

Dear colleagues, Dear experts,

First, I would like to inform you on the activities of the campaign in 2016.

We started the year by signing a contract with a Greek expert who will prepare a study on qualitative and quantities information on Immigration Detention Practices and the Use of Alternatives to Immigration Detention of Children. The study will target the non-EU member states of the Council of Europe, as the EU-FRA is currently carrying out a similar study on the EU member states. We are planning to present both studies jointly with FRA in September during the final conference of the campaign.

We are also planning to organise a one day seminar in one of the member States for the members of national parliaments on alternatives to detention from a legal, practical and implementation perspective. It would be best to organise this in a country which is now facing a big influx of migrants. Therefore, I would like to ask for your support and those of you who would be interested in welcoming such a seminar in your country, please let me know as soon as possible. Our campaign project will cover all expenses.

In May-June 2016, we are going to organise a Seminar in cooperation with the Swiss authorities and non-governmental organisations on the promotion of alternatives to immigration detention in Switzerland.

Finally, during the October part-session we will organise a fourth round table on the age assessment practices in the Council of Europe member States.

This is our action plan for 2016, and now I would like to draw conclusion from today's roundtable which is organised in the framework of the Parliamentary Campaign to End Immigration Detention of Children which focused on a very important topic:

[What are the negative effects of immigration detention on children?](#)

I would conclude that it is evident that detaining children for immigration purposes has a severe negative impact on child health, well-being and development. Even very short periods of detention can undermine a child's psychological and physical well-being and their cognitive development.

As expressed by our experts, children held in detention are at risk of suffering depression and anxiety, and frequently show symptoms consistent with post-traumatic stress disorder. Feelings of hopelessness and frustration can manifest as acts of violence against themselves or others. We should be able to protect these children and ensure a better life for them.

Therefore, I would again remind you of and ask you to support the three main messages of this campaign:

- Prohibit and preclude child immigration detention in law
- Ensure that children are treated first and foremost as children; their best interest is the primary concern and takes precedence over considerations relating to their immigration status when a State takes action
- Promote and adopt alternatives to detention that enable children and families to live in non-custodial, community-based contexts while their immigration status is being resolved

Finally, I would like to thank our experts Dr. Katy Robjant and Mr Martin Vegter, for their active participation in this round table and I would like to remind you that the stand of our campaign is situated in the Foyer outside the hemicycle and those who have not yet signed the petition to stop immigration detention of children are kindly invited to do so. Thank you all for your attendance.