



CBSS Expert Group on **Children at Risk**



Ministry of Welfare
Republic of Latvia



C o u n c i l o f t h e BALTIC SEA STATES



News and Views – Edited and published on behalf of CBSS by The Baltic Sea States Support Group

No 2 • April • 1997

Interview

Mr Ole Espersen

CBSS Commissioner on Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, including the Rights of Persons belonging to Minorities

You are concerned with democratic institutions, human rights and minorities. What's in focus right now in these areas?

We are now finishing a survey on "The Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in the CBSS Member States" with re-



gard to the articles on sexual abuse of children, violence in media and children of asylum seekers. We hope that cooperation between the CBSS states regarding especially the first issue may be established.

Furthermore, we are working on the implementation of the survey of November 1996 "Some Aspects of the Rules

Focus on Children's Rights

and Regulations Related to the Rights and Duties of the Personnel of the Armed Services of the CBSS Member States" where we took up two main issues, namely the spokesman system and the access to civilian courts or other civilian authorities such as the Ombudsman. In general, we are for the time being assisting some member countries in their efforts to be further integrated into Europe.

Background

The III Ministerial Session decided to establish a post as CBSS Commissioner on Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, including the Rights of Persons belonging to Minorities. The aim of the Commissioner is to promote and consolidate a democratic development and the protection of human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities in the member states, and to create favourable conditions for applying generally accepted human rights standards.

Interview

The CBSS Member States have decided to start co-operation with multidisciplinary seminars at central level and at local and professional level. What would you consider to be of particular importance?

"It is very exciting that Norway and Sweden are jointly arranging the seminar focusing on key persons at central level. Most important of all is to gain an overall view of the situation of children. We must not forget that, for example, unemployment and the fact that children are put in prison and other institutions are breeding-grounds for problems and exploitation. All sectors of the community must therefore be activated – this applies to those who are responsible for education, family questions and social issues."

The recommended projects involve net-working. What tasks do you consider to be of importance to a multilateral network?

"An excellent solution is to co-operate around the Baltic Sea in networks for, inter alia, exchanging information and knowledge and also making different demands regarding the rights of the child. It is most essential that the networks are formalized in some form. For example, check-points could be established. This might be an effective method of setting measurable goals, periodically checking their fulfilment, and in this way moving the process forward. The work must not end

after the conference. Continuation of the co-operation must be secured if the rights of the child are to be defended."

"Assembling crucial actors in all the Baltic Sea countries who can do this is an extremely important step."

How could Unicef contribute to the future work?

"The Unicef committees can be active as regard disseminating information, research results, etc. about the situation of children and how it can be improved. Unicef's strength is that we are used to working together with different organizations, with governments, with young people and the elderly. We are

used to being at the hub of large networks. Naturally, this strength can be utilized."



Mrs Lisbet Palme, chairman of the Swedish Unicef Committee, welcomes initiatives to combat sexual abuse against children.

Council of the BALTIC SEA STATES



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Children at Risk

The Swedish Special Group for Children at Risk in the Baltic Sea Region

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Ingrid Åkerman, Eva Rimsten and Bo Henrikson.

The Swedish Special Group for Children at Risk in the Baltic Sea Region was established after the Conference in Tallinn on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Baltic Sea Region 1998 by the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs in Sweden. The Working Group's mandate is to serve as information centre for children at risk and to pursue follow-up activities of the Conference in Tallinn within the social area.

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Children at Risk

The Swedish Special Group for Children at Risk in the Baltic Sea Region

"We must share experiences"

The planned Child Centre for Children at Risk in the Baltic Sea Region is now taking shape. On behalf of the eleven countries in the Council of the Baltic Sea States, Bragi Gudbrandson, General Director of the Government of Iceland Agency for Child Protection, elaborates on the benefits of establishing the network.



