



## PRESS RELEASE

### International Conference “Quality in Alternative Care”

**SOS Children’s Villages, with the support of various partners, is organising the international conference "Quality in Alternative Care" at the Clarion Congress Hotel in Prague from 4-6 April 2011.**

In Europe alone an estimated one million children live in alternative care settings<sup>1</sup>. This means: If a child’s own family cannot – for whatever reason - provide adequate care for him or her, the state is responsible for protecting the child’s rights and ensuring a new home in appropriate alternative care. This happens in co-operation with local authorities and in many cases also with duly authorised civil society organisations. For children and young people living in alternative care there are various care systems. However, inadequate care can have damaging effects on their development. Against this background, SOS Children’s Villages organises the conference “Quality in Alternative Care”.

Quality management plays an important role in ensuring the best interest of the child. Therefore the conference intends to promote the implementation of quality standards. It also aims to identify changes needed in policy and practice to align them with international frameworks, and to empower children and young people with alternative care experience. Other topics of the conference are de-institutionalisation processes and special quality requirements pertaining to the care of siblings, child and youth participation, leaving care, children in emergency situations and others. Last but not least, the conference should provide networking opportunities for the participants.

The conference will target decision makers, NGOs, care-givers, youth welfare service providers, researchers and young people with experience of alternative care. In order to have the same pre-conditions for the young people as well, a three-day preconference on 1-3 April 2011 is organised. The young people will be involved in the conference as facilitators and presenters.

The partner organisations are Better Care Network, Council of Europe, International Social Service, Charles University in Prague, Council of the Baltic Sea States, FICE (Fédération Internationale des Communautés Educatives), INTRAC (International Research Network on Transitions to Adulthood from Care), Eurochild, Palacký University, Olomouc/Czech Republic, EUSARF (European Scientific Association on Residential and Foster Care for Children and Adolescents), Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs/Czech Republic.

Among the speakers and panellists are Nigel Cantwell, international consultant on child protection; Jean-Claude Legrand, Senior Regional Advisor Child Protection, UNICEF; Jana Hainsworth, Secretary-General, Eurochild; Michael Ungar, Professor at the School of Social Work at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Canada; Michael Lehofer, Professor of Psychiatry at the

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<sup>1</sup> Eurochild, CHILDREN IN ALTERNATIVE CARE - NATIONAL SURVEYS, January 2010

Sigmund Freud Clinic Graz, Austria; Hana Pazlarová, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic; Miloslav Macela and Klára Trubačová, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Czech Republic; Christian Posch, International Director Programme Development, SOS Children's Villages International; and Stephen Ucembe, who has started a network of care leavers in Kenya. Furthermore, a group of young people will present the campaign "I Matter", together with Véronique Lerch, SOS Children's Villages International and Mike Stein, Professor in the Social Policy Research Unit at York University, England.

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