

Promoting the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Children's Rights Network Switzerland founded

Zurich, November 13, 2003 – In an effort to promote more effectively the recognition and implementation of the UN-Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Children's Rights Network Switzerland has been established at a conference on November 6, 2003. For this purpose 25 organisations engaged in the well-being of children and young people signed a Memorandum of Understanding intended to promote closer mutual cooperation and at the same time help the organisation find one voice in public discussion on issues related to children's rights.

Judged by international standards, children in Switzerland enjoy a comfortable life. Still, there are shortcomings with respect to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child ratified by Switzerland in 1997. This fact was highlighted in the shadow report drawn up by 46 non-governmental organisations and presented to the UN-Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2002. Wishing to promote the implementation of the Convention and to improve coordination amongst each other, 25 organisations engaged in the well-being of children and young people met on the 6th of November and founded the Children's Rights Network Switzerland. They signed a statement of principles, called Memorandum of Understanding, laying down the aims and objectives of the Network and governing mutual cooperation.

Higher Profile in Public Discussions

The Children's Rights Network Switzerland aims to promote the recognition and implementation of the UN-Convention on the Rights of the Child, for example by elaborating joint statements on issues or measures in the area of children's rights and children's politics and by supporting a broad professional dialog concerning the Convention's implementation. The Network will also accompany the reporting procedures of the Confederation which, by ratifying the Convention, has committed itself to submit a report on the implementation of the Convention to the UN-Committee on the Rights of the Child every five years. By way of closer cooperation the non-government organisations are seeking to strengthen their position in public discussions on children's rights.

Solid support from organisations

The Network was initiated by Coordination des Droits de l'Enfant, Kinderschutz Schweiz, pro familia, pro juventute and UNICEF Switzerland. These organisations were also responsible for last year's shadow report and have been pursuing the cooperation since 1997. Furthermore, Enfants du Monde, the Institut International des Droits de l'Enfant,

the Schweizerische Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Jugendverbände (SAJV) and the Foundation for the Kinderdorf Pestalozzi were involved in the elaboration of the Memorandum of Understanding. The fact that 25 organisations joined the Network from its beginning illustrates the real need felt for the Network and the firm support the Memorandum of Understanding enjoys.

The Network consists of an outer and an inner circle. The latter is mainly responsible for coordination and implementation. Its members are Enfants du Monde, Fondation Terre des Hommes, Fondation Suisse du Service Social International, Institut International des Droits de l'Enfant, Kinderlobby Schweiz, Kinderschutz Schweiz, Swiss Guide and Scout Movement, pro juventute, Foundation for the Kinderdorf Pestalozzi and UNICEF Switzerland. The Foundation for the Kinderdorf Pestalozzi is in charge of coordination.

For more information, please contact

Markus Mader, Coordinator Children's Rights Network, Foundation for the Kinderdorf Pestalozzi

Tel. 071 343 73 73

Mobile: 079 323 00 47

Alexander Rödiger, Head of Communications, UNICEF Switzerland

Tel. 01 317 22 20

Mobile: 076 566 58 93