



Working Group for Co-operation  
on Children at Risk  
Council of the Baltic Sea States

# *Annual Report 2006/2007*



## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction by the Chair of the Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Summary of primary WGCC activities .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>The Working Group for Co-operation on Children at Risk 2006 - 2007.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Meetings of the WGCC .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Chairperson’s meetings .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Budget .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Staff of the Children’s Unit.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Priority Paper .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Activity Plan .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Evaluating the WGCC activities following the Activity Plan 06 – 07 .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Childcentre web site .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>National Co-ordinators .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Meetings of the National Co-ordinators.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>The WGCC as Associated Expert Group in the Northern Dimension Partnership on Health and Social Wellbeing.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Cooperation and Coordination with other organisations.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>The Nordic Council of Ministers .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>The Council of Europe .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>EU cooperation .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>UNICEF .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe – .....</b>	<b>20</b>
Office of the Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings .....	20
<b>NGO cooperation .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Foundations .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Activities out of the priorities set for the co-operation .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>A: The protection of children from all forms of sexual exploitation, abuse and trafficking .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>The Baltic Sea Regional Study on Adolescent Sexuality .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Child Pornography on the Internet and dangers to children related to new techniques</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>B: Unaccompanied and trafficked children. ....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Baltic Sea Region Comprehensive Assistance to Children Victims of Trafficking: BSR CACVT .....</b>	<b>24</b>
Training Programme .....	24
Participating experts to the BSR CACVT .....	24

International seminar 1: Vilnius, 14 <sup>th</sup> to 15 <sup>th</sup> of September 2006.....	25
Protective care of children and young persons that have been trafficked	25
International Seminar 2: Warsaw, 9 <sup>th</sup> to 10 <sup>th</sup> of November 2006 .....	25
Psychological support to trafficked young persons .....	25
International seminar 3: St Petersburg, 15 <sup>th</sup> to 16 <sup>th</sup> of February 2007.....	26
Children’s participation in shaping their own healing context .....	26
International seminar 4: Tallinn, 24 <sup>th</sup> to 25 <sup>th</sup> of May 2007 .....	26
Networking and family work with children and young persons victims of trafficking.....	26
National Follow up .....	27
<b>BSR CACVT Mapping project.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of National Contact Points.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>CBSS Task Force Against Trafficking in Human Beings, TFTHB .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>C: Street children and children without a family.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>D: The rights of children in institutions and in other forms of protection. .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Conference: “The Rights of Children in Institutions in the Region of the Baltic Sea States - Improving Child Participation, Monitoring and Post Placement Assistance” ..</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>E: Young offenders and self-destructive behaviour of children.....</b>	<b>30</b>
 <b>Children at Risk within the CBSS structure .....</b>	 <b>31</b>
 <b>Participation of the WGCC in other major events.....</b>	 <b>32</b>

## **Introduction by the Chair of the Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk**

It is a great pleasure for me to introduce the WGCC annual report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2006 to 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2007. As Chair for the same period, it gives me a good opportunity to emphasise the value of our cooperation and the work that has been and still is carried out. The WGCC itself has grown to be a strong, functional and supportive instrument for cooperation between member states within the framework of Council of the Baltic Sea States. Through our activities and programmes targeting children at risk, we also see good results of our work.

Both the introduction and the annual report itself describe the mandate, framework, activities and priority areas based on our Priority Paper. My experiences are, as one of the initiators of the regional cooperation in the late 1990ies, and subsequently a member and Chair of the WGCC that we have managed to combine policy making with knowledge from practices and with results of scientific research and that we have transformed this into concrete activities. To implement the WGCC programmes we have managed to secure financial support through voluntary contributions from the CBSS member states, through good cooperation with the European Commission's Daphne programme, from the Swedish International Development Agency, SIDA, from the Oak Foundation and from NGOs. This has been made possible through the support given to the WGCC by the Children's Unit at the Secretariat and by the Director of the CBSS Secretariat herself. I would especially like to underline that the support from the Children's Unit has been decisive to the work of WGCC.

It is my impression, that each of the eleven member states shows great enthusiasm and support to the WGCC cooperation and to our work on different levels concerning children at risk. Sharing experiences, learning from each other, working together with common goals give hope for future cooperation and better conditions for the most vulnerable groups of children in our region. Good preventive work in the best interest of the child and for young people is one necessary precondition for good integration into the society and creates equal opportunities for all. In many of our activities we have also included neighbouring countries such as Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. It is my opinion that this is good for our cooperation and for children in the region.

Let me finish by expressing the good relation and cooperation the WGCC have with the CSO (Committee of Senior Official) in the CBSS. It is my hope that the WGCC on a regular basis will have the opportunity to continue reporting from our activities directly at the CSO meetings. It is also my wish that the WGCC will be a part of the discussion concerning the future of the CBSS.

Oslo in September 2007

Bjørn Bredesen

## Summary of primary WGCC activities

**August 06, Copenhagen:** “Nordic Conference on Child Protection” Invited speaker on “Children in Cyberspace – Challenges for Social Workers”

**Aim:** Promoting the WGCC expert meeting on Children Abused in the Context of the Internet.

**Outcome:** Nordic Social Workers aware of possible contacts within the WGCC network..

**September 06, Vilnius:**

**Training Seminar BSR CACVT:** 1<sup>st</sup> Training Seminar in the Baltic Sea Region Comprehensive Assistance to Children Victims of Trafficking. Training 55 experts from 10 countries in the region on “Protective Care”.

**Aim:** For experts to have expertise in how to assist young people that has been trafficked.

**Outcome:** 1<sup>st</sup> Seminar was highly appreciated by participating experts. Tools described will be disseminated to participants and for others to use.

**Expert Meeting, Klaekken, Norway:** Monitoring institutions.

**Aim:** Preparing the WGCC conference with expert input into how monitoring could be used to ensure the protection of the rights of children in institutions.

**Outcome:** Recommendations and input to the WGCC conference outlining what constitutes a good monitoring. Report from the meeting.

**October 06:**

**Preparatory committee work, Moscow:** Meeting of the international preparatory committee on the WGCC conference in Moscow.

**Aim:** Setting the agenda for the conference, ensuring that different concerns from member countries are considered.

**Outcome:** Full and active participation of Russian ministerial representatives, Russian experts and Russian young persons.

**Meeting of the WGCC, Copenhagen: .**

**Aim:** Planning conference in Stockholm on the rights of children in institutions. Drafting follow up of conference. Ensuring full participation at the conference.

**Outcome:** Draft outcome of conference and expert input into the conference in place.

**Presentation, Copenhagen:** Danish training on Children and Trafficking organised by Save the Children Denmark.

**Aim:** Introducing to Danish experts the existing network and how to connect to the network and the National Contact Points on Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children. Introducing the themes of the BSR CACVT training.

**Outcome:** Danish professionals have more opportunities to connect to the existing network of experts and can use the contacts in their work with young persons.

