



END CHILD PROSTITUTION
CHILD PORNOGRAPHY &
TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN
FOR SEXUAL PURPOSES

ECPAT Belgium
Annual Report 2011

Introduction

This reports aims at listing all activities undertaken by ECPAT Belgium in 2011. It contains activities easy to indentify, such as campaigns, tourism fairs, activities in schools. It also lists activities which are not defined in time and always undergoing (campaign promotion, fundraising, lobby in the EU). Some activities overlap on two years. Consequently, it is sometimes necessary to remind briefly the context of their launch.

1. WHAT IS ECPAT?

ECPAT Belgium is the official member of ECPAT International in Belgium.

ECPAT International is a global network of organisations and individuals working together for the elimination of child prostitution, child pornography and the trafficking of children for sexual purposes. It gathers more than 80 groups in over 75 countries.

ECPAT International started in 1990 as a three-year campaign to End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT). Commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) was a common phenomenon in the region but this serious violation of the rights of the child received very little attention from the international community. As the extent of the problem was much larger than expected, the campaign was renewed for 3 years. Its reach extended both geographically to involve countries outside Asia and thematically, from prostitution to any kind of commercial sexual exploitation of children.

This led to the First World Congress against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (1996) which took place in Stockholm, with the support of the Queen Silvia. A broad range of stakeholders attended the Congress: 122 governments, academics, organizations, members of the tourism sector, young people, etc. A Second (2001) and a Third World Congress (2008) were held, confirming the importance of fighting against CSEC.

ECPAT International combats child sex tourism, child trafficking and sexual exploitation through the new technologies. This transpires in its activities:

- Awareness-raising activities
- Care and protection to the victims
- Lobby for legal reforms
- Research and publications
- Child and youth participation

ECPAT Belgium started in 1994 as a network of organizations active in the fields of human rights, child rights, peace, developing countries, and social problems in Belgium. Its main objective was to create a national group which could relay the international ECPAT campaign against commercial sexual exploitation of children. In 2004, it got the official status of non-profit organization (asbl). As part of a network, ECPAT Belgium shares resources, implement global campaigns and works according to ECPAT International's perspective. It has also developed a range of specific actions inspired by its work on the ground. Unlike other ECPAT groups, ECPAT Belgium is not a grassroots organization. Its activities are mainly:

- Awareness-raising campaigns on commercial sexual exploitation of children
- Lobbying to ensure a effective application of the legislation (national and European level)
- Trainings in schools and with the private sector
- Partnership with the tourism industry (travel agencies, tour operators, airlines, etc.)

2. CAMPAIGNS

a. "Stop Child Prostitution" campaign

Launched for the first time in 2004, the Stopchildprostitution.be campaign has been relaunched in 2007 and 2010. Sexual exploitation of children in tourism is a gross violation of the rights of the child. However, it is still tolerated in some countries. ECPAT Belgium and its partners want to remind that nothing can justify sexual exploitation of children (exotic experience, impunity abroad, local beliefs,...) and perpetrators of such offences can be prosecuted in Belgium for an abuse committed abroad.

The three campaigns "Stop Child Prostitution" were the result of a close collaboration between partners from the public and the private sector. A dynamic working group ensures the set up and follow-up of the campaign. It gathers members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Justice, "Anti-Trafficking" Unit of the Federal Police, Federation of the Tourism Industry, Belgian Carriers Federation, Child Focus, Plan Belgium and the Samilia Foundation.

Since the re-launch of the campaign in June 2010, leaflets and posters have been displayed all over the country trough the partners of the campaign, the tourism fairs, the presentation in schools, the website www.stopchildprostitution.be, travel agencies, etc. They give information on the phenomenon and means to report it. All reports left on the website are relayed to the Police afterwards. Since 2004, around 30 reports have been recorded.

Thanks to its growing contacts with the tourism industry, ECPAT Belgium was invited several times to present its campaign “Stop Child Prostitution” at tourism fairs.

