



Press Release

The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child comes into force terre des hommes: “No Progress achieved in Combating Child Trafficking” The child relief organization criticizes the protocol as being a “missed opportunity”

Osnabrück, 18.01.2002. The Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child “concerning child trafficking, child prostitution and child pornography” will come into force today. The protocol is now legally binding for the signatory nations after Romania’s ratification of the protocol as the obligatory tenth nation in October. A UN resolution dating from the year 1994 that called for more concrete international measures to protect children in these areas forms the background of the document. Germany has signed this optional protocol but has not adopted it as yet.

The optional protocol was intended to reinforce the Convention on the Rights of the Child, acceded to by all the countries in the world with the exception of the USA and Somalia, but has failed to do justice to this goal says terre des hommes: “The document is a missed opportunity since it lags behind the already existing international standards. It does not set more stringent criteria nor does it contain a stronger reminder to the states of their duty to combat the trafficking and sexual exploitation of children“, declares Boris Scharlowski, Coordinator of the International Campaign against Child Trafficking, terre des hommes. The Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention of the International Labour Organization against the Worst Forms of Child Labour, for example, already prohibit trafficking in children and stipulate more precise standards. “On the other hand, the optional protocol does not even adequately document the many facets of child trafficking. Some steps necessary to combat this crime affecting hundreds of thousands of girls and boys each year worldwide are also missing”, complains Scharlowski. These steps include more adequate protection for the victims that would for instance prevent trafficked children in prostitution from being prosecuted as criminals. Moreover, there are no measures to ensure a more effective prosecution of the offenders.

“In order to put a stop to child trafficking, what is required is not another international treaty, but rather the political intention to actually implement the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child”, declares Scharlowski. Addressing the German government, terre des hommes calls for the final withdrawal of the reservation against the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Germany had ratified the convention in 1992 with this reservation, which hinders refugee children in Germany from being granted the same protection as German children. “Since trafficked children frequently enter the country illegally and as unaccompanied minors, their legal status and lack of relief efforts make them victims twice over”.

terre des hommes has made the fight against child trafficking a focal point of its work. With the launch of its International Campaign in the autumn of 2001, the child relief organization is also fighting for improved legal protection for young boys and girls who are victims of trafficking.

Issued by: terre des hommes Germany Press Department

For inquiries: terre des hommes-Press Department, Claudia Berker, Phone 0541/7101-111.

Mitglied der
internationalen Föderation
terre des hommes

Spendenkonto 700
Volksbank Osnabrück eG
BLZ 265 900 25

Eintragung
Vereinsregister Osnabrück
Nr. 1870

Spendensiegel
Deutsches
Zentralinstitut
für soziale
Fragen/DZI

Mitglied im
Deutschen Paritätischen
Wohlfahrtsverband

Konto 2611-203
Postbank Hamburg
BLZ 200 100 20

Umsatzsteuer-
Identifikationsnummer
DE 117 646 214