## **November 06:**

**Presentation, Stockholm:** Fighting trafficking in children. The work of the WGCC.

**Aim:** Information to experts in Stockholm County Council to be aware of the WGCC programme.

**Outcome:** 30 experts have thorough knowledge on the WGCC programme.

**Training Seminar BSR CACVT, Warsaw:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Training Seminar in the WGCC Programme: Baltic Sea Region Comprehensive Assistance to Children Victims of Trafficking. Training 55 experts from 10 countries in the region on “Psychological Assistance to Children Victims of Trafficking”

**Aim:** Training experts in the use of a number of different tools and methods when assisting young persons victimised and exploited through trafficking.

**Outcome:** Report written, presentations published and tools disseminated for further use and development by expert participants.

**Conference, Stockholm:** “The Rights of Children in Institutions in the Region of the Baltic Sea States – Improving Child Participation, Monitoring and Post Placement Assistance” organised by the WGCC in cooperation with the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs and the Swedish Presidency to the CBSS.

**Aim:** The conference aimed at agreeing on a platform for further WGCC work on ensuring rights to children in institutional care and children that may be considered to be taken into institutional care.

**Outcome:** The conference gathered 48 decision makers and experts from all 11 member countries and Ukraine and Belarus. Experts from the UK and Switzerland were invited to contribute. The outcome document is a set of recommendations for the WGCC to pursue in their work.

## **December 06:**

**Presentation, Vilnius:** “International Conference in Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.” Key note address. Organised by Lithuanian Ministry of Interior.

**Aim:** Ensuring the continued strong cooperation on children within all regional activities.

**Outcome:** NGOs and governmental representatives from Lithuania and other countries introduced to the further development of the WGCC programme and training.

**Council of Senior Representatives of the NDPHS, Oslo:** 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the NDPHS CSR included participation of the Chairperson of the WGCC

**Aim:** Decision on the future contribution of the WGCC as Expert Group to the NDPHS

**Outcome:** Clear ambition from the NDPHS to coordinate more actively with the WGCC

## **February 07:**

**Coordination meetings, Brussels:** With representatives for the European Commission responsible for the Commission's programme fighting trafficking

**Aim:** Increased streamlining of efforts and full avoidance of all duplications. Commission aware of plans and ongoing activities.

**Outcome:** Commission awareness on the WGCC work. Invitation to the EU Forum on the rights of the child.

**Training Seminar BSR CACVT, St Petersburg, Russia:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Training Seminar in the WGCC Programme: Baltic Sea Region Comprehensive Assistance to Children Victims of Trafficking. Training 55 experts from 10 countries in the region on "Child Participation in Shaping their own Healing Process."

**Aim:** Training experts in the use of a number of different tools and methods when assisting young persons victimised and exploited through trafficking.

**Outcome:** Report written, presentations published and tools disseminated for further use and development by expert participants.

#### **March 07:**

**Conference, Riga:** Northern Dimension Partnership on Health and Social Well Being. SIHLWA expert group: "Reducing Alcohol Problems in the Baltic Sea Region - Effective Approaches to Tackle Alcohol Related Problems in Local Communities".

**Aim:** Through chairing the session on Children affected by alcohol abuse in families, ensuring the child perspective.

**Outcome:** Report and outcome document from the conference recommends the further use of child dedicated instruments and tools in assisting children living in families with alcohol problems.

**Presentation, Falun, Sweden:** Trafficking of Children in the region of the Baltic Sea States. Roundtable meeting with Swedish professionals in Falun, Sweden.

**Aim:** Raising awareness among professionals on how to identify children that may be victims of trafficking and how best to support them or how to find contacts that may support them.

**Outcome:** 25 professionals trained.

#### **April 07:**

**Meeting of National Coordinators, Lillehammer, Norway:** Meeting of the National Coordinators in the cooperation on children at risk.

**Aim:** To discuss the work of the National Coordinators, the work with the web site, the contacts with experts within areas of concern to the WGCC.

**Outcome:** Increased knowledge of how the different parts of the WGCC work fits together and where the National Coordinators fit into the work.

**Meeting of the WGCC, Lillehammer, Norway:** The first part of the meeting was a joint meeting with the National Coordinators discussing their work

and receiving their input mainly to the follow up of the Stockholm Conference on the Rights of Children in Institutions.

**Aim:** WGCC to decide on programme directions for the work. WGCC to instruct the Secretariat on how best to pursue and reach target objectives.

**Outcome:** Programme on the rights of children in institutions and the plan of activities for 2007 – 2008 including the cooperation with the CBSS TFTHB and the expert group on human trafficking under the TFOC decided upon.

**National Follow up, Malmö, Sweden:** Disseminating to a wider audience the content of the BSR CACVT training.

**Aim:** Disseminating to national professionals in Sweden and in Denmark the training and its content.

**Outcome:** 70 Swedish and Danish professionals listened to presentations on the different topics addressed in the BSR CACVT training.

#### **May 07:**

**Meeting of National Contact Points, Warsaw:** 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the National Contact Points and National Coordinators.

**Aim:** Ensuring stable cooperation between the National Contact Points. Disseminating programmes and projects in the region addressing the topic of child trafficking. Discussing new trends and new information on children trafficked and unaccompanied children in the region.

**Outcome:** Strengthening of the NCP network. Discussions focused on how to establish the NCP nationally in order to facilitate national coordination of efforts relating to child trafficking. Topic of safe return was brought up again and the prospect of setting regional standards for how such a return can be organised.

**Training Seminar BSR CACVT, Tallinn:** 4<sup>th</sup> Training Seminar in the WGCC Programme: Baltic Sea Region Comprehensive Assistance to Children Victims of Trafficking. Training 55 experts from 10 countries in the region on “Networking and family work with children and young persons victims of trafficking”.

**Aim:** Experiential learning on how to assist families in supporting their children.

**Outcome:** Experts are aware of different models of work and different settings assisting families and networks.

**Reference group meeting, Copenhagen:** First meeting in the Reference Group Concerning “Co-operation programme between Nordic Council of Ministers, Northwest-Russia, The three Baltic Countries and Kaliningrad” aimed at disabled children and their families. WGCC is participating in the Reference Group.

**Aim:** Develop guidelines and ensure full transparency and cooperation on all aspects of the programme implemented by the Nordic Cooperation in Disability.

**Outcome:** WGCC member of the steering group, input from the NSH to the WGCC programme on the rights of children in institutions and vice versa.



**Presentation, Helsinki:** Discussing the WGCC work with participants to the SIHLWA expert group meeting.

**Aim:** Sub group on Adolescent Health to be fully aware of the work of the WGCC in order to as appropriate connect to and contribute to the ongoing activities.

**Outcome:** SIHLWA group is aware of WGCC work and will as appropriate connect to the WGCC work.

**Meeting, Tartu, Estonia:** Introducing the Leonardo project on Knowledge Workshops for training of experienced social workers to professionals in Tartu.

**Aim:** Social workers in Tartu to become part of the training using the knowledge workshop's tool.

**Outcome:** Excellent contacts built with social workers working with child protection issues in Tartu, with Tartu University Social Workers' training department and with Tartu Child Support Centre.

**June 07:**

**Conference, Berlin:** European Forum on the Rights of the Child. The first forum meeting discussing the form of future fora and how best to address the issue of cyber enticement of children.