- 15-16 January 2011: Jetair Reishapening Beurs, Antwerp. Large public and professionals.
- 4-7 February 2011: Salon des Vacances, Brussels. Large public tourism fair. Stand in partnership with the Federal Police and its Department THB.
- 9-12 February 2011: Altevoyages, Liège. Alternative tourism fair for large public.
- 18-19 February 2011: BelAsia, Wemmel. Tourism fair focused on Asian countries. Large public
- 15-16 October 2011: Tourisme Autrement Fair, Brussels. Alternative tourism fair for large public. ECPAT Belgium held a presentation with the Head of the Anti-Trafficking Unit of the Federal Police, Wim Bontinck, on commercial sexual exploitation of children and the prosecution of the offenders. Students attending the session were from a higher education school in tourism.

Each event gave the opportunity to create contacts with other NGO’s, potential volunteers, to meet officials or members of the tourism sector.

At the Tourisme Autrement Fair, ECPAT Belgium was contacted by a teacher in tourism from Mechelen (higher education) in order to give a presentation to her students on commercial sexual exploitation of children.

b. “Stop Sex Trafficking of Children and Young People”, Year 3, Belgian handover

In August 2009, ECPAT International and The Body Shop launched a three-year campaign to strengthen protection of children from sex trafficking. According to the United Nations, 1.2 million children are victims of trafficking each year. The first year of the campaign (2009-2010) was aimed to raise awareness on the phenomenon. The report “Their protection is in our hands” compiled comprehensive information over sex trafficking of children at a global level. National progress cards were drafted as well, indicating, for each country, measures that had to be taken to strengthen protection of children. Hand creams “Soft Hands, Kind Heart” were sold by The Body Shop to carry on projects against child sex trafficking all over the world.

After Year 1 dedicated to raise awareness on child trafficking, calls for action summarized in the country progress cards were written down in national petitions. During Year 2, each country drafted its own recommendations to the national government in order to improve the protection of children from child trafficking. These petitions were aimed to provoke

long-term change in national policies. From 2010 to 2011, more than 102.000 petitions were collected in Belgium. Year 3 was dedicated to the handover of the petitions to the national government. Political situation in Belgium (no government during more than 400 days) did not allow to do more than a symbolic handover.

On 28 July 2011, Joëlle Milquet received the 102.911 petitions collected in Belgium since one year. Because she received the hand cream at the beginning of the campaign and she is Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Equal Opportunities, Joëlle Milquet was the right person to hand the petitions over to. Indeed she ensured her support: "Since its launch, I have been touched by this campaign and I am satisfied that such a huge number of Belgian people joined the fight which has to be the fight of all of us and particularly the one of politicians. I promise to relay your petition and its calls to the Belgian government in order to strengthen the fight against child trafficking". She also suggested to meet in a working group to discuss this matter with a comprehensive approach.

Around 30 people from ECPAT and The Body Shop attended the petition handover. They walked from the Ministry Cabinet to the Grand Place, wearing yellow T-shirts, holding the letters STOP, some panels in the shape of a hand, a banner with the number of signatures and whistles. A picture was taken in front of the City Hall.

The event got a good media coverage, in both French and Dutch newspapers: La Libre Belgique, Metro, La Dernière Heure, De Tijd, De Gazet van Antwerpen and Knack. The Radios Chrétiennes Francophones also interviewed ECPAT Belgium.

In December 2011, soon after the forming of a new government, ECPAT Belgium was contacted by the newly appointed Minister of Interior, Equal Opportunities and Vice-Prime Minister Joëlle Milquet to know more about the concrete measures included in the petition that could be transposed at the national level.

c. "Stop Sex Trafficking of Children and Young People", Year 3, European handover

The ECPAT Europe groups decided to do an EU handover of all petitions collected in Europe during Year 2 of the campaign. Indeed, the European Union is an entity as such which works hard to promote human rights. Following the adoption of the EU "Directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting victims " in December 2010, ECPAT decided to hand the petitions over to Cecilia Malmström, Commissioner responsible for Home Affairs, in light of key role she played in drafting this Directive.

