

Children First and Foremost:

Realising the Rights of Children and Families in an Irregular Migration Situation

**Residence Palace, 155 Rue de la Loi, Block C
1040 Brussels, Belgium**

Tuesday 26 February 2013

***Working languages: English, French and Spanish
(and Italian through passive interpretation in one afternoon working group)***

Please note the speakers named in the below programme are unconfirmed and subject to change

PICUM, the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants will hold an international conference on undocumented children in Brussels on 26 February 2013.

Children in an irregular migration situation are in a position of triple vulnerability: as children above all; as migrants; and finally because of their irregular situation. Children are always, children, first and foremost. Over the past 10 years of daily monitoring, evidence collection and advocacy for the rights of undocumented migrants, PICUM has noted a dangerous trend towards the loss of the rights of children in an irregular migration situation. The general lack of protection of these children has been observed in almost all EU member states.

The “Building Strategies to Improve Protection of Undocumented Children in Europe” project aims to spread understanding of the challenges children in an irregular migration situation face in accessing their fundamental rights to education, healthcare and housing in Europe, and to share and develop good practices and strategies to overcome them.

In the context of this project PICUM held seven intensive national-level workshops which brought together the experiences and barriers of undocumented families to the attention of civil society, professional and institutional actors. The strategies developed at these workshops have been collected in a guide, entitled “Children First and Foremost: a Guide to Realising the Rights of Children and Families in an Irregular Migration Situation.” The guide is an informative toolkit explaining the legal and policy framework governing undocumented children’s rights that lays out the practical challenges undocumented children face in exercising those rights, and showcases good

practices that facilitate undocumented children's access to rights across Europe. The English version of the guide will be presented at this conference. Further language versions will be available in PDF format at the conference, and hardcopy versions will be available for distribution later this year.

OBJECTIVES

This conference marks the culmination of PICUM's research project "*Building Strategies to Improve Protection of Undocumented Children in Europe*". This conference brings the issues, strategies, and experts identified in this research together, with the aim of fostering real policy change at the EU level.

In gathering a broad range of relevant actors involved in the support and protection of undocumented children's rights at local, national and European levels, the event seeks to highlight the difficulties and barriers undocumented children and families face, whilst also, laying the foundation for policy development on this issue.

The specific objectives of this conference are to:

- Bring the experiences of undocumented children and their families across Europe to the attention of both civil society, professional, and institutional actors working at the European level
- Exchange information regarding best practices and strategies that facilitate undocumented children and families' access to basic social rights.
- Facilitate the development of interdisciplinary and cooperative strategies to effectuate positive change for undocumented migrant children across the European Union.

METHODOLOGY

This event aims to bring together experiences from the front-line, with professionals and policy-makers in the domains of **education, healthcare** and **housing**.

Undocumented families will also give testimony on the realisation of their rights, what support they have found to do so, and what support they still need.

To guide the discussion, the meeting will focus on the following questions:

- How are undocumented children and families' access to services being limited in practice?

- What are the dangers of limiting undocumented children and families' access to services and rights?
- What strategies and solutions have been developed across Europe to facilitate the realisation of undocumented children and families' rights; how can these be supported, developed and multiplied?
- What changes are necessary at the European policy level?

The meeting is broken into five distinct sessions comprised of:

1. KEY NOTE ADDRESSES outlining the development and objectives of this event.
2. PLENARY SESSIONS combining insights from undocumented families, thematic professionals and institutional actors with an interactive discussion including all participants.
3. WORKSHOP SESSIONS showcasing case studies of good practices occurring in the field, and creating a space for participants to work together to see how these strategies can be developed across Europe. Enabling an open sharing of experience and expertise among participants.
4. EXHIBITION SPACE to enable frontline service providers and migrant organisations from across Europe to exhibit their work with undocumented migrant children and families.
5. CLOSING SESSION sharing feedback from the working groups and identifying 'next steps' for effective pan-European change and joint action.

Chairs and Moderators will play a critical role in promoting interactive discussion among participants following the presentations. They will ensure that all points of the agenda are covered, that the time allocated to speakers and to interventions from the floor is respected, and that the expected outcomes of each roundtable are achieved.

Appointed PICUM *rapporteurs* will help take notes of the proceedings and sum up the conclusions of the thematic discussions in the separate working groups.

