

 Republic of Croatia 
Ombudsman for children

ANNUAL UPDATE for ENOC annual meeting, Barcelona 2007.

Briefing on the key activities of the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children since September 2006.

Address: A. Hebranga 4/1
10000 Zagreb
Croatia

Telephone: +385 1 4929 669

Fax: +385 1 4921 277

E-mail: info@dijete.hr

Website: www.dijete.hr

Title of Ombudsperson: Pravobraniteljica za djecu

Name of Ombudsperson: Ms. Mila Jelavić

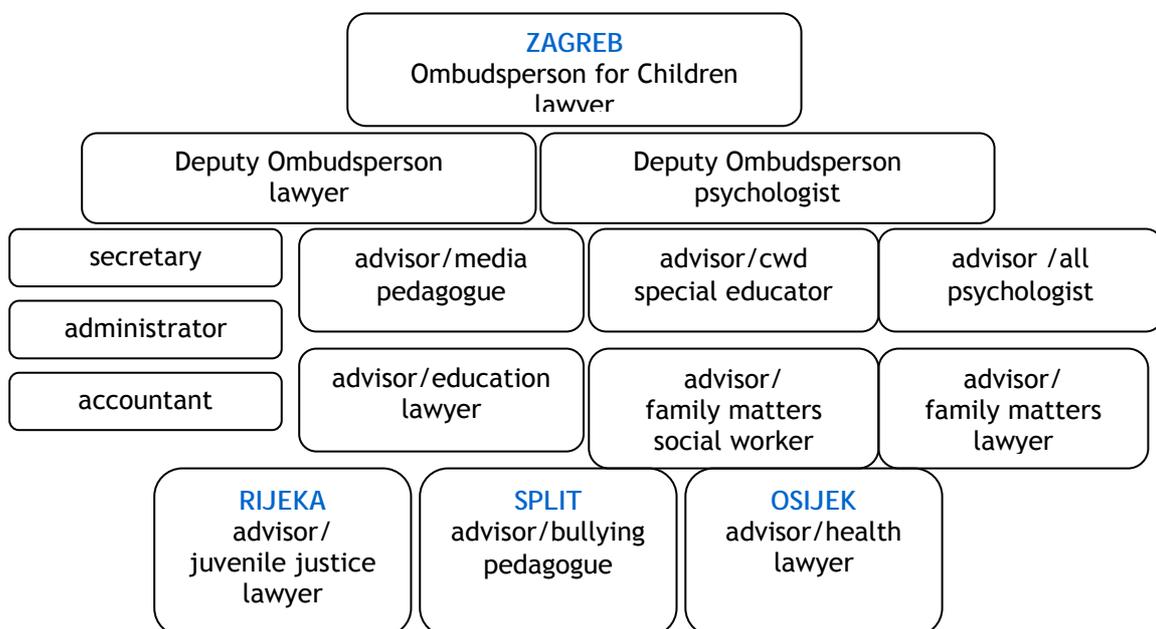
Name of contact person for ENOC: Ms. Tatjana Opačak/Ms. Lora Vidović

OFFICE SIZE AND STRUCTURE

Expert and administrative work for the Ombudsperson for Children has *been performed* in the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children.

The Ombudsperson for Children has two Deputies, and currently in Zagreb (head office) there are 6 advisors, and 3 employees doing technical administration and accounting.

Since the last ENOC annual meeting, the Ombudsperson for Children's Office has expanded regionally *by* opening its offices in three cities in Croatia: Split, Osijek, Rijeka, which employ three advisors - independent officers. Expansion of its offices at the local level represents a respect for the recommendation by the UN Committee for the Rights of the Child (September 2004).



Material resources for the work of the Ombudsperson for Children, are to be insured in the State Budget of the Republic of Croatia. The Offices' budget for 2007 is about 4 110 000 HRK (approximately 560 000 Euro).

COMPLAINTS AND CASEWORK

In 2006 the Office took actions in a total of 636 individual claims of violation of rights (405 were new registered cases and 231 were cases carried over from the preceding report period) and 423 cases concerned general matters.

Since the beginning of 2007 till September, we have already received 560 individual complains and 461 new cases concerning general matters, which are of course, increasing numbers.

The Office is approached every day by people over the phone, e-mail and web site with an average of 20 enquiries per day.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Realising maintenance rights through partnership with the The Croatian Bar Association (already over 500 cases of *pro bono* legal aid)
- We have monitored particular groups of children and relative to them we gave recommendations of measures to develop a complete system for the protection and promotions of children's rights (children with disabilities, children from national minorities groups, children involved in sports, children whose parents are in prison, economically exploited children, children in street situations, children in the media, children in advertising).
- Recommendations of measures to prevent damaging effects that threaten children's interests (for on-call court proceedings and urgent resolution of family law matters, to advance the protection of children in distress matters, concerning the sale of alcohol, for the protection of children against dog attacks, to protect children during teachers' strikes, to realise rights to transport to primary schools, to announce and adjust data about the average needs of the child with regard to the cost of living, to advance the safety of children placed in social welfare homes, with the aim of decreasing the number of infant deaths, sponsorship contracts, related to announcement of pornographic contents, advertising and promotional campaigns at schools and other areas where mostly children stay...)
- Active participation in Parliament committees through objections and recommendations in the decision making process of new legislation relating to children (Criminal law, The law on asylum, The weapons law, Law on legal aid, The law on foreigners, Law on child allowance, Family law, Social welfare law, Foster care placement law, Electronic media law....)

COMMUNICATION, PROMOTION AND PUBLICATION

- The Ombudsperson constantly communicate with children and adults in many different ways. She informs and advises children about the way they can realise or protect their rights and interests and in this regard co-operation with children is extremely important to motivate them to express their opinions and have them taken into concern. This is realised through direct contact or via written material, on our Web site (www.dijete.hr) and through messages sent via media directed to children.
- A lot of work has been done on the issue of protection and promotion of children's right to privacy, particularly in media.
- Office acts pro-actively, preventatively and educationally based on its own initiatives or those of others. Ms. Jelavić and associates realised a series of activities directed to protecting and promoting the rights and well being of children in public. Exposure and participation at various conferences and press releases in magazines covering five main topics: violence, abuse and neglect; family-law protection; children with disabilities; legislature and the law; promoting rights and educating about rights and protection of children. This also covered presentation of the institution of the Ombudsperson for Children.

- We published a booklet containing the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Law on the Ombudsperson for Children in its integral as well as child friendly version. Moreover, we published child friendly Convention printed comparatively in three languages (Croatian and two Roma's languages which are in use in the Republic of Croatia: Romany Chib i Limba D' Bjaš). As a result of round table which has been organized by the Office, we published Almanac "Positive Contents for Children and about Children". As part of our own promotional activities, that is, printing promotional material, we printed several posters displaying the four rights stipulated by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We also printed note books with the same message, wall and pocket calendars, manila folders, carry bags, colouring books, greeting cards and invitations and all displaying children's rights.

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Ms Jelavić and her team have attended various international expert meetings and conferences covering different aspects of protection of children's rights.

Concerning ENOC cooperation, at the beginning of March 2007 we had the honour to host Catalan Deputy Ombudsperson for Children's Rights along with Slovenian Deputy Ombudsperson for Children's Rights.

We were kindly invited by the Ombudsperson for children of the Republic of Poland to visit their Office. Visit was realised in April 2007.

One of our team member took part at the working group for drafting ENOC Statement on Children with disabilities.

Besides, we participate in "The SEE Children's Rights Ombudspersons' Network".