On 28 June 2011, she received the 2.3 million "Stop Sex Trafficking of Children and Young People" petitions collected all over Europe since they were open to signature. The event took place in front of the European Commission in Brussels. Around 60 people (members of ECPAT groups, volunteers, young people, etc.) gathered to ask Commissioner Malmström to

accelerate the implementation of the EU Directive into domestic law. Chris Davis, International Campaigns Director at The Body Shop International and Kathleen Speake, Executive Director of ECPAT International opened the event reminding the objectives of the campaign, its achievements and the remaining challenges that had to be addressed for a better protection of minors.

Commissioner Malmström received the largest human rights petition in EU history. After accepting it, she said: “Trafficking in human beings is an extremely serious crime and a gross violation of human rights. The Directive I proposed will help to severely hinder what can be classified as a modern form of slavery. In response to the 2.3 million people who have signed this petition, I commit that we will do our utmost to ensure that Member States give priority to the implementation of the Directive.”

The event was covered by the European Commission media service and on the blog of the Commissioner (<http://blogs.ec.europa.eu/malmstrom/we-must-put-an-end-to-modern-slavery/>)

ECPAT Belgium also actively prepared the EU handover which was organized in Brussels during the Regional Network Resources Exchange of ECPAT Europe groups. The group was in charge of inviting its contacts to the event, gathering young people, contacting Belgian MEP’s, etc.

d. “Stop Sex Trafficking of Children and Young People”, Year 3, United Nations handover

On 28 and 29 September 2011, ECPAT Belgium went to Geneva with other representatives of the ECPAT network and The Body Shop to present over 7 million petition signatures to the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Human Rights Council. This was the largest human rights petition ever presented to the United Nations. The event was held with sponsorship from the Permanent Mission of Thailand. ECPAT and The Body Shop met with Chairman of the Committee on the Rights of the Child Mr Jean Zermatten and President of the Human Rights Council Laura Dupuy Lassere.

Jean Zermatten strongly welcomed the 7 million signatures and promised to relay the message onto the other members of the Committee to consider a ‘Day of General Discussion’ on child trafficking. Furthermore, he invited ECPAT and The Body Shop to provide input in an upcoming General Comment highlighting the role of the business sector towards protecting children.

Laura Dupuy Lassere stated that sex trafficking of children and young people is a grave crime against children and it is an important issue for the Human Right Council. She promised to bring the campaign messages back to the UN Human Rights Council and encourage member states to continue to take action in honouring the commitments to protect children. The

event was attended by over 100 member state representatives, representatives of international organisations and UN agencies, NGOs and representatives from ECPAT and The Body Shop.

3. PROJECTS

a. “Preventing Trafficking in Persons” project, Year 2

In the perspective of the campaign “Stop Sex Trafficking of Children and Young People”, ECPAT Belgium, in collaboration with the Samilia Foundation and ACSIS launched the pilot project “Preventing Trafficking in Women and Children” in Bucharest. The initial length of the project was 6 months, from October 2010 to April 2011.

AC SIS is a Romanian NGO based in Bucharest which offers material, psychological and social help to young mothers in precarious situation. In the past few years, some beneficiaries have left the country, abandoning their child to get a job abroad. Belgium and Western Europe are seen as an Eldorado for many Romanian, especially those coming from popular background. However, job offers are often misleading and many women are actually trafficked for sexual exploitation. Romania is the country of origin of most of the underage prostitutes identified in Belgium.

Beside social counseling and financial help, the workshops “Work Safe!” were organized to raise awareness of the beneficiaries on risks of being trafficked. Materials used during the workshops were created by ECPAT Belgium and the Samilia Foundation: Romanian translation of the movie “10 min” and handbooks. The latter contained information about the dangers of trafficking, the victims, the offenders, consequences and legal possibilities of work. A simplified version was distributed to the beneficiaries whereas a more elaborated one targeted social workers.