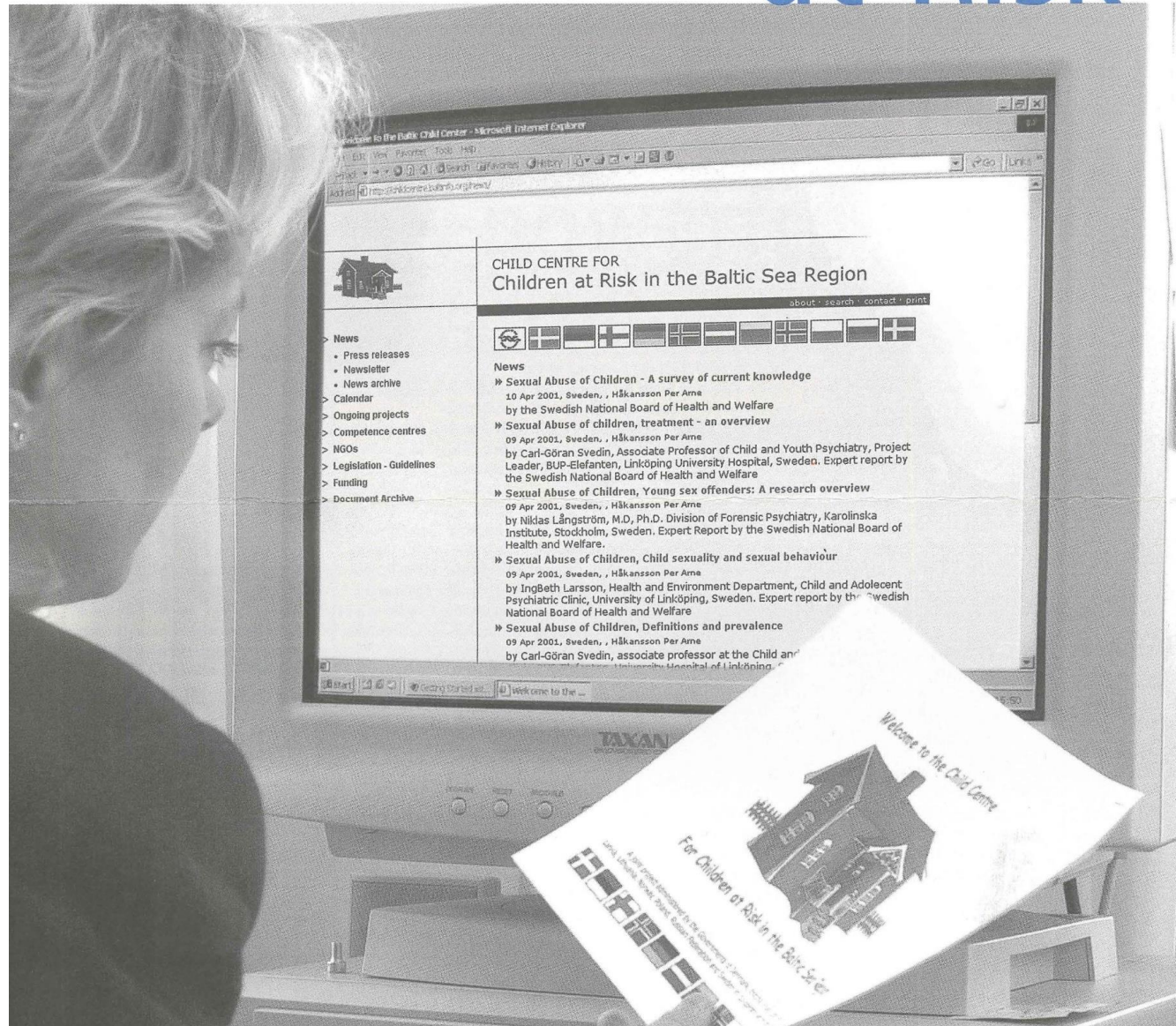
Bragi Gudbrandson



Officials from the eleven Baltic Sea countries met in Stockholm to finalise plans for the Child Centre.

Children at Risk

The Swedish Special Group for Children at Risk in the Baltic Sea Region



A common achievement

All of us who have been involved in establishing the Child Centre felt a certain pride when we recently opened our new site. Not individual pride but a sense of satisfaction for what we had jointly achieved.

As Chairman of the Swedish Special Group, I have, over the past two years, had the honour of closely following the political process which has formed the IT-network.

The initiative grew from our common indignation over the daily abuses committed against the most vulnerable of our citizens, our children. We realised that in order to reach tangible results, we must adopt a joint regional stand. The fact that all eleven Baltic Sea countries had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, formed the backbone for action.

As a diplomat, I am well aware of the difficulties involved in finding solutions that fulfil the needs and requirements of all countries. Yet, I strongly believe to be truly successful, international co-operation is necessary. When information knows no borders, we cannot act alone as nations. When our citizens cross borders to commit crimes against children, we as nations have a duty to prevent offences.

The countries in the region each have their own culture. The levels of economic and social development are not equal. However, we share a common concern for the welfare of all children in our region. That is our common responsibility.

We have spent many hours at conference tables in planning the Child Centre. In retrospect, these have been hours well spent. I am convinced that the strong political support from the highest levels has been the key to our successful network. Without that support, we would not have achieved these results.

While the political support and process has laid the necessary foundation, it has been equally important to shape the Child Centre as a practical tool for all the dedicated professionals and voluntary workers who each day work to improve conditions for children. We have much to learn from each other's experience and knowledge, especially when dealing with fragile and brutally abused children.

Sweden and Norway have taken the lead in establishing the Child Centre. We now enter the next phase when responsibility is transferred to the Secretariat of the Council of the Baltic Sea States. That will ensure the continuing political support for our common cause. Hopefully, we, through our involvement in this process, have to some measure contributed towards ridding our region of the despicable offences against all our children.



Bo Henrikson
Chairman of the Swedish Special Group
for Children at Risk in the Baltic Sea Region

Competence centre in practice



The Centre against abuse in Riga was selected as the Latvian competence centre. This centre was opened in 1996 to support families and children subjected to abuse.

The Latvian Centre against abuse has three main fields of activity. It carries out training and seminars for professionals all across the country. It also has a counselling department that

works with outpatients and, finally, a shelter with 20 places where abused children can stay 30 days or more, either alone or with the non-abuser parent.

"For us, working with abused children has been a question of educating society, explains Agnese Strauta of the Centre.

