



This is
Age
17

Trim Mustafa-Muzaqi

I like: spontaneity

I dislike: jealousy

I worry about: world politics

My wish for children: that every child can go to school, creating his own future.



This is
Age
17

Kevin ten Thij

I like: music

I dislike: people who stress about everything

I worry about: the rights of children in youth care

My wish for children: that children in youth care have a stable and safe home.



This is
Age
24

Frank Maas

I like: music, going out with friends

I dislike: going behind one's back

I worry about: the fact that in a prosperous country as the Netherlands there is so much to do when it comes to the rights of the child

My wish for children: that The Netherlands have an ombudsperson for children by 2008.

Kinderrechtencollectief
www.kinderrechten.nl



Save the Children
Nederland



This is what we told the United Nations about children's rights in the Netherlands



6 October 2008 – Five teenagers and the Dutch NGO Coalition for Children's Rights are ready to speak to the most important children's rights watchdog: the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. This is the third time that the Coalition reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the first time it has the opportunity to report on the Optional Protocol on the sale of children. In January 2009, the Dutch Government has to appear before the Committee to justify their record on the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol. Right now, the children and the Coalition already have a chance to give their opinion to the Committee. What will they say?



This is Merel van Rees

Age
18

I like: rescue swimming, going out with friends, reading, participating in society

I dislike: waking up early, people who don't keep their promises, people who can change things but don't do it.

I worry about: the waiting lists in Dutch Youth Care

My wish for children: that all children have a good, healthy and happy home.



This is Marjolein Buis

Age
20

I like: wheelchair tennis, music, theatre visits, computers

I dislike: people who only focus on negative aspects

I worry about: politicians who don't bother to get a clear view of the lives of the people they decide about

My wish for children: give disabled children the same opportunities to develop themselves, just as their peers have.

Protect child victims of sexual exploitation

The Optional Protocol to the Convention of the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography came into force for the Netherlands on 23 September 2005. This is the first time the Netherlands reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child about the implementation of the Optional Protocol in the Netherlands. The Dutch NGO Coalition for Children's Rights (KRC) made a special report about the approach to the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and child sex tourism in the Netherlands.

These are seven out of 25 recommendations in the report of the Dutch NGO Coalition for Children's Rights:

1. Create specialised shelter, care and treatment facilities

There is a need for more specific shelters and care facilities for child prostitutes and minor victims of sexual and other forms of exploitation to offer child victims the necessary assistance and care. There are insufficient shelter facilities, and there is a lack of customized care. (Follow up to recommendation 57 from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, p. 13 NGO report. OP art. 8 and 9)

2. Improve the identification and referral

Agencies involved in child prostitution and/or (potential) victims of child trafficking fail to keep specific or complete records and the various systems are often incompatible, thereby complicating or even precluding

exchanges of information. (p. 12 NGO report, OP Art.8 and 9)

3. Increase the expertise and skills of professionals in care facilities

Staff of institutions involved in dealing with victims of trafficking have insufficient knowledge on trafficking, the effects of trafficking on child victims, the needs of child victims, and the rights of children. The existing training should give specific attention to the position of minors. (p. 16 NGO report, OP Art.8 and 9)

4. Special attention for foreign unaccompanied minor victims

All child victims of trafficking domiciled in the Netherlands should receive the protection and care they need irrespective of their backgrounds or residence status. There are insufficient guarantees for the safety and protection of child victims of sexual exploitation who are in the Netherlands without a valid residence permit. (NGO report, p. 14-16, OP Art.8 and 9)

5. Educate children in schools about (sexual) exploitation and violence

Information about the (sexual) exploitation of minors should become part of the curriculum. The lessons should not devote attention solely to prostitution, but should also extend to other forms of exploitation and violence. These classes and the assertiveness training should begin as early as at primary school. (NGO-report, p. 18-19, OP Art.9)

6. Promote involvement of travel organisations to combat child sex tourism

Child sex tourism can be dealt with effectively only when the entire travel sector is involved. The Government should play an active role in promoting concrete actions against child sex tourism. (NGO-report, p. 19).

7. Increase the capacity and expertise of law enforcement agencies

The police need to be equipped better for investigations of the (sexual) exploitation of minors. The lack of priority, capacity and expertise on the part of the police, Public Prosecution Service and judiciary continue to constitute the bottleneck in the investigation and prosecution of the (sexual) exploitation of children. Also the Dutch Government should play a greater and encouraging role in promoting regional and international collaboration to prevent and combat the (sexual) exploitation of children. (Follow up to recommendation 57 from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, NGO-report, p. 9-10, 20, OP Art. 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10)

Top ten recommendations towards a better implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child

1.

Appoint a Children's Ombudsperson **It's time for it!**

(No follow up on recommendation 21 from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2004, NGO-report, p. 70-71)

2.

Improve youth care

At least 150.000 children in the Netherlands are in need of some form of youth care. Guarantee the right to youth care! Eliminate existing waiting lists and guarantee a reduced caseload. Focus on foster care for every child and monitor the newly developed closed youth care institutions. (Article 3, paragraph 2, NGO-report, p. 9 – 13)

3.

3. Respond to every case of child abuse

Between 106.000 en 160.00 children are victims of child (seksual) abuse and neglect every year. About 25% of the cases are reported to the Advice and Reporting Centres for Child Abuse and Neglect. Report every case of child abuse and neglect should be a legal obligation for all professionals working with children. Impose a legal obligation on all aid workers to intervene in the event of suspicions of child abuse. An abused child should never be on a waiting list! (Article 19, p 14 – 20 NGO report)

4.

No exclusion of 'illegal' children

Give parents of 'illegal' children the opportunity to provide their children an adequate standard of living or provide housing for families who have no access to the social security system. Do not turn out any children onto the street. (Article 2 and 27, p 21 – 32 NGO report)

5.

Reduce poverty

In the Netherlands 310.000 children live on or below the poverty line. Issue specific discounts on certain

activities, such as sports and culture, to children in families living at subsistence level. Withdraw the reservation to the Convention (article 26). (Articles 24, 25 28, 3, p 33 -40 NGO report)

6.

Take participation serious as a right.

Dutch youth policy has to assign priority to young people's participation. This needs a legal basis in institutions, schools and government bodies. Young people need to be involved from the time of the issue identification for the policy, right through tot the implementation and evaluation. (Articles 12 and 17, NGO report p. 41-47)

7.

Protect children in conflict with the law

End the treatment waiting lists for children in detention. Improve monitoring to protect children in custodial youth institutions against all forms of violence. Juvenile justice should remain directed towards promoting the reintegration of the child, and not become increasingly repressive. (Articles 37 and 40, NGO report, 48-54).

8.

Arrange green play areas

In many cities at least 25% of the children never play outdoors. Include guarantees in the new land development regulations for formal and informal play areas in the built environment. Arrange for 'green play areas': trees children can climb in, and shrubs in which they can build dens. (Article 31, NGO report, p. 55 – 60)

9.

Educate children's rights

Make education in human rights a compulsory element of the school curriculum and the vocational courses for secondary and/or primary school teachers. Make sure vulnerable groups as 'illegal' and highly gifted children have full access to education. Schools should be safe places. (Article 28, NGO report, p. 61- 64).

10.

Integrate children's rights in development cooperation

Approach development cooperation from the perspective of the rights of the child. More attention needs to be devoted to the participation of young people, children and children's right organizations. Integrate the recommendations of the Pinheiro report on children and violence in international poverty policy (Articles 4, 12, 19, NGO report, p. 65 - 68).