**Aim:** Supporting EU initiatives in the area of ensuring children's rights.

**Outcome:** Draft working plan for the setting up of a more comprehensive and planned future forum

**Expert meeting, Budapest:** Round table meeting organised by Oak Foundation discussing the various initiatives in place in Central and Eastern Europe fighting the trafficking in children.

**Aim:** Coordinating the efforts and looking at joint programmes addressing the topic in a more comprehensive way. Presentation of the WGCC programme as one model of governmental and NGO cooperation with a focus on sustainability.

**Outcome:** Contacts with initiatives in South Eastern Europe. Input to the streamlining of all initiatives to support existing state efforts on protecting children.

**Conference, Visby, Sweden:** Presentation at the "Baltic Sea Convention" on the WGCC work fighting trafficking in children in the region and discussing ways forward.

**Aim:** Awareness raising on the issue and building stronger networks in the region.

**Outcome:** Interest from the representatives of the churches in the region.

## Introduction

The Working Group for Co-operation on Children at Risk, WGCC, was established as a permanent Working Group within the CBSS structure in January 2002. The Children's Unit has been operational since June of the same year. The WGCC has continuously developed activities within its competence and within the terms of reference agreed on at the time of constituting the group<sup>1</sup>. All activities and information focus on children at risk. This broad concept has in the mandate of the WGCC been interpreted so that children at risk are all children whose rights are not adequately respected and where the immediate adult world do not manage to secure the safety and/or the wellbeing of the child or young person. Recognising that the competence of the responsible ministries in the sphere of children at risk is high, the WGCC aims to increase the inter-regional dissemination of best practices in the field of legal, social and psychological support to the group of children. The diverse competencies of the different responsible ministries and the added expertise of government agencies, research institutions and Non-Governmental Organisations, enables the cooperation on children at risk to channel the resources available to areas identified where the cooperation may make a true difference on the ground. The cooperation also plays an important role as an interface between the groups mentioned.

At the meeting in Vilnius in January 2002, the WGCC adopted its terms of reference in which the development of a yearly report was one part. The development and agreement on a priority paper<sup>2</sup> was another and the development of an activity plan for the coming year was the third<sup>3</sup>.

The quality of the lives of boys and girls in the countries in the Baltic Sea Region on the whole is rising. Fewer children grow up in poverty and the level of and access to education is higher. Some children still suffer from abuse and exploitation, be it sexual, physical or psychological. New techniques benefiting children and young persons have also meant new challenges for child protection and assistance to children that have been abused. Violence occurring in Internet related settings be it bullying in communities or outright sexual abuse committed with the aid of the Internet, poses new tasks for professionals and politicians in preventing abuse from occurring and securing the best possible assistance when it has happened. All countries in the Baltic Sea Region face the important and challenging task of ensuring the best possible care and rehabilitation to children that have been sexually abused, physically violated or exploited in any way. Difficult as it is for professionals assisting children, improved sharing of expertise and increased exchange of knowledge means that more children will benefit from adequate assistance. To do this, networks of professionals need to be built and maintained since these are powerful countermeasures when we as a region move towards creating societies where no child is left out. The goal of the cooperation on children at risk is to fully implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child where every boy and every girl has a right to be heard and where every child, no matter what her or his experiences are, has a right to develop in accordance to her or his potential.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.childcentre.info/archive/workinggro/dbaFile11484.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.childcentre.info/archive/workinggro/ifid2552.html>

<sup>3</sup> The plan of activities are published on the web site. The plan for 2007 – 2008 can be accessed at <http://www.childcentre.info/archive/workinggro/2007/dbaFile14580.html>

## **The Working Group for Co-operation on Children at Risk 2006 - 2007<sup>4</sup>.**

Members of the working group for Co-operation on Children at Risk has been:

### **Chair**

#### **Norway**

**Mr Björn Bredeesen**, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Children and Equality.

### **Vice Chair**

#### **Poland**

**Ms Magdalena Wantola Szumera**, Head of Unit, Department of Education. Ministry for Education and Sports. (Until January 2007)

**Ms Joanna Michalak**, Head of Unit, Department of General Education, Special Education and Social Prevention, Ministry of National Education. (From February 2007)

#### **Denmark**

**Ms Lise Færch**, Director of UFC Børn og Familier. (Until December 2006)

**Mr Bertil Mahs** National Board for Specialist Counselling and Social Services. (From January 2007)

#### **Estonia**

**Ms Anniki Tikerpuu**, Adviser, Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Social Affairs.

#### **Finland**

**Ms Anne Hujala**, Senior Adviser, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

#### **Germany**

**Ms Baerbel Hinz**, Senior Principal, Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

#### **Iceland**

**Mr Bragi Gudbrandsson**, General Director, The Government Agency for Child Protection.

#### **Latvia**

(Contact person: **Mr Lauris Neikens**, Ministry of Children and Family Affairs)

#### **Lithuania**

**Ms Audra Mikalauskaite**, Head of Children and Youth Division, Ministry of Social Security and Labour.

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<sup>4</sup> Contact details of the WGCC members can be found at <http://www.childcentre.info/iFID330.html>

**Russian Federation**

**Mr Igor Belyak**, Ministry for Education and Science

**Sweden**

**Ms Agneta Björklund**, Deputy Director, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

## ***Meetings of the WGCC***

The WGCC has had two meetings during the year:

**Copenhagen, October 2006.** The meeting was hosted by the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs and took place at the premises of the ministry. At the meeting the WGCC elaborated on the upcoming Conference on the Rights of Children in Institutions. The programme of the conference was finalised and discussions were held regarding the possible outcome of the conference and the actions that could be the result. The WGCC programme on Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children was also discussed. The Danish delegate to the Expert Group on Human Trafficking under the Task Force Against Organised Crime, Detective Inspector Lars Thorbjørnsen participated in the discussions and also gave the group an overview of the fight against child trafficking in Denmark.

**Lillehammer, Norway, April 2007:** The meeting was hosted by the Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality and took place in the scenic town. The first part of the meeting was a joint meeting of the National Coordinators and the WGCC discussing both the work of the National Coordinators and the activities planned. The National Coordinators gave their input to the WGCC Programme on the Rights of Children in Institutions. The programme was also decided upon by the WGCC taking into considerations the expert meetings held and the outcome from the conference in Stockholm. Mr Eric Backer Røed, senior adviser with the County Governor of Hordaland participated in the discussions on the programme. The WGCC discussed the continued work under the WGCC Programme on Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children. In these discussions the Norwegian participant to the Expert Group on Human Trafficking under the Task Force on Organised Crime, Detective Inspector Geir Svae from KRIPOS participated along with Mr Svante Weyler who made a presentation of his work mapping cases and interviewing children victims of trafficking. Ms Sofia Ekfeldt Nyman briefed the group on the work of the newly formed CBSS Task Force Against Human Trafficking and joint initiatives between the two groups were discussed for further elaboration. The WGCC Plan of Activities for 2007 – 2008 was adopted.

