

Raising Awareness of Children as Hidden Victims of Domestic Violence and Abuse in Europe

A Public Policy Exchange Symposium



Tuesday 28th February 2012
The Silken Berlaymont Hotel
Brussels

"An International Symposium for gathering knowledge, discussing the latest challenges and sharing best practices in tackling domestic violence and its impact on children"

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Overview

Children make up one fifth of the population of the EU and as some of the most vulnerable members of society, they require particular protection. In Europe, ten to twenty per cent of children are expected to be victims of violence during their childhood. Every year, hundreds of millions of children are exposed to domestic violence at home, and this has a profound impact on their lives and hopes for the future.

In many cases, when domestic violence occurs within the household children are either present or within earshot. Children are either victims of witnessing violence or are directly affected and abused. They may have their lives disrupted by moving or being separated from parents, may be used by the aggressor to manipulate or gain control over the victims, and they themselves are more likely to be abused.

Although the consequences of violence for children may vary according to its nature and severity, the short and long-term repercussions are in most cases grave and damaging. Whilst the devastating effects of domestic violence on women are well documented, far less is known about the impact on children who witness a person being subjected to violence. Research shows that children who are exposed to violence in the home may suffer a range of severe and lasting effects. Children who are not direct victims have some of the same behavioural and psychological problems as children who are themselves physically abused. Several studies also reveal that children who witness domestic violence are more likely to be affected by violence as adults – either as victims or perpetrators.

Violence in the home is one of the most pervasive human rights challenges of our time. It remains a largely hidden problem that few countries, communities or families openly confront. Seeking to address the problem, the European Commission is in its third phase of the *Daphne Programme* aiming to prevent and combat all forms of violence towards children and women.

This timely International Symposium will analyse the existing challenges in shaping comprehensive and holistic strategies and toolkits for assessing, preventing and protecting cases of violence and abuse towards children in a domestic environment. It will focus on the role of international and regional organisations along with analysing existing consequences and effects on children. Collecting reliable data on this hidden issue poses several challenges and this will be an invaluable opportunity to share best practices.

The Symposium will support the exchange of ideas and encourage delegates to engage in thought-provoking topical debate with local and regional practitioners and policymakers at EU level.

“ With this directive we can make a difference. We are making it easier to prosecute and prevent crimes against children, and we are strengthening the protection of victims. I am confident that this new EU legislation will make a real difference in protecting children from these horrible crimes”

- Cecilia Malmström, European Commissioner responsible for Home Affairs,
27 October 2011

Venue and Accommodation

**The Silken Berlaymont Hotel,
11-19, Boulevard Charlemagne
1000 Brussels - Belgium**

Through our partnership with the Silken Berlaymont Hotel 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?

- ✓ **Explore the current strategy and outlook for tackling domestic violence with children being the direct and indirect victims – including policy developments**
- ✓ **Understand the challenges, typologies of child violence and abuse, possible solutions and prevention scenarios**
- ✓ **Exchange good practices from cross-border projects and analyse comparative knowledge of shaping child-friendly services and environments**
- ✓ **Utilise the added value of major stakeholders, international and regional organisations in delineating holistic strategies for empowering child victims of domestic violence and abuse**

Who Should Attend?

- Women Refugees and Advice Centres
- Domestic Violence Co-ordinators
- Youth Services
- Housing Officers
- Family Courts
- Police Service, Police Authorities and Fire Services
- Probation Officers
- Child Protection Agencies
- Families Services Officers
- Family Advice Centres
- Sure Start, Children's Trusts and Children's Centres
- Health Service Professionals
- Child Welfare Research Centres
- Victim Support Representatives
- Community Cohesion and Development Organisations
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships
- Community Safety Teams
- Neighbourhood Policing Teams
- Anti-Social Behaviour Coordinators
- Drug and Alcohol Action Teams
- Youth Offending Teams
- Community Support Officers
- Children and Youth Services
- Housing Associations
- Social Workers and Social Services Officers
- Local Education Welfare Authorities
- Teachers and Head Teachers
- Criminal Justice Practitioners
- Judges and Magistrates
- Legal Professionals
- Local Authority Officers and Councillors
- Central Government Departments and Agencies
- Equality and Diversity Practitioners
- Academics and Researchers

