



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL JUSTICE

Directorate C: Fundamental rights and Union citizenship
The Director

Brussels,
JUST.C1/MT/rg/s1683490

Letter addressed to JHA
Counsellors

By e-mail

Subject: New informal Member State expert group on the rights of the child to be established as of January 2013

Dear Colleagues,

In the EU Agenda for the rights of the child adopted in February 2011¹, the European Commission presented general principles that should ensure that EU action is exemplary in ensuring the respect of children's rights as set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In terms of cooperation and dialogue with stakeholders, aside from the annual European Forum on the rights of the child², the Commission seeks to continue to support Member States' efforts by promoting exchange of best practice, cooperation and communication with and among national authorities responsible for protecting and promoting the rights of the child.

With this in mind, as of the first quarter of 2013, the Commission would like to establish an informal Member State³ expert group on the rights of the child. It is expected that the expert group would meet four times (one-day meetings) in 2013, once per quarter, at Commission premises in Brussels, with meetings taking place in English.

The agenda for the first meeting should cover organisational questions including the role of the group and rules for procedure and the agenda for the first meeting is also likely to include the following items:

¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52011DC0060:en:NOT>

² http://ec.europa.eu/justice/events/child-forum-2012/index_en.htm

³ and Croatia

- Follow-up to the 7th European Forum on the rights of the child 13-14 November 2012, on supporting child protection systems through the implementation of the EU Agenda
- Status report on data collection studies underway at EU level (missing children EU27, children's involvement in administrative, civil and criminal judicial proceedings(EU27 and Croatia));
- Status report on study on legislation, policy and practice on child participation underway at EU level (Member States and Croatia)
- Child-friendly justice
- Preparation of legislative proposals with an impact on children, e.g. vulnerable suspects

The expert group could usefully serve to discuss a range of other topics of relevance to children's rights in the EU.

We would welcome the active participation of all Member States and Croatia in this expert group and would invite each Member State to appoint a government representative (Member State official). As the expert group is likely to discuss a range of topics that may not always be under the responsibility of a sole government department, Member States may wish to consider a) appointing a focal point or coordinator to the group or b) appointing more than one delegate and deciding which one will represent the Member State at a particular meeting based on the agenda items to be discussed. The expert group will be chaired by a Commission representative.

The Commission will reimburse the travel costs of government experts (**one expert per Member State**). A second government expert may attend the meeting, but without reimbursement of travel expenses. Information on expense reimbursement rules is attached.

I would be grateful if each Member State could notify us of the contact details (name, role/function, national authority, address, email, telephone number) of the designated Member State appointee(s) **by 10 January 2013 at the latest**. Notifications should be addressed to JUST-CHILDREN-RIGHTS@ec.europa.eu.

The first meeting will be convened between mid-February and end March 2013. Should you require any further information, please contact JUST-CHILDREN-RIGHTS@ec.europa.eu or Margaret Tuite, Commission coordinator for the rights of the child on +32.2.2953567.

Yours faithfully,


 Paul Nemitz

Enc: Information on reimbursement of travel expenses