



European conference: “Stepping up progress in combating violence against children”

Venue: Ankara, Turkey
27-28 November 2012

CONCEPT NOTE

Background:

As the UN Study on Violence against Children highlighted, no violence against children is justifiable and all violence against children can be prevented. The recommendations of the UN Study are anchored in a strong human rights normative foundation, provided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols and other international instruments on children’s rights. The UN Global Study on Violence against Children recommends all states to develop a holistic national framework to prevent and to respond to violence against children. It is the mandate of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General on Violence against Children, Ms Marta Santos Pais, to mobilise action and political support to maintain momentum around this agenda and generate renewed concern at the harmful effects of violence on children; to promote behavioural and social change, and to achieve effective progress.

With the support of many actors - including UNICEF and the Council of Europe - countries in the European region have continued to improve systemic responses to the issue of violence against children through reforms of their child protection systems. The 2009 Council of Europe Policy Guidelines on Integrated National Strategies for the Protection of Children from Violence¹ provide guidance on how to implement the UN Study recommendations through systemic reform. Acknowledging the multidimensional nature of this violence, the Guidelines promote an integrated approach capable of addressing a range of factors: political, socio-economic, legal, cultural,

¹ Adopted as a Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)10

psychological, behavioural, etc., conducive to or nourishing violent behaviours. Since their adoption, the Guidelines have been used to encourage states to develop national strategies and action plans. The information available reveals the importance of stepping up the process of implementation and concretising it further through more results-oriented actions and sustainable approaches. A progress report, prepared by the UN SG Representative on Violence against Children on the implementation of the UN SG Study Recommendations, is to be presented at the General Assembly in October 2012. The Turkish Government is committed to the implementation of both the UN Study recommendations as well as the Council of Europe Policy Guidelines.

Since the publication of the UN Study, significant steps towards protecting children and preventing all forms of violence against children have been taken in Turkey. The new dynamic structure of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies which was established in 2011 and mandated to promote the best interests of the child, has been particularly instrumental in providing its support in the process of developing an integrated national action plan for the protection of children from violence. All partners involved in supporting this development are currently being consulted on the action plan to prevent violence against children. The conference will provide an opportunity to evaluate the opinions and suggestions concerning the action plan.

Against this background, the Government of Turkey, in partnership with the Council of Europe and UNICEF, and in collaboration with the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Violence against Children (UN SRSG VAC), is convening a conference on 27-28 November 2012 in Ankara, Turkey.

Conference objectives:

The conference will pursue the overall aim of exchanging European experiences in implementing integrated national strategies and addressing gaps in accountability and responsiveness to safeguard children's rights and eliminate violence against children.

More specifically, the conference will pursue the following objectives :

- **Stock-taking and next steps within the context of the mandate of the UN SRSG VAC:** starting with an analysis of the results at European level of the SRSG's Global Progress Study, participants will be encouraged to make suggestions for action within the strategic priorities outlined in the report presented by the SRSG to the UNGA in October 2012
- **National action plans and promising practices:** participants will be invited to share their experiences in the process leading to the development of national action plans, to identify challenges and make suggestions for concrete action in the framework of the Council of Europe strategy on the Rights of the Child² for the period 2012-2015

² Adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers on 15 February 2012

- **Knowledge-sharing & networking:** participants will be invited to exchange experiences in preventing and addressing various forms of violence against children through concerted and inter-sectoral action between key stakeholders.

Venue and dates: The conference will be held on 27-28 November 2012 in Ankara, Turkey.

Targeted countries:

- Council of Europe member states, in particular countries under the EU Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy
- Invitations will also be extended by the Council of Europe to other CoE member states, especially those with successful experiences in preventing and addressing violence against children.

Participants:

The conference will bring together participants, including:

- National/regional/local authorities
- Practitioners and academics
- Civil society representatives
- Independent child rights monitoring bodies
- International and European organisations

DRAFT AGENDA

Monday, 26 November 2012

Arrival of participants

Tuesday, 27 November 2012

Opening

Session I

- *International, European and national level responses to violence against children*

Session II

- *Implementation of integrated national strategies on violence against children: success stories and pitfalls*

Session III

- *Preventive, protective and child-friendly services on violence against children - improving services' availability and capacity for children and family support*

Wednesday, 28 November 2012

Session IV

- *Counselling, reporting, complaint and referral systems and the enhancement of inter-sectorial collaboration on violence against children*

Session V

- *Current strategies, trends and challenges in preventing and addressing violence in various settings*

Session VI

- *The role of NGOs and media in building a culture of respect for the rights of the child and strengthening public awareness on violence against children*

Session VII

- *Monitoring - controlling, research, data collection and data sharing systems on violence against children*

Conclusions on main actions for follow-up