Reports from the meetings of the WGCC and the WGCC Plans of Action are published on the Childcentre web site and are available at <http://childcentre.baltinfo.org/archive/workinggro>

### ***Chairperson's meetings***

To ensure as smooth a transition as possible when a new member to the WGCC is appointed by the responsible national ministry, the chairperson of the WGCC has strived to arrange meetings with the new member to the WGCC preferably in the presence of the old member, the director of the responsible department in the ministry and the WGCC secretariat. Meetings with specific ministries in the member countries are also at times arranged when the chairperson and/or the secretariat for other reasons are visiting the capital of a member country. At times the planning of major events and programmes also calls for bilateral meetings.

**August 2006, Copenhagen:** Meetings with Danish Ministry of Social Affairs.

**February 2007, Berlin:** Meetings with German Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

**March 2007, Warsaw:** Meetings with the Polish Ministry of Education.

**May 2007, Warsaw:** Meetings with the Polish Ministry of Education.

**July 2007, Moscow:** Meetings with the Russian Federal Ministry of Education and Science

### ***Budget***

The Children's Unit is financed by voluntary contributions from the member states. During 2006 all member countries except Russia and Latvia contributed to the budget. The BSR CACVT is realised through the support from the European Commission through Daphne II programme, Save the Children Sweden and the Oak Foundation. The conference on the Rights of Children in Institutions was funded by SIDA Baltic Sea Unit and the Swedish Foreign Ministry as part of the Swedish presidency to the CBSS. The 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of National Contact Points was funded by the SIDA Baltic Sea Unit and the Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality. Contributions from the Norwegian Ministry also made the Expert meeting on Monitoring of Institutions possible, and financed the background report for the expert meeting.

### ***Staff of the Children's Unit***

The present budget allows for only one person to work at the Children's Unit. The difficulty in maintaining a smooth and efficient unit with only one person employed is self evident and the WGCC has continued to discuss how to make room for additional staff. Mr Lars Lööf has during the year worked as Head of the Children's Unit. For four months Ms Ida Ljöfström was assigned as intern to the Children's Unit. Ms Olga Boltenko served as intern to the unit for two months and Ms Alexandra Ronkina made her internship during four months during the year.

### ***Priority Paper***

The Priority Paper for the WGCC was adopted after the Helsinki meeting in September 2002 and was developed and amended in Copenhagen in October 2003. The priority paper is one tool in communicating the mandate of the WGCC to both external stakeholders and other organisations.

For full text version of the priority paper please go to

<http://childcentre.baltinfo.org/archive/workinggro/ifid2552.html>

### ***Activity Plan***

The Activity Plan is decided upon annually and is a tool through which the WGCC may follow up on what has happened and what has not been achieved but was planned to be achieved. The plan also includes references to responsible partners and funding. The activity plan is posted on the Internet.

<http://www.childcentre.info/archive/workinggro/2007/dbaFile14580.html>

## **Evaluating the WGCC activities following the Activity Plan 06 – 07**

At the WGCC meeting in Lillehammer the activities during the year were evaluated using the Activity Plan as a template. The WGCC noted with satisfaction that the activities planned for the year had been implemented. One major exception to this was noted however: The meeting planned in cooperation with the Russian Ministry of Education on Children that commit crimes, has been postponed and is a part of next year's activities. The WGCC finds the Activity Plan a useful tool possible to use in communicating what the WGCC plans to do and also illustrates how the priorities set for the cooperation may be translated into concrete actions.

## **Childcentre web site**

<http://childcentre.info>

The website has during the year seen a continued increase in visitors even if the increase rate has slowed down to 10% on a monthly basis. We now have an average of 800 daily unique visitors to the site, less during summer months, and the WGCC sees the site as a continuously useful instrument to publish valuable information on projects and publications in the region on the topic of children at risk.

The NGOs and other organisations that are registered on the site have been updated during the year, making certain that contact details are still valid. The cooperation with Glykol, the information company that monitored web sites and other sources of information has run until mid May 2007 when the cooperation was terminated. The WGCC felt that the cost of the agreement was too high in relation to the outcome.

The names and contact details of the National Co-ordinators are posted on the site in order for them to be accessible for professionals, organisations and researchers. <http://childcentre.baltinfo.org/nationalco/>.

The secure part of the site, allowing for registered users to post questions or comments that only other registered users can access is reached via a simple log on procedure. The secure part is not used. The WGCC believes that this kind of forum is no longer the preferred way for professionals to interact. Email lists and email contacts are now easier to use and the log on, simple as it is, takes a bit of time. The secure part is still on the site, but its main function has been for some of the National Coordinators to send group mails to all registered users in their country.

The web site is evaluated by the WGCC at each meeting, where the statistics available are analysed and discussed using an updated report describing the statistics and other developments as a background. The part of the site where NGOs, especially local NGOs introduce themselves is one of the most visited parts of the site.

## **National Co-ordinators**

The National Co-ordinators, the NCs, are the backbone in the co-operation on Children at Risk. Each NC is appointed by the ministry responsible for children's issues in the country and is given the authority to publish events, material and also details of NGOs or other organisations. The Childcentre website focuses on publishing material in English, even though the site makes room for publications in the different languages spoken in the cooperation. The NC can in this way serve the professional

community in his or her country also with important publications and materials that would otherwise go unnoticed. Other tasks of the NCs are numerous: They are the first point of contact for the WGCC when organising events, conferences, meetings and expert meetings. They are also the node for the cooperation on the whole and are kept updated on the plans for the cooperation. When the WGCC decides to focus on a topic the NCs are contacted in order to find relevant experts in their country on the specific issue and to prepare for expert participation and to identify research developments in their country. Countries with no appointed NC usually do not participate in expert meetings. A major task for the WGCC during the year has therefore been to support the national ministries in their efforts to identify the most appropriate organisation to carry out this important task. All countries in the cooperation have now identified NCs except for Latvia..

As of July 2007 the appointed National Coordinators are:

**Denmark**

**National Co-ordinator:** Ms Anne Melchior, National Board for Specialist Counseling and Social Service

**Estonia**

**National Co-ordinator:** Ms Ruth Soonets, Tarttu Child Support Centre

**Finland**

**National Co-ordinator:** Mr Heikki Sariola, National League of Child Welfare

**Germany**

**National Co-ordinator:** Ms Sabine Herzig, DJI - Deutsches Jugend Institut.

**Iceland**

**National Co-ordinator:** Mr Bragi Gudbrandsson, The Government Agency for Child Protection.

**Latvia**

**National Co-ordinator:** Not appointed

**Lithuania**

**National Co-ordinator:** Mr Evaldas Karmaza, NGO Child House

**Norway**

**National Co-ordinator:** Mr Svein Mossige, NOVA – Norwegian Social Research.

**Poland**

**National Co-ordinator:** Ms Joanna Michalak, Ministry of National Education (From April 2007)

**Russian Federation**

**National Co-ordinator:** Mr Vassili Yermoloff, Yaroslavl Youth Information Centre

**Sweden**

**National Co-ordinator:** Ms Ingrid Åkerman, National Board of Health and Welfare



## ***Meetings of the National Co-ordinators***

The overarching goal of the co-operation is that professionals, wherever they are in the region, shall have access to the best available knowledge on rehabilitation, research and education on children at risk of sexual abuse, violence and exploitation. The Childcentre web site works as the hub of this co-operation and is fuelled by the participating professional's dedication and willingness to share their respective findings from their fields of expertise.

