

European states support UN complaints procedure on children's rights ^[1]

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Since yesterday (28 February 2012), a new Optional Protocol of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is open for signature. The Protocol will provide a complaints procedure for children, enabling them to seek redress for violations of their rights at international level - if national mechanisms have been exhausted.

The official UN signing ceremony that opens the Protocol for signature took place on 28 February 2012 during the UN Human Rights Council session in Geneva. Eurochild welcomes the leadership and commitment to children's rights shown by 20 countries who signed the Protocol at the ceremony - the majority of which are from the Europe region: Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain.

The Protocol enters into force once it has been signed and ratified by 10 countries. The NGO Group for the CRC - of which Eurochild is a member - has campaigned strongly for this new instrument so as to offer children a level of protection equivalent to that provided to adults at the UN level. As stated by Lisa Myers, Director of the NGO Group "We have to make sure this new instrument enters into force quickly so that it can be used by children who need it". Once in force, children and their representatives, who do not secure justice for rights violations at national level, can appeal to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child - the independent body in charge of monitoring the implementation of the Convention and its Optional Protocols

Together with the NGO Group, Eurochild members will be pushing for an early entry into force of this Protocol and helping to raise awareness about the potential of this new instrument. Eurochild President and UNCRC member Maria Herczog said "Use of this Protocol should tell us a lot about the overall quality of implementation of the UNCRC in state parties. From individual cases we can get a better understanding of how the system is really working".

-reprinted from Eurochild

Region: International ^[2]

Tags: children's rights ^[3]

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Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/12/02/european-states-support-un-complaints-procedure-childrens-rights> [2]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/region/international> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/childrens-rights>