

## **Input of the Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary to the Midterm Progress Report on the Third Phase (2015-2019) of the World Program for Human Rights Education**

The Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary performed the following activities and programs related to the third phase of the World Program for Human Rights Education during its operation in 2015-16:

- establishment of the JOG-OK Task Force and the active, continuous operation of the correspondence list between the members
- running the internship program in cooperation with the partner law schools, in the form of a cooperation framework agreement
- formation and development of a thematic children's rights subsite at the website of the Office
- other activities of the Office promoting rights awareness

### **The JOG-OK Task Force**

It was back in May 2015 that the Ombudsman announced, at a professional workshop on the situation of the rights awareness among children and young people, that he would bring it up with the heads of institutions involved in the protection of fundamental rights that coordinators for the promotion of programs addressing children and youngsters, the teaching of law, the development of rights awareness and cooperation should be appointed. He also announced that he would propose that the JOG-OK Task Force be set up with the participation of the delegated staff members, which would thus ensure keeping continuous contact and the participants could exchange their experience with each other at least once a year.

The Commissioner for Fundamental Rights thinks that a citizen who is conscious of human rights and is also aware of the rights of others is to be highly appreciated. On the other hand, through common thinking, those methods and solutions by using which children and youngsters can be reached can be found, rights awareness can be improved and the knowledge of their possibilities to enforce their rights can be conveyed to them. In the Ombudsman's opinion, this presumes a clear strategy and an enduring cooperation, which require the setting up of a supporting forum.

Mr. László Székely asked the heads of the National Authority for Data Protection and Freedom of Information, the National Center for Patients' Rights and Documentation, the Equal Treatment Authority, the Internet Roundtable for Child Protection of the National Media and Infocommunications Authority, the National Office for the Judiciary, the Office of the Prosecutor General, the Constitutional Court and the Office of the Commissioner for Educational Rights, as well as the State Secretary for Family and Youth of the Ministry of Human Capacities to participate in the JOG-OK Task Force. The

Commissioner for Fundamental Rights Mr. László Székely asked the Budapest-based European Youth Center of the Council of Europe, as well as the Hungarian Association of the International Children's Safety Service to participate in order to facilitate international cooperation, while he requested UNICEF's National Committee Hungary to do so on behalf of the Civil Society Coalition for Children's Rights and the NGO's that take part in the latter.

All the state bodies and civil societies that had been addressed agreed with the goals of the Task Force and the importance of the initiative, each of them contributes to the efforts of the Task Force through the heads of their organizations or their delegated staff members. The activities of the JOG-OK Task Force are coordinated by the Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary.

### **The internship program**

Ever since 2009, the Ombudsman's Office has hosted an innovative internship program which is unique in the country. After entering into official agreements with the individual faculties of law of some universities, the Office of the Ombudsman has received mainly law students for professional practice for a total six-weekly period in February and March, i.e. in a predefined period of the year. This program is organized in the first months of the year because this is the official internship period at several law schools. The average number of students was 10-13, as the infrastructural potential of the office also had to be taken into account. In early 2016, the Office renewed the cooperation framework agreements with the deans of the partner law faculties, i.e. ELTE ÁJK (Eötvös Loránd University of Sciences), PPKE JÁK (Pázmány Péter Catholic University), PTE ÁJK (University of Pécs) and DE ÁJK (University of Debrecen), in which the legal framework of the cooperation in the internship program was defined. Thus, in 2015-16, a total of 24 law students took part in the complex professional practice program of the Office. The significance of the program lies in that an increasing number of graduating students could get a first-hand experience in the activities and operation of the Office, as well as in some of the key areas of the protection of fundamental rights.

The students could apply for the internship through the individual faculties of law, it was a criterion for selection that the students should at least be in their third year of studies (as these students already have an overview of the legal system as a whole), we primarily expect those who are interested in constitutional law, fundamental rights, as well as administrative law. Furthermore, any outstanding results in these fields (OTDK, i.e. the National Scientific Students' Associations Conference), or membership in the students' association obviously increase the chances for selection. The dean's offices compiled a special timetable for those students who arrived from outside Budapest, so these students had the chance to spend this six-weekly period in Budapest. On some occasions, we accepted not only law students but also those majoring in political science,

who could primarily join our project research programs. The interns had to sign a declaration of confidentiality, which also allowed them to review specific documents.

In the first two weeks of the practical program, the students were given theoretical training, they received an overview of general questions such as the activities performed by the Parliamentary Commissioner, his procedures, competence, as well as the operation and organizational structure of the Office of the Commissioner. Furthermore, they were informed of the special issues of fundamental rights, the inquiries conducted in the context of the individual projects, international cases, the process for receiving complaints, as well as the functioning of media relations. In the following two weeks of the internship program, each intern participated in the preparatory work for the competence review under the professional supervision and guidance of one of our colleagues. The interns typically explored the legal backgrounds of the simpler cases and prepared the draft correspondence related to these cases. In the last two weeks of the program, the interns participated in the work of one of the departments of the Office in a similar setup, i.e. under the mentorship of one of our staff members. The individual tasks were performed by the interns mostly independently, in accordance with what they had agreed upon with their respective mentors, in the well-equipped library of the Office, either at the work stations of the Office, or on their own computers. In the context of the internship program, the students had the chance to pay visits to some institutions, for instance, they got an insight into the operation of the National Assembly, a specific National Assembly committee, and the Constitutional Court.

