

**Dear colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I have the pleasure to announce to you some very positive news: the Swiss government, represented by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs has agreed to contribute 119,621 Swiss Francs to our campaign activities for 2015-2016.

I am personally very thankful to my government for such support of the activities of our Committee. It will allow us to launch a study on quantitative and qualitative information about the immigration detention practices and use of alternatives for immigration detention of children in Europe and to organise several awareness raising events and round tables.

Today's round table organised in the framework of our Parliamentary Campaign to End Immigration detention of Children was focused on a very important topic:

How we can promote the alternatives to the immigration detention of children?

The laws of most of the Council of Europe member States prohibit the detention of children and provide the possibility of applying alternatives. Nevertheless, the majority of these States are not applying the alternatives in practice or they are used only rarely.

Despite numerous studies and recommendations produced by international organisations, human rights groups and special rapporteurs, there is still much room for action to achieve this goal and bring detention rates of children down.

It is evident that much more has to be done in order to persuade governments on the benefits of alternatives and negative effects originating from any type of detention. Much more resources are required to promote reforms and to train public servants involved in the process in the best practices to manage the migration related problems.

### **What else should we do?**

- Prohibit and preclude child immigration detention in law
- Ensure that children are treated first and foremost as children
- Provide support to enable children and families to live in the community

In some States, deficient legislation is supplemented with wrong policies and practice. In my opinion, the situation requires concerted efforts from the State authorities to put an end to the detention of migrant children and start developing effective models for the application of alternatives to detention.