

Children in Focus – Best Interests and Rights of the Child in Social Work across Borders

90th Anniversary Conference of the German Member of International Social Service

Since its foundation in 1930 as the German member of the International Social Service network, the ISD (Internationaler Sozialdienst), which today is Department I in the German Association for Public and Private Welfare (Deutscher Verein für öffentliche und private Fürsorge e.V.), has been concerned with the implications of migration for children and their families. Protecting children across borders, safeguarding their rights and strengthening and uniting families are the goals of the joint work, then as now. Embedded in the German Welfare Congress 2022, the ISD invites you to a conference to honour its 90th anniversary.

Families in migration are faced with specific challenges. When this stressful situation is further complicated by conflict situations regarding their children, the pressure on those affected is particularly high. But professionals also face special challenges in their work across national borders. Central problem areas are cross-border conflicts over child custody, the right of access and child abduction. The migration movements of recent years have also raised new questions, e.g. how the best interests of the child can be taken into account in the context of refugees, deportation and voluntary return. In this regard, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Hague Conventions have had a significant impact on international cooperation in the interest of children.

The more complicated the situation, the greater the risk of losing sight of the individual child, his or her wishes and interests. The conference therefore places the focus on the child.

Jointly with international speakers, current developments and challenges of cross-border social work will be discussed with a specific focus on children's rights and the determination and safeguarding of the best interests of the child in a transnational context.

The conference languages are German and English with a simultaneous translation.

PROGRAMME

Wednesday, 11th May

- 10:30 – 11:00 1.11 Opening of the conference and welcome
Nora Schmidt, CEO German Association of Public and Private Welfare (Berlin)

GERMAN (with English translation)
- 11:00 – 11:45 1.11 a Best interests of the child: Determination of the best interests of the child in a cross-border context
Nigel Cantwell, International Consultant on Child Protection Policies (Geneva/ Switzerland)

ENGLISH (with German translation)
- 11:45 – 12:30 1.11 b The abducted child – Considerations from a psychological perspective
Birgitte Beelen, Psychologist and Director of the SYNTAGMA practice (Haren/Netherlands)

ENGLISH (with German translation)
- Lunch break
- 14:00 – 14:15 2.11 Hague Convention on Child Abduction: Review and current questions
Philippe Lortie, First Secretary Permanent Bureau of the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HcCH) (Den Haag/ Netherlands)

ENGLISH (with German translation)
- 14:15 – 15:30 2.11 Child abduction – How helpful are the existing possibilities of support offered to parents and children in case of abduction? - A panel discussion with:
Birgitte Beelen, Psychologist and Director of the SYNTAGMA practice (Haren/Netherlands)
Philippe Lortie, First Secretary Permanent Bureau of the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HcCH) (Den Haag/ Netherlands)
Stephan Schlauß, Head of Department International Civil Law, Federal Office of Justice (Bonn)
Ursula Rölke, Director International Social Service Germany/ Central Contact Point for Cross-border Family Conflicts and Mediation (Berlin)

Moderation: Katja Schwappe, Family Court Judge at the Higher Regional Court of Frankfurt am Main

ENGLISH/ GERMAN (with translation)

Coffee break

16:00– 18:00 2 parallel Specialist Forums

3.9 The new Brussels IIb Regulation (EC) - What will change for child and youth welfare services and for the family courts?

Ulrike Janzen, Head of Division International Private Law, Ministry of Justice (Berlin)

Christian Höhn, Head of Division Central Authority, Federal Office of Justice (Bonn)

Moderation: Jan Fries, Advisor Social Services, Department Children, Youth and Families, LVR (Cologne)

GERMAN (with English translation)

3.10 Aliens law meets child and youth services law – child and youth services law meets aliens law

Prof. Marion Hundt, Professorship for Public Law at the Protestant University of Applied Sciences Berlin

Frank Hartwig, Network Coordinator Early Assistance and Child Protection, Oberhavel District

Moderation: Dr. Sebastian Sedlmayr, Director of Advocacy und Politics, UNICEF Germany

GERMAN

18:00 Champagne reception – 90 Year Anniversary of The Internationaler Sozialdienst

18:30 'Abend der Begegnung' (Evening of encounter) – German Welfare Congress (DFT)

Thursday, 12th May

09:30 – 11:00 4.11 Put to the test: What do unaccompanied minor refugees need to really „arrive” in Germany? – A panel discussion with:

Daniel Jasch, BBZ (Berlin)

Johanna Karpenstein, Expert, Association for Unaccompanied Refugee Minors/BUMF (Berlin)

Philip Ishola, CEO L 146 (UK)

Philip Schützeberg, Head of Federal State Office for the Distribution of Unaccompanied

Foreign Minors in North Rhin-Westphalia (Cologne)
Dr. Nicolas Tsapos, Director Youth Welfare Office of Leipzig

Moderation: Heiko Naß, Diakonisches Werk of Schleswig-Holstein, Chairman of the
Standing Committee Internationaler Sozialdienst/ ISS Germany

GERMAN/ ENGLISH (with translation)

11:00 – 11:30 Conclusion – 100 Years of International Social Service – 100 Years of Social Work
across Borders: An outlook on upcoming developments and challenges
Jean Ayoub, General Secretary ISS (Geneva/ Switzerland)
Ursula Rölke, Director Internationaler Sozialdienst, ISS Germany (Berlin)

ENGLISH/ GERMAN (with translation)