

Violence Against Children in SWITZERLAND

Extracts from the latest national NGO coalition's report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

CRC Session 30, 20 May - 7 June 2002

Comité Suisse pour l'UNICEF - English

www.crin.org/docs/resources/treaties/crc.30/swiss_ngo_report_eng.doc

[...]

- › **Family:** Children are increasing the poverty risk for the family.
Due to the lack of supplementary benefits increasing numbers of families in Switzerland are being pushed close to the poverty line. The child is turning more and more into a poverty risk for the family. Between 100 000 and 190 000 children, that is between 7 and 12% of all minors, are affected by the shortage of financial means.
- › **State support and assistance for parents:** Family allowance is linked to gainful employment and differs from canton to canton, resulting in unequal treatment of children and their families.
The allocation of family allowance is linked to the occupational situation of the parents. A single parent without independent income is particularly at disadvantage in this system. Children of single parent families who receive insufficient support or no support at all are inadequately protected.
- › **Child care facilities:** Parents find it hard to place their child in a crèche.
Families needing two salaries to make ends meet are particularly affected by the insufficient number of crèches and day nurseries. The number of latchkey-kids in Switzerland is rising.
- › Switzerland offers a wide network of advice centres for parents. Often these centres find it hard to reach the desired target groups.
- › **Traffic:** Switzerland has one of the highest mortality rates for child victims of traffic accidents. The report of the Swiss Government does not elaborate on that fact.
- › **Child abuse:** In Switzerland a certain level of corporal punishment of children is permitted.
Even today, the country does not have any decree or regulation prohibiting corporal punishment or similar humiliating treatment of children.
- › **Child custody:** The system of guardianship needs to become more professional.
- › **Foreign children:** The integration of foreign children into society appears insufficient.
Foreign children often do not receive adequate assistance with integration. They are above average represented in special needs classes.
- › **Asylum proceedings:** The present asylum proceedings do not consider the special needs of asylum seekers below the age of 18 years.
- › **Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Switzerland:** The Swiss federal system hinders the elaboration of a homogenous children and youths policy. There is no federal administrative body that supervises and evaluates how the Convention on the Rights of the Child is implemented on federal, cantonal and communal level.
- › **Participation:** Certain forms of children's participation do exist. However, they only bear fruit if adults actively and firmly support the participation process and make sure that participation is not limited to certain isolated issues.
The numerous children's parliaments have had but little impact on the decision making process of adults.

[...]

- Furthermore, many cantonal school laws do not contain any interdiction of corporal punishment inflicted by teachers. On the contrary: The Regulation concerning obligatory Schooling in the Canton of Zurich (Verordnung betreffend das Volksschulwesen des Kantons Zürich) considers corporal punishment «excusable in special cases, in particular when the teacher has been provoked». Many other cantonal school laws or regulations do not explicitly mention the subject of corporal punishment.

[...]

The report of the Swiss Government points out (§ 747) that the Swiss Penal Code forbids pornography in connection with children. However, the report fails to address the increasing problem of child pornography in the Internet and does not propose potential counteracting measures that are required.

- Since late 1999, Switzerland no longer has a federal office that deals with the prevention of and fight against criminality on the Internet and hence with the combat against child pornography.
- According to the Control Committee (Geschäftsprüfungsdelegation) in charge of state security there is high time for action.

[...]

Due to the federal system in Switzerland, the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is in certain areas incoherent and this often to the disadvantage of children. For certain areas affecting the child, the implementation of federal legislation lies within the authority of the cantons.

[...]