



1 December 2011

To Mr. Jacek Cichocki
Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration
Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Dear Minister,

As you know, a ministerial-level meeting of all Member States of the United Nations on 7 - 8 December 2011 in Geneva will commemorate the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 50th anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. This meeting will also be an opportunity for states to make forward-looking specific commitments to concretely improve protection and assistance for refugees and stateless persons. States as well as intergovernmental organisations such as the European Union can also pledge.

The International Detention Coalition launched a global campaign to urge States to take this opportunity to commit to ending the detention of refugee and asylum-seeking children, as well as the detention of any child solely for immigration purposes.

This campaign is strongly supported by the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) and Amnesty International. Across Europe, 85 organisations in 15 countries (see list below) have called on their governments to make this commitment.

As EU institutions are negotiating on Commission proposals recasting the EU asylum *acquis* that include important provisions relating to the detention of children we urge EU Member States to ensure that EU asylum legislation includes a clear ban on the detention of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and the necessary guarantees to ensure that alternatives to detention are in place with a view to ending the detention of families with children.

The ongoing negotiations on the Asylum Package are a unique opportunity for the EU institutions and the Member States to set the standard and adopt a legal framework on the non-detention of asylum-seeking children that can be a model for other regions in the world. We believe this would be an important and significant step that would contribute to improving the situation of asylum-seeking children in the EU and an impressive contribution to the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention.

Yours sincerely,

Allan Leas
Acting Secretary General
ECRE

Nicolas Beger
Director
Amnesty International
European Institutions Office

Attached: Letter concerning the UN Pledging Conference 7-8 December 2011 on the occasion of the commemoration of the Geneva Refugee Convention



Participating Organisations

Austria

Asylkoordination Osterreich
Amnesty International Austria

Belgium

UNICEF Belgium
Amnesty International Belgium
Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen
Service Droit des Jeunes
Jesuit Refugee Service Belgium
Kinderrechtencoalitie Vlaanderen
Caritas International Belgium
Association pour le droit des étrangers
Coordination des ONG pour les droits de l'enfant
Kinderrechtencommissariaat
Coordination et Initiatives pour Réfugiés et Étrangers
Délégué général aux droits de l'enfant

Bulgaria

Bulgarian Council on Refugees and Migrants
Bulgarian Helsinki Committee
Bulgarian Red Cross - Refugee and Migrant Service
Caritas Bulgaria
Association for Integration of Refugees and Migrants
Council of Refugee Women in Bulgaria
Assistance Centre for Torture Survivors - ACET
Foundation "Centre Nadja"
Bulgarian Judges Association
Supreme Bar Council

Czech Republic

Amnesty International Czech Republic
Consortium of Migrant Assisting Organizations in the Czech Republic:
OPU - Organization for Aid to Refugees
MKC - Multicultural Centre Prague
SIMI - Association for Integration and Migration
People in Need
PPI - Counselling Centre for Integration
SOZE - Association for Citizens Assisting Emigrants
META - Counselling and Information Centre for Young Migrants

Denmark

Amnesty International Denmark

Finland

Amnesty International Finland
Finnish Refugee Advice Centre



Finnish Red Cross

France

France terre d'asile
Assfam

Greece

Amnesty International Greece
Antiracist Initiative of the city of Igoumenitsa
ARSIS – Association for the social support of youth
Network for Children's Rights
Volunteers of the World
Voluntary Work of Athens - "IOS" Shelter
Hellenic Action for Human Rights
Greek Helsinki Monitor
Greek Council for Refugees
Greek Forum of Refugees
Medical Intervention - MedIn
Marangopoulos Foundation for Human Rights
i-RED - Institute for Rights Equality and Diversity
"LATHRA" - Solidarity Committee for the Refugees of Chios Island
NGO "Aggalia"
NGO "AITIMA"
NGO "Antigone"
Ecumenical Refugee Programme
Group of Lawyers for the Rights of Refugees and Migrants
Group of Lawyers to Support the Rights of Refugees and Migrants of the city of Thessalonica
PRAKSIS
Initiative for the Rights of Detainees

Hungary

Hungarian Helsinki Committee
Menedek – Hungarian Association for Migrants
Amnesty International Hungary

Ireland

Amnesty International Ireland
Irish Refugee Council

Luxembourg

Caritas Luxembourg

Norway

NOAS

Poland

Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights
Amnesty International Poland
Polish Humanitarian Action
Legal Intervention Association



Centre for international Relations



Switzerland

Amnesty International Switzerland
Swiss Refugee Council

The Netherlands

Coalition "*Kinderen horen niet in vreemdelingenbewaring*":
Amnesty International Netherlands
Defence for Children
INLIA
Raad van Kerken
Kerk in Actie
Stichting Kinderpostzegels
Stichting LOS
Unicef
VluchtelingenWerk Nederland

International Organisations

Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe – CCME
International Detention Coalition