Personal meetings are needed as an addition to the online activity. Conferences on the issue of children and violence and how to assist them is one way of making networks of professionals continue to function. The offline meetings are a prerequisite for the online activities to develop and flourish. In the budget of the cooperation a sum is set aside to be able to finance a yearly meeting of the group of National Co-ordinators and representatives of the Competence Centres.

The National Coordinators have met twice: One day on their own in Lillehammer before the WGCC meeting there and also participated at the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of National Contact Points and National Coordinators in Warsaw.

## **The WGCC as Associated Expert Group in the Northern Dimension Partnership on Health and Social Well-being**

As of 2005, the WGCC is an Expert Group within the Northern Dimension Partnership on Health and Social Wellbeing (NDPHS). At the recent meeting of the NDPHS CSR it was decided to rename the Expert Group: Associated Expert Group.

The WGCC was represented by the Chair person at the Partnership Annual Conference held in Oslo in December 2006.

In March 2007 the WGCC through the Head of the Children's Unit, chaired the workshop on Children affected by Alcohol Abuse in Families, at the NDPHS conference on Tackling Alcohol Abuse.

In May 2007, the WGCC contributed with a presentation at the SIHLWA (Expert Group on Social Inclusion Healthy Lifestyles and Work Ability) meeting in Helsinki. The presentation was an invitation to the members of the NDPHS that are not members to the CBSS to coordinate, contribute and take stock of the activities the WGCC implements.

The WGCC is represented on the NDPHS web site under the heading Associated Expert Groups.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.ndphs.org/?associated\\_egs](http://www.ndphs.org/?associated_egs)

The chair of the WGCC has sent a letter to the Chair of the NDPHS stating the WGCC's wish to identify which partners to the NDPHS that would want to cooperate with the WGCC in order for the activities to be well coordinated. The WGCC expects to follow up on the letter and invite all NDPHS partners to take active part in the development of plans and activities and in already formulated programmes.

## **Cooperation and Coordination with other organisations**

In accordance with the WGCC priority paper, the WGCC emphasises coordination and practical cooperation with other actors on the national, regional, European and international level. Different organisations have different emphasis in their work and to update the WGCC knowledge on where the other organisations, especially other regional and European organisations put their weight is vital to maintain a cost effective and streamlined operation.

### **The Nordic Council of Ministers**

The Nordic Council of Ministers is an important organisation for the WGCC to cooperate with in all priority areas. During the year, the contacts with the Nordic Council of Ministers have continued and developed. Meetings with the NCM colleagues working on programmes fighting trafficking as well as the advisers continuing the work with the neighbouring countries have been held on two occasions. The Nordic Cooperation on Disability under the Nordic Council of Ministers runs a programme aiming at improving the situation for children with disabilities in institutions in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Kaliningrad region and in North West Russia. The WGCC has had several contacts and meetings with the programme team in order to ensure full transparency in relation to the plans on the rights of children in institutions that the WGCC will now pursue following the November 2006 Conference.

The NCM project on prevention of trafficking of girls into prostitution was introduced to the National Contact Points and the National Coordinators at the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting in Warsaw, giving the NCM opportunities to establish links with ongoing work in the WGCC network.

The Nordic Council of Ministers is an active partner in the SIHLWA expert group and discussions are under way as to how best link to the work the NCM would like to do to the WGCC plans.

### **The Council of Europe**

The Council of Europe Recommendation (2005:5) "The Rights of Children in Institutional Care" is one of the international instruments that the WGCC uses as a basis for the Programme on the Rights of Children in Institutions

Several members of the WGCC are active in Expert Groups also in the Council of Europe, allowing the WGCC to be well informed as to which initiatives that should be linked to and the secretariat to the WGCC is continuously invited to meetings of Council of Europe expert groups on children and families. The WGCC has participated in the regional conferences held promoting the adoption of the Council of Europe Convention on Human Trafficking.

## **EU cooperation**

In February the Head of the Children's Unit visited the European Parliament, Vice President Fratini's Cabinet and the DG JLS in order to give comprehensive information on the work of the WGCC, both in areas relating to trafficking of children and in the other areas of work. The WGCC also presented its activities at the yearly meeting of the CSO and the European Commission in Brussels and visited the newly appointed EC Coordinator for the Rights of the Child. This means that the WGCC can interface with the European Commission initiatives in the area and feed into the European Forum for the Rights of the Child, the first meeting of which was attended by some WGCC members and by the Head of the Children's Unit.

As of February 1<sup>st</sup> 2006, the WGCC implements an EC funded programme: Baltic Sea Region Comprehensive Assistance to Children Victims of Trafficking, the BSR CACVT. The programme is funded by the Daphne II programme, the Oak Foundation and Save the Children Sweden. The BSR CACVT has enabled a training for professionals in the region working to assist children that have been trafficked or are unaccompanied. The programme includes a documentation of cases of trafficking in the region in order to base new practices on the gathered experiences. The participation in the EC programme also opens up for extended networking with NGOs and agencies in Europe working on supporting children exposed to violence.

## **UNICEF**

UNICEF is currently implementing a programme in some of the countries involved in the WGCC Programme on the Rights of Children in institutions. The UNICEF programme focuses on strengthening the capacity of the child protection services in the fight against exclusion and abuse of children. The WGCC keeps the Geneva office of UNICEF, notably its department of Central and Eastern Europe updated on the developments of the WGCC programme in order to make use of UNICEF experiences and vice versa.

## **Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe –**

### **Office of the Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings**

The Head of the Children's Unit paid a visit to the new OSCE special representative, Ms Eva Biaudet and her colleagues in Vienna. The office of the Special Representative was also invited to make a presentation at the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of National Contact Points in Warsaw. The OSCE office now plans to have a regional conference promoting the recommendations taken by the OSCE on the topic of trafficking in human beings and the WGCC expects to contribute to the meeting.

## **NGO cooperation**

One of the most distinct features of the WGCC work is the close cooperation with NGOs. The WGCC has constant working contacts with both big international NGOs and small local organisations. The benefit for the NGOs to use time and energy to co-

operate with the WGCC lies in the possibility of gaining access to representatives from the ministries responsible for children's issues as well as the widened network of NGOs and agencies that is part of the cooperation. Many of the Competence Centres in the cooperation are NGOs and some National Coordinators are based in a NGO.

On a more regular basis, the WGCC is in contact with ECPAT and with Save the Children Alliance. In both of these international children's organisations, the WGCC through the Head of the children's unit is represented as expert in expert groups and reference groups on issues that are close to the work of the WGCC. ECPAT has just finalised the project devising a manual for multi stakeholder training for social workers and police in different countries that come in contact with children that have been trafficked<sup>6</sup> and participation from the side of the WGCC secretariat in the steering group in Save the Children's new project assisting boys and girls without documents in a country other than their own are examples of extended cooperation<sup>7</sup>. The WGCC is also regularly invited to moderate or chair meetings on the topic of online abuse of children.

