



In 2014 and 2015, the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) Secretariat is organising five expert meetings in cooperation with partners in Europe and beyond. The aim of the meetings is to identify child rights standards and key agencies responsible for protecting children exposed to exploitation and trafficking in cross border situations. The outcomes will include a report and an online tool outlining relevant laws, policies and procedures – as well as responses to issues faced by child welfare and migration authorities in relation to the return of child victims of exploitation and trafficking.

Agenda for an Expert Meeting on:

Case assessment and best interest determination: Special considerations and procedures in transnational cases of children exposed to exploitation, trafficking, and children at risk

Dates: 28-29 January, 2014

Venue: Slussplan 9, Stockholm

Facilitators: Turid Heiberg, CBSS and Daja Wenke, consultant

Tuesday, 28th January

Session I: Introduction

9.00 – 9.45

Welcome and introduction

- Turid Heiberg, Senior Adviser/Head of Children's Unit - Council of Baltic Sea States Secretariat, Sweden

Introduction of the project and participants

9.45 – 10.30

Key note speech: The best interests of the child

- Johanna Schiratzki, Professor of Welfare Law - Ersta Sköndal University College, Sweden

Overview on the general principle of the best interests of the child under the CRC, in national law and practice, including introduction to the holistic, rights-based perspective, the best interests of the child as an individual and collective concept, and the latest developments from the European Union.

Discussion

10.30 – 10.45 *Coffee*

Session II: The best interests of the child in practice: Experience and perspectives from different sectors

10.45 – 12.15 **The social services approach to best interests assessment**

- Charlotta Thorelius, Development Manager against Prostitution and Human Trafficking - County Administrative Board of Stockholm
- Philip Ishola, Advisor - Association Directors Children Services Asylum Taskforce and CEO - Counter Human Trafficking Bureau, UK

Discussion

12.15 – 13.30 *Lunch – Restaurant Agaton, Västerlånggatan. 72*

13.30 – 15.00 **The perspective on the return and best interests assessment**

- Eva Biaudet, Ombudsman for minorities and National Rapporteur of Trafficking in Human Beings, Finland
- Claes Lyckner, Coordinator - Return of victims of trafficking, County Administrative Board of Stockholm

Discussion

15.00 – 15.15 *Coffee*

15.15 – 16.45 **Examples of multi-disciplinary/cross-sectoral/inter-agency approaches to best interests assessment**

- Mariana Petersel, President - Association Generatie Tanara Romania
- Bragi Guðbrandsson, General Director - the Government Agency for Child Protection, Iceland
- Evija Ivdra, Senior Inspector - the State Inspectorate for protection of children's rights, Latvia.

Discussion

16.45 - 17.00 *Closure of day one - group photo*

18.00 *Dinner - First Hotel Reisen, Skeppsbron 12*

Wednesday, 29th January

Session III: International perspectives

9.00 – 10.30 **The contribution of international actors to best interests assessments in transnational child protection cases**

- Andy Elvin, CEO - Children and Families Across Borders, UK
- Monika Sandvik-Nylund, Senior Advisor on Child Protection - Division of International Protection, UNHCR
- Jyothi Kanics, Advocacy & Policy Specialist - Child Rights Advocacy and Education Section UNICEF, Geneva
- Dorothea Czarnecki, Senior Adviser – ECPAT, Germany

Discussion

10.30 – 10.45 *Coffee*

10.45 – 12.15 **Experience with handling dilemmas in best interests assessment in transnational child protection cases**

- Kristina Misiniene, Coordinator - "Aid to the Victims of Trafficking and Prostitution", Caritas, Lithuania
- Daniela Reale, Exploited Children Adviser - Save the Children, UK
- Pierre Cazenave, Regional Child Rights Officer - Terre Des Hommes, Hungary

Discussion

12.15 – 13.30 *Restaurant Agaton, Västerlånggatan. 72*

Session IV: The Child's Perspective

13.30 – 15.00 **The child's perspective and best interest determination in the formal system (courts, possibilities to appeal etc.)**

- Elin Wernqvist-Roberts, Manager - Children's Rights Bureau, Sweden
- Elinor Lindroth, Social Worker - Social Services Administration, Sweden

Discussion

15.00 – 15.30 **Closing**

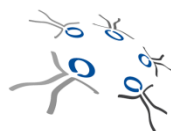
Organisers: Council of Baltic Sea States Secretariat, the State Border Guard in Latvia, Stockholm Social Emergency Center, State Child Protection and Adoption Service in Lithuania

Funding: The European Return Fund – Community Actions of the European Commission Directorate-General Home Affairs and the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

Guiding questions

To be covered by the speakers representing social services, immigration authorities and cross-sectoral cooperation mechanisms for the best interests assessment:

- What does the relevant national law say about the best interests of the child in the specific sector (social services / child protection law, immigration law, others)
- What are the tools used?
- How is the child heard?
- What is the procedure of best interests *assessment* ? How long does / can it take?
- How is the decision taken and by whom ('best interests *determination*')? Does the authority take the decision themselves or do they inform a decision taking process led by another authority?
- Does the authority cooperate with partners? If so, with whom and how?
- Are there any regulations on confidentiality and if so, to what effect?
- Are there any specific issues to consider for children who have been exposed to exploitation or trafficking? If so, which?
- Are there any dilemmas? If so, of what kind?
- Is there access to professional advice on difficult cases and if so, where and how?
- Are there any good practices? What works?
- What are the specific issues in transnational cases?
- Considerations in relation to age and gender



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