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Programme

- 09:15** Registration and Morning Refreshments
- 10:00** Chair's Welcome and Opening Remarks
Dr. Christine Harrison, Deputy Director, Centre for Study of Safety and Wellbeing; Chair of School of Health and Social Studies, University of Warwick, UK (confirmed)
- 10:10** **Prevention and Protection of Children as the 'Hidden Victims' of Domestic Violence and Abuse**
- Identification of EU Actions in Key Areas: Legislation, Policies and Programmes
 - The Role of the EU in Implementing Preventive and Protective Measures at Regional and National Levels in Europe
 - Reducing Vulnerability and Increasing Legal Protection for Victims – Challenges and Opportunities
 - Recommendations
- 11:00** **First Round of Discussions**
- 11:30** Morning Coffee Break
- 11:50** **Dealing with the Effects of Domestic Violence and Abuse of Children**
- Medium and Long-Term Consequences of Children Being Direct and Indirect Victims of Violence
 - Psychological Effects of Violence and Abuse – Existing Typologies
 - Prevention Through Better Education and Awareness – Good Practices and Lessons Learned
 - Recommendations for Future Policy Initiatives
- 12:15** **Second Round of Discussions**
- 12:45** Networking Lunch
- 13:10** **Improving Integration and Cooperation between Child Protection Services in Europe**
- Cross-Sectoral Cooperation – Existing Instruments at Local, National and Regional Levels and the Role of Other International Organisations
 - Creating Child-Friendly Services and Improving the Well-Being of Children Through Multi-Level Work
 - Latest Initiatives and Good Practices in Europe
 - Recommendations
- 14:05** **Third Round of Discussions**
- 14:35** Afternoon Coffee Break
- 14:55** **Case Study – Developing Toolkits for Assessments and Holistic Social Services for Children as Victims of Domestic Violence and Abuse**
- Opening Communication Networks with Children and Building Resilience through the Provision of Child-Friendly Services
 - Ensuring the Correct Form of First Response – Through Better Training for Front-Line Practitioners
 - Supporting and Empowering Victims - Safeguarding Those at Higher Risk of Domestic Violence
 - Recommendations for Future Policy Actions
- 15:15** **Fourth Round of Discussions**
- 15:45** Chair's Summary and Closing Comments
- 15:50** Networking Reception

Sponsorship and Exhibition Opportunities

We offer a range of opportunities to enable your organisation to raise its profile and communicate with key decision makers in the public sector.

For further information please contact **Parvin Madahar** on +44 (0) 20 3137 8630 or email parvin.madahar@publicpolicyexchange.co.uk

Event Details

- Date:** Tuesday 28th February 2012
Time: 10:00am – 4:20pm
Venue: The Silken Berlaymont Hotel, Brussels



Speakers include

- ✓ **Ms. Margaret Tuite**, Commission Coordinator for the Rights of the Child, DG Justice, European Commission (confirmed)
- ✓ **Ms Gordana Berjan**, Children's Rights Policies Division, Council of Europe (tbc)
- ✓ **Ms. Sietske Dijkstra**, Psychologist and Lecturer in Domestic Violence and Interagency Work at Avans, University of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands (confirmed)
- ✓ **Senior Representative**, UNICEF Belgium (tbc)

“ We must adapt the justice systems to meet the needs of children, as highlighted by the Commission's Action Plan implementing the Stockholm Programme. The Council of Europe Guidelines on child-friendly justice are a very useful tool which we will continue to promote and draw on in this context. Crime victims, including children, must have the same minimum level of rights, support, protection and access to justice in all EU Member States, and the victims' package will ensure that. The proposal for a Directive establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime aims to make sure that special care is taken of children's specific needs”

- **Viviane Reding**, Vice-President of the European Commission, Responsible for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship,
23 November 2011