The project initial length was 6 months. Due to its success among beneficiaries and the request of two other local NGO’s to share the materials/knowledge, the project was renewed one year, from April 2011 to May 2012. It was renamed “Preventing Trafficking in Persons”. The objectives were to extend the awareness-raising activities to students of vocational schools in Bucharest and to train professionals likely to come into contact with at-risk families. The same materials (DVD’s, simplified handbook and handbook for professionals) were used. This time, the project reached 550 young people (60 ACSIS beneficiaries, 30 NGO’s beneficiaries, 400 students from Arts & Crafts N°3 High School, 60 institutionalized teenagers) and 51 professionals (26 social workers/psychologists, 25 high school teachers). 600 handbooks were disseminated.

AC SIS also organized a drawing contest in vocational schools. The 30 students who enrolled themselves in the competition were asked to create an original poster on trafficking issues,

based on their new knowledge of the phenomenon. The best 10 creations received a prize (school supplies, sweets, etc.). Quote from one participant: “I liked that I spoke on trafficking relaxed and I could tell my opinion whenever I wanted. I learned new things; I didn’t know that traffickers are using so many methods to attract victims. I was surprised by the life experience of my colleagues and their stories about human trafficking, which made all look more real. I liked the poster contest because I had the opportunity to draw what I understand after our discussions”.

ECPAT Belgium and the Samilia Foundation visited ACSIS’s staff on 20 June 2011. The visit in Bucharest was also an opportunity to present the “Preventing Trafficking in Persons” project to the Belgian Embassy in Bucharest who gave its support. Through the Ambassador, contacts were taken with Romanian and Belgian officials to ensure that the project could be carried out in the long term.

b. Golondrina project

This is the second project which was partly funded by the “Stop Sex Trafficking of Children and Young People” campaign. It is an awareness-raising campaign launched in the educational community of Santafe, Candelaria and San Cristobal (Columbia). Activities were carried out in 10 high schools where violence between students is particularly high. Youth workers were introduced to the CSEC, its relation with school and the role of teacher in changing attitudes, the means to lower abuse, etc.

The objective was to train 350 teachers, 350 fathers and 350 students in order to prevent sexual abuse of children. It was done through visits in colleges, conferences and workshops.

2100 students (7-17 years) were reached, 380 computer and social science teachers and 20 fathers. The low level of participation from the fathers can be explained by the schedule of the workshops (during work hours).

A day on CSEC was also organized gathering 300 students, several teachers, families and civil servants of the Secretariat for the Education. Focus was set on legislation on CSEC.

Beside the direct beneficiaries of the workshops, there is a large number of indirect beneficiaries because the teachers can spread the knowledge to the whole school. Each school counts 3000 students and teachers from 10 schools were trained. So, 30 000 students could potentially be reached.

The students and teachers were highly interested by the topics of commercial sexual exploitation of children and asked many questions.

The project started on 30 March 2011 till 31 August 2011.

4. NETWORKS

Since its very beginnings, ECPAT Belgium has been involved in a large scope of consultative organisations and networks. These different collaborations have been maintained and enlarged on purpose by ECPAT in order to become a genuine strategy of working in networks. By the way of doing, a small organisation like ECPAT can use the expertise of bigger stakeholders in the field and enlarge its reach and influence. At the international, European and national levels, ECPAT Belgium is member of different working groups and takes part to a large range of meetings.

a. ECPAT Europe RNRE meeting

Every two years, a Regional Network Resources Exchange is organized between the ECPAT groups of the same region (Europe, Americas, Africa, East Asia and Pacific), in order to share experiences and elaborate an action plan for the future. ECPAT Belgium, in collaboration with ECPAT International, was highly involved in the logistical preparation of the meeting which took place in Brussels from 27 to 29 June 2011. It was responsible for identifying accommodation and meeting rooms for 40 participants, organizing daily meals and coffee breaks, providing the participants with local logistical information, arranging entertainment activities, organizing the printing and display of materials, etc.