## **Foundations**

The WGCC has regular contacts and consultations with the World Childhood Foundation, Swedish Children's Welfare Foundation and with the Oak Foundation. The latter funds a part of the BSR CACVT training programme through the NGO Childhouse in Lithuania and is also funding a major training for professionals in several countries in eastern and central Europe on child abuse and neglect. The Oak foundation invited to a roundtable meeting with several different organisations in central and eastern Europe looking at how joint initiatives in the region fighting trafficking may better support the child protection systems in place and vice versa. WGCC was represented at the meeting by the Children's Unit.

## **Activities out of the priorities set for the co-operation**

### ***A: The protection of children from all forms of sexual exploitation, abuse and trafficking***

#### **The Baltic Sea Regional Study on Adolescent Sexuality**

The network of professionals involved in the cooperation discussed at meetings how their combined experiences of both hands on assistance to abused children and research on both extent of abuse and assistance to abused children could be put to use in preventing abuse from occurring in the first place. It has always been seen as a priority for the work that knowledge gained should also mean that fewer children became victimised.

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<sup>6</sup> For the multistakeholder training, please refer to <http://www.ecpat.nl/ariadne/loader.php/en/ecpat/eng/>

<sup>7</sup> For the Save the Children project, please refer to <http://www.utanpapper.nu/en/startpage/>

Dr Svein Mossige of the Norwegian Social Research Institute, NOVA, had in a small survey asked young persons about their attitudes towards child sexual abuse and also put questions to them on male and female tendencies as well as a number of personality traits<sup>8</sup>. He found that there was only a small group of respondents that would even hypothetically consider having sex with a child if they knew that there would be no legal actions taken and that no one would find out. There was also a marginally bigger group of young persons in the study who would consider having sex with a somewhat older child, but still a child under the age of consent. By looking at how these groups of young persons scored on the personality scales and on attitude scales used in the questionnaire, it was possible to see that the small group of young persons that would consider having sex with a child also had other attitudes and traits in common.

In discussing the results from this small group of respondents, 710 individuals, the idea was raised to duplicate the study on a larger scale. The phenomenon that the experts were trying to circle was obviously a low frequency phenomenon but none the less one that did cause a great deal of harm to the child victims. Arguing that with a larger set of respondents we would get more reliable data the cooperation started looking for interested partners in the cooperation on children at risk among the member states within the Council of the Baltic Sea States, CBSS.

Researchers from Estonia, Latvia, Russia, Lithuania, Poland, Norway, Sweden and Iceland attempted, all on their part to secure funding for the national part of the study, and the regional group under the Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk within the CBSS on their part tried to find funding for the regional cooperation needed. At meetings in Vilnius, Oslo, Tartu in Estonia and H or in Sweden the different specific aspects of what should be included in the regional study was elaborated. The governments involved in the cooperation showed a great interest in conducting this kind of research and supported the meetings in order to get the cooperation operational. The Nordic Council of Ministers funded the regional part of the cooperation.

In the end, research teams from six countries conducted the same kind of survey: Norway, Sweden, Russia, Estonia, Lithuania and Poland. All in all some 20 000 young persons around the age of 18 has responded to the questionnaire and it is the joint analysis of parts of the questionnaire and the national comments to these that we present in this volume.”

The full regional report will be launched early in September 2007<sup>9</sup>.

## **Child Pornography on the Internet and dangers to children related to new techniques**

The WGCC has via the Head of Unit kept a strong working relationship with emerging research and practice development regarding children that have been abused or exploited on the Internet. The WGCC focus is to make certain that the clinical impli-

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<sup>8</sup> A summary in English of this study can be found at <http://www.childcentre.info/research/abusedchil/ifid1842.html>

<sup>9</sup> For more on the regional report: <http://www.nova.no/?id=14848>

cations for child practitioners follow the developments of police actions and industry activity. Through cooperation with the Swedish Children's Welfare Foundation, the WGCC organised an expert meeting where international and regional expertise were gathered to discuss clinical experiences and developing methods in place to assist children that have been abused in the context of the Internet. The meeting was held in late May 2006 and during the year the secretariat has cooperated with the Swedish Children's Welfare foundation in finalising the report. The report in English from the meeting is due early August 2007.

The International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, the ICMEC, and the Internet Hotline Association of Europe, the INHOPE, have jointly organised focus group meetings in countries in Europe where there has up to date been little activity regarding the fight against abusive and illegal images on the Internet and relating to safety for children on the Internet. In October the Children's Unit was invited to present the work of the WGCC on victim support and how the Internet may pose risks to children. The upcoming publication of the expert meeting presentation was promoted.

## ***B: Unaccompanied and trafficked children.***

The programme on unaccompanied and trafficked children includes all the eleven member countries to the CBSS. Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova have from the start been invited to participate in the technical implementation and cooperation and have agreed to do so. In July 2007 12 of the 14 countries involved in the cooperation have appointed National Contact Points. Germany and Russia have not. The appointed National Contact Points are published on the Childcentre web site. The plan of action was adopted at the WGCC meeting in May 2004<sup>10</sup>.

## **Baltic Sea Region Comprehensive Assistance to Children Victims of Trafficking: BSR CACVT**

### **Training Programme**

During the year, four out of a total of five of the training seminars in the BSR CACVT training programme have been held. The fifth and last seminar will be organised in Stockholm in September<sup>11</sup>.

### ***Participating experts to the BSR CACVT***

A total of 54 experts from 10 different countries have participated in the training. The steering group has consisted of representatives from the coordinating organisations in each country and bears the responsibility for looking at how to formulate the goals of the training, which trainers to invite and how to manage the flow between the regional training and the national follow up activities. The names and short CVs of the participating experts have been shared with the National Contact Points, the National Coordinators, the WGCC and the Task Force on Organised Crime: Expert Group on Human Trafficking.

The number of trained experts by country:

Belarus: 3  
Denmark: 2  
Estonia: 5  
Latvia: 5  
Lithuania: 5  
Moldova: 3  
Poland: 4  
Russia: 8  
Sweden: 7  
Ukraine: 10  
CBSS: 1

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<sup>10</sup> The plan of action can be accessed at <http://www.childcentre.info/projects/traffickin/dbaFile11217.html>

<sup>11</sup> For a full description of the training programme, please go to <http://www.childcentre.info/projects/traffickin/dbaFile13240.html>

## *International seminar 1: Vilnius, 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2006<sup>12</sup>*

### **Protective care of children and young persons that have been trafficked**

The protection issues to consider differ somewhat when we consider protection in the country of origin or in the host country. It also differs from one country to another. From the research and mapping done in the region, it seems that victims of trafficking fear what will happen to them when they return to their country of origin, but that the security issues are not that present in their minds when they are still in the host country.

