The ombudspersons are therefore establishing a taskforce to ensure that European leaders respect the rights of these vulnerable children.

The ombudspersons are concerned about the situation of the thousands of refugee children who are currently fleeing to Europe. They have experienced traumatic events, and many are or may become victims of violence and human trafficking. The European Ombudspersons for Children believe that European governments should protect these children and provide them with access to healthcare and education.

The taskforce will oversee the actions of governments to ensure that European leaders respect the rights of children on the move. It will do so by monitoring the situation of these children, reporting on their situation to European leaders, and placing the relevant issues on European political agendas.

The taskforce represents 40 European Ombudspersons for Children based in 33 countries. Marc Dullaert, the Dutch Ombudsman for Children, has been appointed to lead the taskforce in his capacity as the new chairman of the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC). The ombudspersons for children of Flanders, Croatia, England, Greece, Italy, Malta, Poland, Catalonia and Sweden are also members of the taskforce.

All European countries are signatories to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that children are entitled to protection against violence, and the best possible healthcare and education. These rights should be enjoyed by all children residing within European borders, regardless of their nationality.

### **Summit**

The European Ombudspersons for Children convened in Amsterdam and The Hague over the past few days for their annual summit, which focused on violence against children. The ombudspersons unanimously decided to place on the agenda the situation of the thousands of children on the move in Europe.