The RNRE was very instructive. ECPAT Belgium took part in the debates, especially by presenting the work it does with ECPAT Netherlands in lobbying the EU institutions.

b. ECPAT 5th International Assembly

Between 8 and 10 November 2011, the fifth General Assembly of ECPAT International was held in Paris. ECPAT groups from over 70 countries participated in this first global gathering since the proclamation of the Rio de Janeiro Declaration and Call to Action to Prevent and Stop Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents (CSEC) in 2008.

The 5th International Assembly enabled ECPAT groups to reaffirm the vision of the ECPAT movement, assess progress and agree collective action for the future. The plenary sessions and the Thematic Workshops also allowed extensive sharing of good practices and lessons learnt on key issues related to the mandate of ECPAT International.

ECPAT Belgium had the opportunity to present its campaign “Stop Child Prostitution” during the workshop devoted to the fight against child sex tourism.

During the Assembly, Katlijn Declercq was nominated as Regional Representative for Western Europe to the ECPAT International Board.

c. Focal point on the EU institutions

Since 2002, ECPAT Belgium is responsible for the coordination of the lobbying work on the European institutions. Its location in Brussels has certainly influenced this choice. Lobbying is made through networks/collaborations with other organisations on a thematic approach (namely CSEC and trafficking) and on an institutional approach (EU, Council of Europe, OSCE, NATO etc.).

The work is conducted in collaboration with the Secretariat and other major child rights NGOs: La Strada, Save the Children, Terre des Hommes, Amnesty International, Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (for the issue of trafficking) and Missing Children Europe, ENACSO, NSPCC, Save the Children (for CSEC issues). ECPAT attended several hearings organized in the EP to prepare the new Directives on Trafficking and Sexual Abuse of Children. ECPAT Belgium represents ECPAT International in different events and expert meetings in the European Parliament, the Commission, etc., for instance through the Anti-Trafficking Day 2011.

d. Belgian Child rights NGO network

ECPAT Belgium is member of the "Coordination des ONG pour les droits de l'enfant" (www.lacode.be) and the "Kinderrechtencoalitie" (www.kinderrechtencoalitie.be) in charge of writing the "Alternative Report on the implementation of the UN Convention on the rights of the child". This implies meeting on a monthly basis where NGO's exchange information about their work and set up common projects.

ECPAT Belgium is also associated to the work of the Belgian National Commission on the Rights of the Child and the General Delegate on the Rights of the Child.

e. Stop Child Prostitution group

As coordinator of the campaign "Stop Child Prostitution" (see above), ECPAT Belgium is member of the working group gathering all the partners of the campaign: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Justice, Anti-Trafficking Unit of the Federal Police, Federation of the Tourism Industry, Belgian Carriers Federation, Child Focus, Plan Belgium and the Samilia Foundation. The group meets 3 or 4 times a year to follow up the campaign and develop new activities. In 2011, it has decided to develop a Code of Ethics which could be applied to each organization in order to protect children from sexual exploitation.

f. Child Focus

Since the creation of Child Focus in 1998, ECPAT Belgium has had close contacts with the Foundation for missing and exploited children. It has been an expert for the Child Focus study on young people and the Internet (2008).

g. Tourism sector

Beside the Federation of the Tourism Industry, ECPAT Belgium has close contacts with Jet Air and Thomas Cook. It has also displayed the campaign “Stop Child Prostitution” through “Connections” and smaller travel agencies.

5. SUPPORT TO STUDENTS

Raise awareness of the public on the issue of CSEC is one of the main activities of ECPAT Belgium. Schools are places where prevention is of utmost importance. ECPAT Belgium is frequently asked by students from high schools with a specific focus on tourism to give a presentation about its work. In 2011, ECPAT Belgium went to l’Institut de la Providence (Gosselies) on 4 March and Notre-Dame de la Sagesse (Schaerbeek) on 28 March. It also participated to a jury for a final high school work on CSEC.