In many countries there is legislation in place when a child leads a life endangering his or her own well-being. Children engaged in selling sex would in most countries be considered leading such a destructive life and would therefore be assisted or even forcibly assisted in changing their lifestyle. However, in most countries this protective legislation is not applied for citizens from another country. In cases of trafficking there is in many countries now a period of reflection for the victim. A period s/he is expected to use in considering the alternatives s/he has. For young persons there should be a possibility to use this period to mobilise the young person's resources to change or find alternatives to the life of exploitation s/he is engaged in. This would demand the different child protection systems in the countries to consider the resources in place for a child to be, for a short period of time, put in forced care against his/her will? How is this applied? If a child is under non-consensual care, what are the restrictions on such care in the different countries? These problems were the focus of the first international training event.

## *International Seminar 2: Warsaw, 9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> of November 2006*

### **Psychological support to trafficked young persons**

How does exploitation affect the young person? Overall, the knowledge on how children are affected psychologically by exploitation is limited. Some experience exists but this is built on few cases and the knowledge has not been systematically organised nor is it in a form that can be communicated. The lack of knowledge in this field must not lead into denying young persons access to the best possible psychological care.

Is it possible to manage and reprocess old traumas, like childhood sexual abuse? Is it feasible to heal family traumas, old wounds in the family of origin that in some sense is awakened in the young person and sometimes acted out in the exploitation process? Proper and thorough assessment of the child of the family and of the history of the young person is vital. The psychologist or the social worker need to be well acquainted with how to develop contact in a setting that would enable the child to feel more at ease. The training in this needs to incorporate also how psychologists and social workers may cooperate in the work assisting children and another part of the training needs to deal with the first contact between the authorities and the trafficked child. Often the police are the first point of contact for the child so contact building with the police is vital. Police regularly complains about the fact that it is so difficult

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<sup>12</sup> All programmes, reports and tools from the trainings are published at <http://www.childcentre.info/projects/traffickin/bsrcacvt/>



to get in contact with social workers in the acute phase when assistance and secure housing is desperately needed. Authorities need to respect the work flow of other involved professionals and define the process enabling them to cooperate. Psychological support, in the case of assisting children and young persons victims of trafficking means psychologists participating in the first contact with acute assistance and the psychologist also being part of the deliberations of protective care for the affected child. Finally, in these cases the fact that counselling is given in the host country, needs to be conveyed to the care workers continuing to work to assist the child in the home country.

### ***International seminar 3: St Petersburg, 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> of February 2007***

#### **Children's participation in shaping their own healing context**

This seminar was a special training devoted to the development of techniques and methods inviting the young person her/himself to participate in the shaping of how s/he is assisted. The article 12 in the Convention on the rights of the child clearly and unambiguously states the fact that children should be made partners in all aspects of decision making that affects them. The assistance measures are based on decisions that the child should be made a party to. This however, requires innovative thinking in order for the professional to be able to convey to the child his/her assessments and recommendations. The inclusion of the young person in this also means that professionals may need to rethink their treatment strategies.

The training consisted of training in

- Peer group support
- Encouraging the agency of the young person
- Outlining possibilities in cooperation with the young person
- Defining the space for assistance
- Developing techniques to involve young persons instead of advising them what to do

### ***International seminar 4: Tallinn, 24<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> of May 2007***

#### **Networking and family work with children and young persons victims of trafficking.**

The importance of the family in supporting a young person can never be overestimated and care workers need to develop their expertise in how to create a healing context that works towards including the family in all forms of assistance. The network of relatives, neighbours, friends and other people in the young person's life may also be used as a resource when it comes to assistance. Some issues that will be important to elaborate in this training are:

- Finding the family
- Mobilising the family
- Adapting family therapy techniques
- Using the family as a resource
- Assessment of the family's situation
- Identifying the social network

- Enabling the dynamics of the social network to work to assist the young person
- Building of alternative ways of support

### ***National Follow up***

The teams from the different countries participating in the training have all in different ways organised national follow up meetings in which the content of the training have been disseminated to stakeholders in the different countries. The activities have been organised as one day seminars discussing how the specific country may better identify and assist children that may be victims of trafficking and how the national resources may best be put to use.

### **BSR CACVT Mapping project<sup>13</sup>**

The Daphne funding from the EU has enabled the WGCC to commission Mr Svante Weyler to undertake a study of cases of trafficking of young persons in the region. The study runs for 12 months from the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2006 and is intended to look at what assistance the young persons victims of trafficking have been offered and if the assistance was adequate as perceived by the affected young person. Mr Weyler has interviewed former victims of trafficking and experts in the region. The report from the mapping is expected to be published in early 2008.

### **4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of National Contact Points<sup>14</sup>**

The 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of National Contact Points on Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children in the Baltic Sea Region was organised by the WGCC and the Polish Ministry of Interior and Administration in Warsaw on May the 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>. The meeting was made possible through the support from the SIDA Baltic Sea Unit. The meeting gathered 44 National Contact Points, National Coordinators and experts from 12 countries in the region plus experts from international organisations. The below excerpt from the report from the meeting sums up the discussions held during day 1:

#### ***Summing up of discussions in the groups.***

#### ***Lars Lööf, Head of the Childrens' Unit, CBSS Secretariat:***

One of the issues we identified yesterday was the need to work on more effective means of dissemination of information. To give you an example, we are getting constant calls for more training or knowledge resources, even though we know that there is already a lot of info about these issues out there.

*Dissemination difficulties.* So, I think the problem lies into connecting the right people, because by now most of the countries already have well trained people. It would be logical then to assemble teams of national experts available for training and advice inside the country. As national contact points, you will have the list of all 55 experts

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<sup>13</sup> For a full description of the mapping project:

[http://www.childcentre.info/projects/traffickin/wgcc\\_programme/copyofdbaFile13837.html](http://www.childcentre.info/projects/traffickin/wgcc_programme/copyofdbaFile13837.html)

<sup>14</sup> The full report from the 4th meeting is published at:

<http://www.childcentre.info/contactpoints/ncpmeetings/dbaFile14814.html>

trained and contact details of those experts who are from your countries. They should definitely be used as a resource on a national level. How they should be used – that is another question to be discussed in more detail. Some of the discussions highlighted the fact that national contact points are not used to their full potential within countries. We should recognize the fact that it is important for national contact points to receive all available information about what happens to unaccompanied children from their country. Even if no names are available, it is still useful to relay general information to appropriate representative.

I should also touch on the issue of disseminating national activities. In many countries national contact points are vital nodes of calling meetings and summing up information as well as looking up at the needs expressed by different actors.

*Child Friendly Witness Procedures.* We also discussed yesterday child-friendly witness procedures applied in relation to children that commit crimes. What do we mean by child-friendly witness procedures? These procedures should be used not only for children who testify in cases as victims or witnesses, but also for children who committed a crime. National contact points certainly have a lot of expertise in this area. Of course, national contexts are very different when it comes to such procedure, but there is a certain overlap of provisions and this overlap should be analyzed and articulated.

A further point was raised about the need to train judges and prosecutors about these procedures.