### **Thematic children's rights media platforms**

2016 saw great strides forward in the development of the thematic children's rights subsite, the structure and the elements of the new homepage, as well as the wireframes, the design plans and the new logo were finalized after continuous efforts and coordination. Content development commenced, the descriptions of the individual children's rights, institutions, as well as frequently asked questions are being prepared. The new homepage will have quite a number of new functions, the latest news and current events can be followed here, there will be a quick link to the increasingly popular children's rights Facebook page of the Office. A special complaint platform will be available for children, coloring sheets can be downloaded, quizzes can be completed, and campaigns can be launched from here in the near future. The design of the new children's rights subsite will be better suited to the needs of the target group of children between 10 and 14 years of age but useful information and teaching materials will not only be available for children but also for teachers and parents.

The Office does not only have its own Facebook page but it also has one of a children's rights profile, through which it is not only the individual reports on children's rights, the related research findings and press releases that can be shared but also, children's rights messages, events (world days) and information promoting human rights training

programs can also be spread. Furthermore, it should also be noted that the Office strives to reach the parents and the children directly and to promote the awareness of fundamental rights in a playful manner by regularly (including 2015-16 as well) participating in the most popular outdoors children's events in Hungary, for example in the two-day Children's Day festival in the City Park (Városliget), or in the event called Gyerek Sziget (Children's Island) organized at the Hajógyári Sziget, where the Office has its own stand. Here, it is the age group between 8 and 14 years of age and their parents that are intended to be targeted by the quizzes and other games. Besides these, the Commissioner regularly undertakes the role of a host, a patron or a partner in children's rights tenders or competitions as well, which are also suitable for increasing the awareness of children's rights. Besides the internship programs, there is a wide cooperation with the universities and professional workshops, and in 2015, the Ombudsman and his deputies offered three special prizes for the national finals of the Section of Law and State Administration Studies of the National Scientific Students' Associations Conference, i.e. for the scientific competition of the students of the most prestigious Hungarian law schools.

Besides the above permanent programs or those coordinated by the Office, our colleagues regularly hold ad hoc presentations on the basis of invitations, e.g. for the police staff or high school students, etc.

### **Other activities of the Office promoting rights awareness**

In the period of 2015–2016, the staff of the Secretariat of the Deputy Commissioner for the Rights of National Minorities mainly participated in campaigns and programs related to the Council of Europe as trainers and facilitators. The Office held no human rights training courses on its own but it was happy to fulfill the requests of the Budapest-based European Youth Center and the NGO's. It was in the fall of 2015 that a one-week international seminar entitled Diversity Voices was organized in Budapest by the European Youth Press, on the first day of which the expert of the Secretariat held a foundation course on human rights, children's rights, minority rights, as well as the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers to young journalists. Also, the volunteers of the "Alarm Clock" program of UNICEF's National Committee Hungary could also get familiar with the questions of the online world, especially with the phenomena of internet harassment and online hate speech in a one-day training course. Furthermore, on the World Day of Human Rights, the Secretariat of National Minorities, jointly with the staff members of the Children's Rights Unit, held a workshop on the Ombudsman's practices concerning children's rights at the European Youth Center. At this workshop, special emphasis was laid on the promotion of the enforcement of the rights of children who belong to minorities. In 2016, the Deputy Commissioner for the Rights of National Minorities supported, as a strategic partner, the project called "With soft words against hate – the development of an informal educational program against online hate speech

for youngsters and educators” designed by the Reményt a Gyermekeknek Közhasznú Egyesület (Hope for Children Hungary) and the Szubjektív Értékek Alapítvány (Subjective Values Foundation).

The Commissioner for Fundamental Rights launched a series of lectures called “Evenings at the Ombudsman’s” in 2014, with an aim to create tradition. This series is related to the Ombudsman’s role of raising attention to human rights issues, making people sensitive to these topics, as well as shaping attitudes. As part of these series, 2016 saw presentations held by renowned professors and the experts of the Office on their specific fields of research. In compiling the event timetable, the organizers strove to present as many aspects of the legal protection activities of the Ombudsman as possible in a complex manner.

The Office has had a long-standing cooperation with the Association of Hungarian Administrative Judges, in order to train the judges on the development of a judicial practice which is sensitive to the protection of natural resources, especially soil, forests and water supplies, as well as biodiversity, and to the right to a healthy environment. During the training program, the efficiency and the problems of the legal institutions are analyzed, with special regard to the law of the European Union and the legal practices applied by the Court of Justice of the European Union.

The deputy head of the Constitutional Initiatives Unit of the Public Law Department of the Office took part in a training program entitled “Hate Crimes” at the National University of Public Service (CEPOL Course 69/2015) between June 29 and July 3, 2015. The course was aimed at the training of the law enforcement agencies of the EU member states. The expert of our Office held a presentation in the course of the training program on action against hate crimes, including the Ombudsman’s practice in this regard.