THE PROGRAMME

Tuesday 26 February 2013	
08:15 – 09:00	Registration
09:00 – 09:20	Opening Addresses and Introduction
	<p>Welcome Address and Presentation of the Guide <i>“Children First and Foremost: a Guide to Realising the Rights of Children and Families in an Irregular Migration Situation”</i> Michele LeVoy, Director, PICUM</p>
09:20 – 09:45	Keynote Speech
	<p><i>François Crépeau</i>, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants</p>
9:20 – 10:45	PLENARY: Undocumented Children, Accompanied and Excluded
	<p>CHAIR: <i>Maria Hertzog</i>, Vice-Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child</p> <p>Who are Children in an Irregular Migration Situation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testimony from an undocumented family and young person • The Reality of Access to Basic Social Rights for Children and Families in an Irregular Migration Situation – <i>Ann-Charlotte Nygård</i>, Programme Manager, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) • Immigration Control Practices and Undocumented Children’s Legal Protections – <i>Nando Sigona</i>, Senior Research Officer, Refugee Studies Centre, Oxford • Implications of Exclusion on Undocumented Children’s Psycho-Social Development - <i>Roberto Gonzales</i>, Assistant Professor, University of Chicago <p><i>Plenary discussion</i></p>
10:45 – 11:15	Coffee Break
11:15 – 12:30	PLENARY: Institutional Protections for Undocumented Children
	<p>CHAIR – <i>Mark Neville</i>, Head of Migration and Equal Opportunities Department, Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the UN Framework to Realise the Rights of Undocumented Children and Families – <i>Verena Knaus</i>, Senior Policy Advisor, UNICEF • Promoting the Social Inclusion of Undocumented Children – <i>Emma Toledano Laredo</i>, Head of Unit, DG Employment, European Commission • The Role and Remit of the Ombudsmen for Children in Europe – <i>Marie Derain</i>, Ombudsman for Children, France <p><i>Plenary discussion</i></p>
12:30 – 14:00	<p>Lunch and Exhibition Space</p> <p>Viewing of PICUM's Web-documentary on undocumented children, public exhibitions and displays of participants' work with children in an irregular migration situation will be available and on display in the lobby</p>
14:00 – 16:30	<p>PARALLEL WORKING GROUPS: Collaborative work on building strategies to overcome barriers for undocumented children and their families</p>
<i>(Working languages: English and French)</i>	<p>1: Legal Strategies to Improve Access to Housing</p> <p>Moderator: <i>Samara Jones</i>, Policy Officer, European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA)</p> <p><i>Case Study 1 : Defence for Children International (DCI) v. Netherlands case (presented by Carla Van Os, DCI Netherlands)</i></p> <p><i>Case Study 2 – Engaging the Modérateur Fédéral in the Defence for Children International (DCI) v Belgium case (presented by Katja Fournier, Plate-forme Mineurs en Exil)</i></p> <p><i>Group Exercise – Building a legal case and conducting supportive advocacy activities (led by Pim Fischer, Fischer Advocaten)</i></p> <p><i>Workshop discussion</i></p>
<i>(Working languages: English and Spanish; Italian as passive language)</i>	<p>2: Developing an Evidence Base to Promote Access to Healthcare</p> <p>Moderator: <i>Monika Kosinska</i>, Director, European Public Health Alliance</p> <p><i>Case Study 1 – Gruppo di Lavoro Nazionale per il Bambino Immigrato's (GLNBI) research activities, Italy (presented by Rosalia Maria Da Rioli, GLNBI)</i></p>

	<p><i>Case Study 2 – Medicos del Mundo (MDM) inquiry into the healthcare of undocumented children and families in Spain (presented by representative from <i>Medicos del Mundo</i>)</i></p> <p><i>Group Exercise – Building an evidence base by linking front-line work to professional research activities (<i>Alfonso Montero</i>, European Social Network)</i></p> <p><i>Workshop discussion</i></p>
(Working languages: English and French; Spanish as passive language)	<p>3: Media and Empowerment Strategies to Surmount Barriers to Education</p> <p>Moderator: <i>Mafalda Leal</i>, Policy Officer, Eurochild</p> <p><i>Case Study 1 – Réseau éducation sans frontières (RESF), France (presented by <i>Richard Moyon</i>, RESF)</i></p> <p><i>Case Study 2 – DigitalUndoc, UK (presented by <i>Sarah Cutler</i>, Paul Hamlyn Foundation)</i></p> <p><i>Group Exercise – Strategizing on the empowerment of undocumented youth (<i>Monami Maulik</i>, DRUM, New York City)</i></p> <p><i>Workshop discussion</i></p>
16:30 – 17:00	Coffee Break
17:00 – 17:45	CLOSING PLENARY SESSION – THE WAY FORWARD
	<p>CHAIR – <i>Ayesha Saran</i>, Migration and Europe Programme Manager, Barrow Cadbury Trust</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key issues raised in discussions on building strategies – Feedback from Working Group Rapporteurs • Concluding Remarks – <i>Kinga Goncz</i>, MEP, Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament <p><i>Plenary discussion</i></p>
17:45 – 18:00	CLOSING ADDRESS
	<i>Don Flynn</i> , Director, Migrants' Rights Network and PICUM Chair
18:00	CONFERENCE ENDS