*Returning children to country of origin.* Another important issue we touched upon is the return of children to their home country. There is an inherent dilemma involved in every such case: on one hand, we should assess the risk of returning a child, consider rehabilitation process (s)he will undergo, decide whether rehabilitation should be completed *before* a child returns, and, on the other hand, we are tempted to facilitate a speedy return, ensuring that a child receives the attention (s)he deserves in his/her own native environment. This issue has been discussed at the 2004 expert meeting in Helsinki, but it needs to be discussed further. Of course, some groundwork in this area has already been done by the UNICEF, who published the guidelines on safe return. Separated Children in Europe programme has also published a guideline for safe return of children. So, if we will start addressing this issue forcefully, we will not be starting from scratch. Yet, despite all this preliminary work there is still a need to discuss the issue in depth and consider thoroughly its ramifications.

*Children trafficked for exploitation in criminality.* We came to the conclusion that more efforts are required to identify children victims of exploitation in criminal activities early on, before they end up detained at the police station. The issue of non-sentencing clause was raised from the floor. The clause stipulates that children who commit crimes when being a victim of trafficking should not be criminally prosecuted. This provision has been established in a number of international conventions.

We also mentioned the issue of social workers – how their work could be improved. A valid point was raised that we need more contacts between police working with youth criminality and police fighting human trafficking. Several countries have reported that they are looking into ways of improving support mechanisms for families

at risk. Efforts in this area should focus on preventive work with families and support to them in preventing the child from returning to criminality.

## **CBSS Task Force Against Trafficking in Human Beings, TFTHB**

One of the priorities of the Swedish presidency to the CBSS was to successfully integrate the Nordic Baltic Task Force Against Trafficking in Human Beings in the CBSS activities, widening the circle of countries cooperating in the Task Force with Germany, Poland and Russia. During the year Sweden has seconded a Senior Adviser to the secretariat to function as secretary to the Task Force during the constitution phase. The Children's Unit has supported the Task Force whenever possible, sharing contacts and strategies used with the secretariat and with the Task Force's chair. The Head of Children's Unit and the CBSS Task Force had joint meetings in Brussels, introducing both the work of the WGCC and the plans of the new Task Force to representatives of Commissioner Fratini's cabinet and to other officials in the EU Commission. The CBSS TFTHB presented their plans at the Lillehammer WGCC meeting and at the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of National Contact Points in Warsaw. The two groups have plans to integrate some of their respective work in order to make full use of their respective potential. The CBSS TFTHB has been invited to take part in the evaluation meeting when the lessons learned from the BSR CACVT programme will be summarised.

### ***C: Street children and children without a family***

During this year there have been no activities specifically linked to children in the street.

### ***D: The rights of children in institutions and in other forms of protection.***

## **Conference: "The Rights of Children in Institutions in the Region of the Baltic Sea States - Improving Child Participation, Monitoring and Post Placement Assistance"<sup>15</sup>**

The conference was held on November 14 – 15 in Stockholm and gathered 48 representatives from 14 countries. All member states were represented except Germany. The meeting resulted in a list of suggested action points that the WGCC was encouraged to develop and make reality of. The Suggested Actions have been elaborated by the WGCC at the meeting in Lillehammer and will be the basis for the implementation of the WGCC Programme on the Rights of Children in Institutions. The major parts of the programme as agreed by the WGCC in Lillehammer will be:

### **1. Support to young persons leaving institutions:**

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<sup>15</sup> The full report from the meeting, or parts thereof may be accessed at <http://www.childcentre.info/projects/institutions/dbaFile14074.html>

## **Suggestions for Action**

All countries in the region run different programmes and support measures assisting young persons leaving care. There is a need for development of networks where NGOs, state agencies, local and national authorities and other actors may share programme design, results and best practices in the field of support to young persons leaving care.

- The WGCC is therefore suggested to
  - a. commission a mapping of programmes in the region to create a foundation for exchange and development of assistance measures in the field. The mapping should focus on including all actors regardless of their status, i.e. both state agencies and local county council authorities and bodies and NGOs, local and international.

## **2. Developing the monitoring of institutions to include the Council of Europe Recommendation (2005)<sup>5</sup> and other international recommendations, ensuring also that children are heard in the development of the monitoring of institutions.**

## **Suggestions for Action**

Throughout the region, countries struggle to find the most appropriate way of monitoring care to respond to the responsibility of caring for children in out-of-home placement.

- The WGCC is suggested to use the network of experts in the region to
  - a. develop a plan for a training, through which monitoring skills should be developed. The plan will include specific provisions on how children themselves should be included and their rights respected
  - b. implement a pilot training, using the developed plan, including teams of monitoring staff from countries in the region.

## ***E: Young offenders and self-destructive behaviour of children.***

An expert meeting on this priority was planned for the year, but has not been possible to organise due to all the commitments the WGCC had taken on. The meeting will take place in the autumn of 2007.

## **Children at Risk within the CBSS structure**

The Children's Unit is one of three separate units within the secretariat of the CBSS. The Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk, the WGCC, is in the structure of the CBSS alongside of the other WGs and the annual report is submitted to the Committee of Senior Officials, CSO. The work of the WGCC has been duly recognised by the ministers of foreign affairs at their meeting in Malmö in June. The WGCC has on several occasions been invited to present its work to the CSO and has also on one occasion made a comprehensive presentation of the work and plans for the future.

The WGCC looks forward to the increasing flow of information between the different regional bodies within the CBSS structure and outside of it.

## Participation of the WGCC in other major events

(For events organised by the WGCC, please refer to page 5).

### 2006

**21 – 22 September, Riga:** Council of Europe regional conference on Trafficking in Human Beings.

**2 October, Stockholm:** Meeting with Swedish group on unaccompanied and trafficked children. Representatives from the MFA, Save the Children, Board of Health and Social Welfare, Stockholm city council and UNICEF Sweden.

**6 October, Stockholm:** Presentation of the work of the WGCC regarding fighting trafficking of children, at the NGO Forum

**11 – 13 October, Salzburg, Austria:** Presentation of the work of the WGCC at the Central and Eastern European Forum on Combating Internet Related Crimes Against Children.

**1 December, Vilnius:** 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Expert Group “Social Inclusion, Healthy Lifestyles and Work Ability”, SIHLWA.

**8 December, Copenhagen:** Meeting with Kristian Birk, Maria Pia De Palo, Carita Peltonen and Ane Kofod Pedersen of the Nordic Council of Ministers discussing the work on trafficking of children and coordination of efforts between the organisations

**8 January, Stockholm:** Meeting with the reference group on Online Victimization of Children.

**11 January, Stockholm:** Meeting with Inge Ovesen Director of the Nordic Cooperation on Disability and Mr Björn Bredesen, Chairperson of the WGCC. Discussing co-operation in the area of the rights of children in institutions

**17 January, Vienna:** Meeting with Ms Eva Biaudet, Special Representative and Coordinator and Ms Vera Gracheva Senior Advisor to the Office of the Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.

**1 – 3 March, Valencia, Spain:** Invited special participant to the Queen Sofia Foundation 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. “A world without Violence”

**26 March, Stockholm:** Meeting with seven representatives from NGO Stellit and from City Shelter Fedor from St Petersburg.

**11 May, Vilnius:** Presentation on regional cooperation at NGO Childhouse 5 year anniversary