



COPING

The Brussels Consortium Meeting was preceded by a 1-day conference on 6 November 2012 entitled:

***Coping with a Parent in Prison:
An Agenda for Policy Reform***

to launch findings and policy recommendations





Conference at the Musée du Cinquantenaire

Maja Gabelica
Supljika chaired the
event



Baroness Hale gave the official
welcome and opening



Jean Lambert MEP gave the keynote speech

The conference opened with speeches
from the Deputy Ombudsperson for
Children Croatia Maja Gabelica
Supljika, The Right Hon the Baroness
Hale of Richmond, and Jean Lambert
MEP.





Opening speech highlights

The Right Hon the Baroness Hale of Richmond – Supreme Court Judge in the UK:

- *stressed the importance of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in relation to children affected by parental incarceration.*

“All in the criminal justice, social welfare and education fields should recognise the needs of this group of children and make proper provision for them.”

Jean Lambert, MEP for London:

- *highlighted that the number of children affected by parental incarceration exceeds those affected by divorce.*

“I don't think that the children whose parents are in prison are taken into consideration in terms of resources, attitudes and awareness at the EU level.”

- *outlined various channels to raise the profile of this vulnerable group of children such as the European Parliament – in particular through the Alliance for Children.*
- *offered her personal support to work on behalf of these children.*





Plenary Session I

The Conference included presentations from the researchers and NGOs involved in the COPING project.

COPING: A Landmark Study - An Overview

Adele Jones - *University of Huddersfield*



Findings: Children's Mental Health, Well-being and Resilience

Anne H. Berman - *Karolinska Institutet* and Martin Manby - *University of Huddersfield*



Findings - Interventions and Services

Matthias Schuetzwohl - *Technische Universitat Dresden*



COPING : Key Recommendations

Alex Hirschfield - *University of Huddersfield*





Plenary Session II

The Impact of COPING on NGOs

Liliana Foca - *Asociata Alternativa Sociale*



Diane Curry OBE - *Partners of Prisoners and Families Support Group*



Kate Philbrick – *European Network for Children of Imprisoned Parents*



- COPING partner NGOs welcomed the findings as a bedrock of solid research to complement their fieldwork and as a springboard for change to meet the needs of children of prisoners.

Young Person Presentation: How Adults Can Help Me

The highlight of the day was a presentation by young people who presented their recommendations, developed in workshops where they formulated their own needs based on personal experiences of parental incarceration. These workshops were hosted by Bryggan in Sweden and Partners of Prisoners and Families Support Group (POPS) in the UK.





Plenary Session II

Panel Session - Using Research Findings to Develop Policy Change

Chaired by Rachel Brett, a panel of experts concluded the afternoon session by responding to questions and generating new ideas to address the various needs of children of prisoners within their own fields.

Rachel Brett - Quaker United Nations Office - Representative for Human Rights and Refugees

Verena Knaus - Senior Policy Advisor, UNICEF Brussels

Margaret Tuite - European Commission, Child's Rights Coordinator

Stefan Enggist - World Health Organization, Technical Officer - Prisons and Health

Closing Remarks - Liz Ayre, Director of the European Network for Children of Imprisoned Parents





Expert Panel Session

Participants introduced themselves and responded to questions from the audience.

Rachel Brett, Quaker United Nations Office Representative for Human Rights & Refugees:

Promised to lobby for clauses on health relating to prisons and children when the UN Standard Minimum Rules on the Treatment of Prisoners are revised.



Stefan Enggist, World Health Organisation Technical Officer, Prisons and Health:

“The current edition of the WHO Prison Health Guide chapter on women has a paragraph on children; but in the second edition, I will ensure that there is a focus on fathers and more consideration of children.”

Stefan suggested that it is a myth that prisons are only a security matter; they need to be connected to other spheres or areas of life, particularly to promote reintegration.





Expert Panel Session



Verena Knaus: Senior Policy Advisor UNICEF Brussels:

“This research has made invisible children visible and I will add children of prisoners to the group of vulnerable children who should be considered and recognised.”

Verena advocated the need for prisons to develop normality of contact for these vulnerable young people using technology such as Skype and email (response to question from young person). She spoke of the “silent harm of uncertainty”, which many children suffer from arrest through to imprisonment.



Margaret Tuite: European Commission Children’s Rights Coordinator

“My remit includes the rights of the child with a special focus on vulnerable children and, as of today’s conference, vulnerable children will include children of prisoners.”





Findings presented included:

- 25% of children with a parent in prison are at risk of mental health problems.
- Caregiving parents and extended family are important, as is how openly they talk to the children about imprisonment.
- Children may often be disturbed and confused, particularly during the arrest, trial and early stages of imprisonment.
- Schools can provide help with schoolwork, emotional support and counselling.
- Good quality prison contact with their prisoner parent is central to children's resilience.





Recommendations presented included:

- Police arrest and search policies and procedures should reflect the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).
- Courts should consider the child's best interests when sentencing.
- Prison and security measures should be compatible with a child's well-being and provide child-friendly visiting centres.
- The EU and national governments need to be aware of the existence of children of prisoners.
- Schools should identify children of prisoners in ways that are discreet and non-stigmatising.
- Professionals should be prepared to give parents and caregivers advice and support on telling children about the imprisonment of their parent.
- The vital role of caregiving parents, grandparents and siblings should be recognised and supported.
- There is a great need for general public awareness-raising across the EU.





Consortium Meeting- Brussels 7th November 2012.

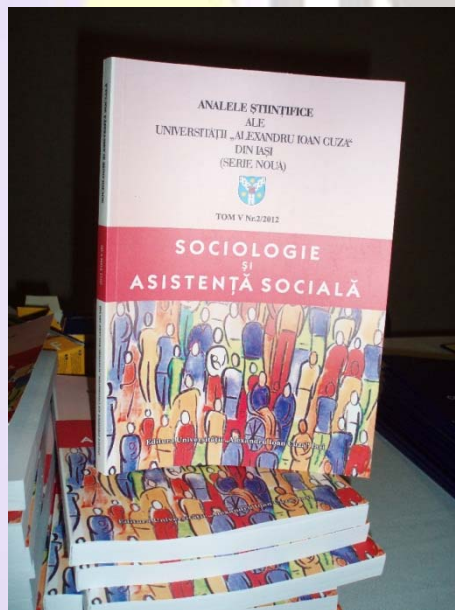
Conference Exhibition



The COPING project has received funding from the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) under Grant Agreement no 241988



A Timely Publication . . .



A number of COPING colleagues contributed articles to an edition of *Sociologie și Asistență Socială*, published (in time for the conference) by the University of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, Iasi, Romania. All attendees received a complimentary copy.





Consortium Meeting- Brussels 7th November 2012.

Consortium Meetings

On Wednesday 7 November 2012 the COPING partners met in a number of meetings



The COPING project has received funding from the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) under Grant Agreement no 241988



Consortium Meeting- Brussels 7th November 2012.

COPING colleagues socialising at mealtimes



The COPING project has received funding from the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) under Grant Agreement no 241988