"When we were still a part of the Soviet Union, this problem simply did not exist. We now have adult women coming to us who never received any help because sexual abuse was not recognised. Therefore it is vitally important to spread information on where to seek help."

The Centre has been organised using a multidisciplinary approach. "One crucial question that we hope the network can assist us with concerns developing registration and documentation. What works and what doesn't work?"

2001 Feb



2002 June



FAMILY SUPPORT IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

LEVEL MEETING
1-4 MAY 2015



Estonian Parliament
2014-2019





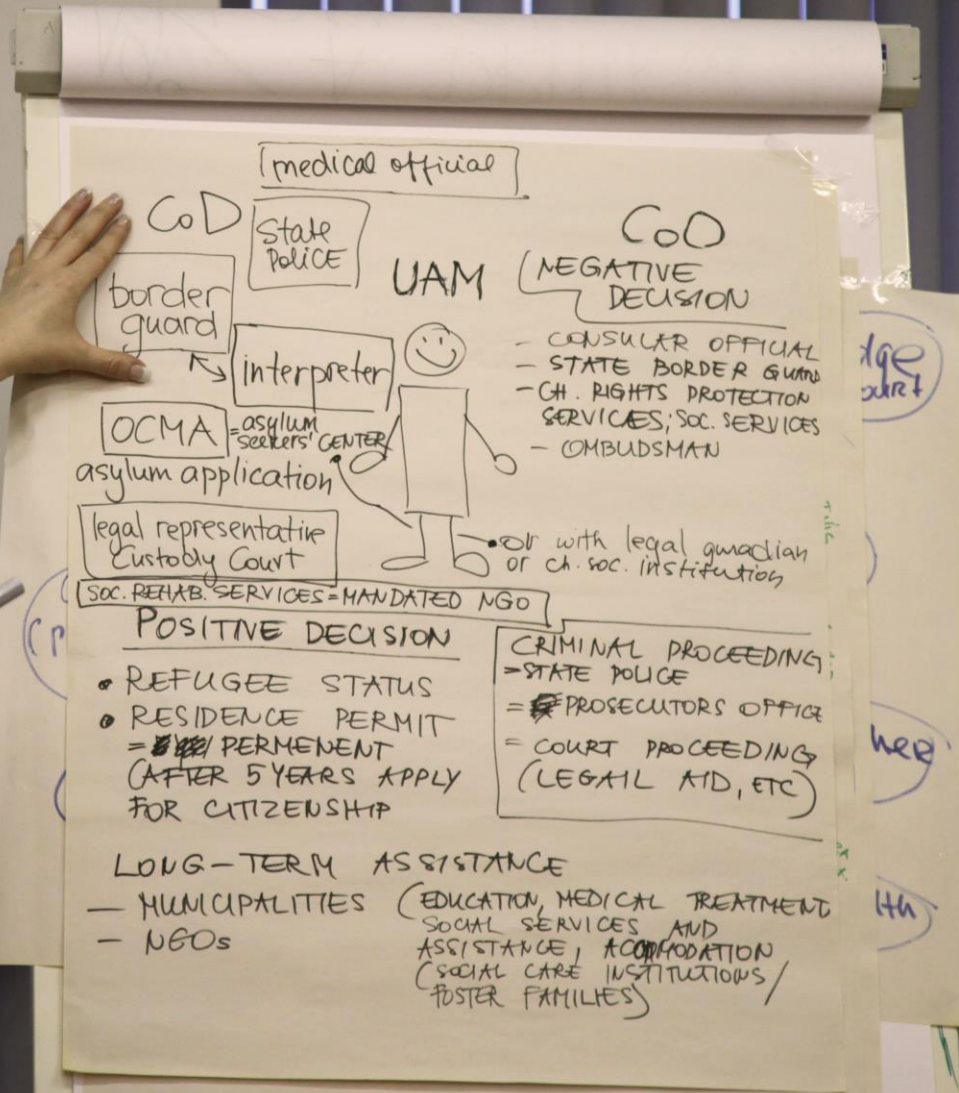
AudTrain Final Conference

Vilnius, Lithuania
7 – 8 June 2017

















Conference on

Good practices in protecting unaccompanied children and finding solutions for the children and their families, societies and states

8-9 December 2016
Stockholm, Sweden



Equality

Democracy

Children





Linking the Legal Framework & the PROMISE Standards

Rebecca O'Donnell Promise Project

Reykjavik Exchange Meeting June 2016



















ischer Ausschuss der Regionen
s | Coiste Eorpach na Réigiún
| Kunitat Ewropew tar-Régiuni
urópsky výbor regiónov











1998 – june 2002





Political consensus on successive changes of laws combined with effective (massive) information campaigns

Where assaults on children are *equalized* with assaults on adults

Universal prevention (ex. Midwives bringing up family violence at pregnancy check-ups).

Family support in the welfare state (parental leave, pre-schools).

A more *profound understanding* of the immediate future risks of child maltreatment



Icelandic
Presidency
2016-2017

Equality

Democracy

Children



Service providers as champions for non- violent childhoods

Expert Meeting
Riga, Latvia, 27-28 February 2018











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