ECPAT Belgium is also frequently interviewed by students from both high schools and universities. In 2011, it was contacted among others by high school students from l’Institut de l’Enfant Jésus (Etterbeek), students in communication from University of Brussels, from the University of Liège. Following these interviews, one work was particularly striking: a mock raising awareness campaign on child prostitution.

Once a year, ECPAT Belgium also works with interns for a length of 3-4 months. In 2011, it was a future social worker from the ISFSC (February-April).

6. COMMUNICATION

a. New technologies

ECPAT Belgium has set up two websites.

- www.ecpat.be to present the work done in Belgium, the awareness-raising campaigns, the news in the field, etc. In 2011, ECPAT Belgium decided to change the design of its website in order to make it easier to read and with more comprehensive and more actualized information.

- www.childprostitution.be to support the campaign “Stop Child Prostitution”. Latest news of the campaign, reporting form for suspicious cases, etc.

ECPAT Belgium also gives information on the network through Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ecpat-Belgium-End-Child-Prostitution-Pornography-and-Trafficking/170706209624951?ref=hl>) and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/ecpatbelgium>).

b. ECPAT in the media

ECPAT Belgium has been contacted several times by English, French and Dutch media to discuss commercial sexual exploitation of children and explain its work in the field.

In July 2011, The Network (Euronews) interviewed three experts on child sex tourism, notably Ariane Couvreur from ECPAT Belgium.

The handover of the petitions to Joëlle Milquet got a good media coverage, in both French and Dutch newspapers: La Libre Belgique, Metro, La Dernière Heure, De Tijd, De Gazet van Antwerpen and Knack. The Radios Chrétiennes Francophones also interviewed ECPAT Belgium.

On 8 March 2011, Katlijn Declercq and Sophie Jekeler, administrator and President of ECPAT Belgium, were invited to the Belgian Senate with 98 other “Women of exception” to receive an award for their action in the field of women’s rights.

7. FUNDRAISING

ECPAT Belgium works on a project-basis for subsidies: it applies for funding only for specific projects. Besides this short-term fundraising, it also tries to set up a long-term fundraising strategy with two organizations: L’ô en conscience and Masaga.

L’ô en conscience has developed the “Card Post Art” project which is a set of 5 reproductions of art photographs sold to the profit of the artist, a cause and the intermediary L’ô en conscience. ECPAT has been chosen as the cause for one of these sets. In December 2011, Viaxis (from AXA) bought 30 sets.

Masaga offers to create an online portfolio where one can tell his/her own story and seal it till death where it will be opened only by people named before. Part of the profits generated by the creation of portfolios will be offered to ECPAT.

ECPAT Belgium also applied at “King Baudouin Foundation” to open a “compte projet” which would facilitate the gifts to ECPAT’s cause as it gives automatically a fiscal discount to the donor, without requiring an additional administrative workload for ECPAT Belgium. On the

long-term, this strategy is a way to increase gifts to ECPAT. The project that was presented was the “Card Post Art”. However, it was not selected by the jury.

One of the priorities in 2012 is to set up a fundraising strategy for ECPAT Belgium.

8. THE TEAM

- Sophie Jekeler, volunteer since 1994 and elected President of ECPAT Belgium in 2004: representation of the organization at different events.
- Danielle Van Kerckhoven, Administrator of ECPAT Belgium: daily coordination of the organization since 1993 – part time.
- Katlijn Declercq, coordinator since 1994, then administrator of ECPAT Belgium. Since 2002, Focal Point on European Institutions for ECPAT International. Since 2011, Regional Representative for Western Europe to the ECPAT International Board – part time
- Ariane Couvreur, Project Manager, ECPAT Belgium: management of the different projects, since 2010 – full time

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