

Prohibition of all forms of violence against children, including physical and humiliating punishment

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party convening in Palermo, Italy on 23-25 November 2011

Whereas

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the most ratified of the core international human rights instruments, by all European states and by 193 states globally. According to article 19, children have the right to be protected from being hurt or mistreated, physically or mentally. Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse or neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them. In addition, article 36 stipulates that children shall be protected against any activity that takes advantage of them or could harm their welfare;
- Yet in reality, the rights - civil, political, economic and social - of millions of children across Europe remain unrealised;
- It is a well established fact that violence affects children in many negative ways, and hinders their healthy development. In the most severe cases, it can lead to death or injury. In addition, violence destroys children's self-confidence, undermines their trust in adults and can affect their ability to learn and their willingness to go to school;
- Violence against children entails consequences as an adult, such as unemployment, social exclusion and crime. These consequences place a considerable social and economic burden on societies at large. By preventing violence we can reduce these costs.

Recognises that

- The full scale of violence experienced by children remains unknown, and the severity of the problem has not been acknowledged;
- Children who are exposed to violence must have real remedies for breaches of their rights, and urgent action is needed at national and international levels;
- Despite the Council of Europe's commendable campaign to achieve a complete ban on all corporal punishment across its 27 member states and the 2009 deadline for a universal ban set by the UN Study on violence against children three years ago, hitting and humiliating children as a form of punishment remains common in most European states and lawful in almost half.

Resolution:

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Year and Congress:

November 2011, Palermo

Category:

Fundamental Freedoms and Human Rights

Fundamental Human Rights

Page:

1

Calls for

- The prohibition of all forms of violence against children, including physical and humiliating punishment;
- Every member state to carry out an urgent review on the status of the CRC in its national law and to evaluate whether children have real remedies for breaches of their rights, and that immunity from prosecution is not allowed in any case;
- Attention to be focused on all forms of violence against children and for the mobilisation of all forces that can end this violence.
- A child alert mechanism and a Europeanwide hotline.

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Page:

2