

Young Runaways and Missing Children in Europe: *Towards More Effective Cross-border Cooperation*



Wednesday 2nd October 2013

NH Hotel Grand Sablon
Brussels



Young Runaways and Missing Children in Europe: Towards More Effective Cross-border Cooperation

Overview

An estimated one million children go missing every year within the European Union. Runaways or criminal/parental abductions often become a European matter due to cross-border disappearances. To tackle this issue, it is vital that Member States increase their cooperation through effective and innovative information sharing. The Treaty of Lisbon explicitly requires the EU to promote the protection of the rights of the child and this also implies continuous improvement of the EU framework for dealing with young runaways and missing children.

Some cases of disappearances, such as runaways from home or from institutional care may be anticipated through the identification of root causes and improved inter-agency cooperation. Police services, care agencies, local authorities as well as justice professionals all have an important role to play in preventing and tackling national and international young runaways. Although some good progress has been made, there is more work to be done, in particular regarding data collection on missing children and young runaways. Because of major variations in practice at local, national and European levels, it is indeed difficult to collect accurate data in the field.

This timely international symposium provides an invaluable opportunity to discuss how to tackle the problem of young runaways and missing children in Europe. The symposium will examine how to improve child protection across the EU and explore innovative methods of collaboration between Member States.

Public Policy Exchange welcomes the participation of all key partners, responsible authorities and stakeholders. The symposium will support the exchange of ideas and encourage delegates to engage in thought-provoking topical debate.

“Runaways are a very vulnerable group of increasingly younger children, who mostly run away from situations of conflict or abuse, often putting themselves in even more danger while being on the run. Estimates suggest that 25 % of runaways are liable to run into high-risk situations while running away. Moreover, children whose disappearance is not reported, and who therefore do not appear in statistics, may be those who are most at risk.”

- Sir Francis Jacobs, President Missing Children Europe, May 2011

“Social media and the internet are playing an increasingly important role, a topic discussed this morning as well. We all know that it is not always easy for children to pick up the telephone and talk to a complete stranger about sensitive issues. That is where an extension of the hotline service into the online world can be useful. It is yet another tool that can help us to reach children in distress.”

- Vice-President Viviane Reding, EU Justice Commissioner, June 2013

Venue and Accommodation

**NH Hotel Grand Sablon,
Rue Bodembroek 2/4. B-1000 Brussels
Belgium**

Through our partnership with the NH Hotel Grand Sablon we are pleased to be able to offer our delegates specially negotiated accommodation rates. These discounted room rates are subject to availability and are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.



Why Attend?

- ✓ **Discuss current policy frameworks for dealing with young runaways and missing children in Europe**
- ✓ **Examine innovative projects in providing EU citizens with more knowledge of child rights and protection**
- ✓ **Explore new solutions for cooperation across Europe at local, national and European levels**
- ✓ **Analyse the role of stakeholders in implementing EU decisions and projects for missing children**

Who Should Attend?

- Looked After/Children in Care Teams
- Social Workers and Social Services Officers
- Child Protection Officers
- Adoption and Fostering Agencies
- Local Authorities and Councillors
- Independent Reviewing Officers
- Local Safeguarding Children's Boards
- Safeguarding Teams
- Corporate Parenting Boards
- Central Government Departments and Agencies
- Youth Workers and Youth Offending Teams
- Youth Inclusion Teams
- Mental Health Practitioners
- Community Mental Health Teams
- Commissioning Managers
- School Nurses and Health Visitors
- Directors of Children's Services
- Family Services Officers
- Family and Systemic Psychotherapists
- Family Information Service Workers
- Family Intervention Project Workers
- Family Nurse Partnership Practitioners
- Family Pathfinder Workers
- Family Support and Outreach Teams
- Schools and Children's Trusts
- Early Years Practitioners
- General Practitioners
- Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinators
- Sexual Health Strategy Co-ordinators
- Local, Regional and National Health Services
- Health Treatment/Advisory Services
- Domestic Violence Co-ordinators
- Victim Support Representatives
- Teachers and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators
- Counselling Services
- Psychotherapists
- Health Promotion Advisers
- Child and Educational Psychologists
- Drug and Alcohol Action Teams
- Immigration and Border Control Teams
- Human Trafficking Prevention Teams
- Drug and Alcohol Action Teams
- Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinators
- Community Safety Teams
- Internet Safety Teams
- Child Safety Online Teams
- Police and Fire Service
- Probation Service
- Victim Support Teams
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Housing Officers
- Third Sector Representatives
- Academics and Researchers

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Programme

- 09:15** Registration and Morning Refreshments
- 10:00** Chair's Welcome and Opening Remarks
- 10:10** **Missing Children and Young Runaways in Europe – Assessing the EU Framework for Child Protection**
- Addressing Child Disappearances in a European Context: Transnational Abduction, Runaways and Sexual Exploitation
 - The Need To Distinguish Runaways From All Missing Children Cases In Data Collection Systems
 - Exploring EU Capacity To Support Child Protection Systems
 - Recommendations and Future Actions
- 10:40** **First Round of Discussions**
- 11:10** Morning Coffee Break
- 11:30** **National and International Young Runaways – Developing the Child's Perspective**
- Focusing On The Child's Right In Case of Placement and Judicial Decision
 - Discussing The Use Of Efficient Children's Helpline Across Member States
 - Improving The Gatekeeping Function Of Child Protection Systems
 - Exchange of Best Practices Across Member States
- 12:00** **Second Round of Discussions**
- 12:30** Networking Lunch
- 13:30** **Consolidating Inter-Agency Cooperation – Setting an Overarching Vision for EU Member States**
- Coordinating The Role Of Judges, Cares and Police Services
 - Runaways from Care: The Caretakers Role and Point of View
 - Alternative Care Approaches for Runaway Children
 - Recommendations for Future Policy Developments
- 14:00** **Third Round of Discussions**
- 14:30** Afternoon Coffee Break
- 14:50** **Targeting Prevention – Identifying the Root Causes**
- Prioritising Repeat Runaways
 - Identifying Root Causes For Runaways And Discussing New Preventive Systems
 - Supporting Families And Home-Visit Systems
 - Recommendations For Future Actions
- 15:20** **Fourth Round of Discussions**
- 15:50** Chair's Summary and Closing Comments
- 16:00** Networking Reception
- 16:30** Close

Please note that the programme is subject to change without notice

Event Details

- Date:** Wednesday 2nd October 2013
Time: 10:00am – 4:30pm
Venue: NH Hotel Grand Sablon, Brussels



Speakers Include

- ✓ **Margaret Tuite**, Coordinator for the Rights of Children, DG Justice, European Commission (confirmed)
- ✓ **Delphine Moralis**, Secretary General, Missing Children Europe (confirmed)

Forthcoming Events

Young People and Sexual Health: Reducing Risky Behaviour through Education and Engagement

4th September 2013

Eliminating Domestic Violence in Europe: Implementing Strategies for Protection and Prevention

17th September 2013

The EU Drugs Strategy 2013-2020: Combating Illicit Trafficking and Substance Misuse

18th September 2013

Supporting Inclusive Entrepreneurship in Europe: Creating Sustainable Employment and Growth

24th September 2013

A European Strategy for Gender Equality: Tackling Discrimination in the Workplace and Beyond

9th October 2013

Plugging the Sustainability Gap: Boosting the European Electric Vehicle Market

29th October 2013

Marketing and Exhibition Opportunities

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For further information please contact:

Parvin Madahar on **+44 (0) 20 3137 8630**

or email parvin.madahar@publicpolicyexchange.co.uk

Enquiries: 0845 606 1535

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