

Transcript of Interview with Patrizia DE LUCA, European Commission, DG Justice

8 October 2009

Subject: Conference on Adoptions, 30 November – 1 December 2009, Strasbourg

Conference is now public, internet site. NO problem to spread information. Website does not belong to European Commission, is managed by external contractor of European Commission, not on site Europa – only temporary site for registration. During December will be suspended. Not .eu, because temporary website.

Done by private organization paid by the European Commission, controlled by us, content etc. Very simple. About conference, program draft agenda ready soon...

[...]

Very small number of NGO's, which work with us – which contacted us before. Ten NGOs. Nordic Adoption, is umbrella of 15 advocacy of adoption, they have a website. They are very important in Nordic area. Others from France, Italy. France, I don't remember the name now.

SERA, yes, one of them. Yes, they have a special unit in Romania. We will invite the general SERA, which is based in Switzerland, in Geneva. De Combret, I don't know if he comes, because SERA did not yet receive the invitation, but we will send all invitations soon.

Also ISS, International Social Services, one of the biggest associations who deals with adoptions. Small number we can reimburse, and just one person, travel and hotel. Otherwise only member states, but we want to hear also the voices....

United Adoptees International:

We organize the conference, we want people to be there. Problem is this people never contacted us before. First e-mail I received after your e-mail.

The first time I heard of this thing. I asked them, if you want to participate you can.

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Yesterday I sent them the last email, saying website is now online, if they want they can be registered as participant to be confirmed. For budgetary reasons we cannot reimburse everyone

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Amici dei Bambini, yes and Amici d'Adozione

And SERA Romania-

Funding EU for Amici, I do not am aware, there are so many financial programmes. Money is there, our financial programme, they did not apply there. But maybe some other programme. If SERA sends a project in appropriate call for proposal, they will receive invitation.

I and head of unit made invitations – we are team for civil justice. I am head of sector, then there is head of unit, lady from Finland.

The speaker, you will see name in the agenda. But it will be high level.

The conference is organized this way:

First day managed more by Council of Europe, and they will speak about new convention on Adoption. There was this old convention of 1967, convention of CoE on adoption. Now in 2007 revised this convention in order to meet social change in Europe. Now they want to make some publicity on this convention and explain to member state to convince them to ratify.

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Second day more mentioned by European Commission. EC pays for the whole conference. We pay on basis of our financial programme, because in this programme we can have a part of the programme to finance programme of people like for instance AiBi or other stakeholders. Autonomous action of the Commission there is this conference. Let's say CoE so they can offer the restaurant, logistics or for instance they pay for the badges, the keyholder for the badges. Small things but they don't have much budget. SO if the COM has some money to spend, we are eager to spend this money to organize evens like that.

Commissioner is Jacques Barrot. Yes, he is French (like Combret). French is very well represented in the conference at level of associations also level of speakers at level Member States because 3 people are sent from France to participate. Obviously we can only pay 1. Yes, De Combret will send someone.

Also AiBi Bulgaria will come.

United Adoptees International: I think they care for the rights of the adopted persons. I don't know, child trafficking maybe. I don't have any elements, first time I hear of this organisation.

I search on website and saw they deal with rights of adopted persons. But ok, I have no problem with them in the conference.

So, the second day of the conference is more devoted to international adoptions. Start with Hague conf in international law, 1993 convention, but Romania has acceded to this convention recently no? There are three people from Hague coming, including deputy secretary general William Duncan will speak about function, perspectives etc. Second part: presentation general legal framework UNCRC, new Convention CoE, about all the framework to see if in these national is secondary, no, so 1993 Hague. Then the Right to a Family in the int legal framework and practical experience. And expert will speak

and then we will analyse some practical experience, that will be the case of Romania and Bulgaria, because they are the hot...

I don't know if a Romanian NGO will come, as they did not contact us. But I can tell you that from Romania we have three persons from DG of adoption. It is Panait. Then speaker about Romania will be president of Unicef Romania, Then we will have experience BG?RO. Last session about European policy, it will be Cavada, you know he is very..... Cavada will speak of the need of European policy. Then it will be me. I will present result of study on adoption, of the Commission, a comparative study on adoption. Study not yet published, will be public after conference. Normally we take some months. it will be European Parliament they have study of the EP of adoptions between Member States.

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Next we will hear, don't know if she will come yet, an adoptive parent from Hungary, but the theme is the problem. She lives in UK. So she had problem with adoption because she had an adoption in Hungary, but this adoption was not recognized in UK. Because problem we want to address is lack of mutual recognition of adoption decision between MS's could hinder the free movement of people. Because now you do not live anymore in one country or origin, but you work in another country. SO this adoption should be recognized.

In 2006 Cavada, EP held a conference for possible European adoption.

(Shows BOOK of Roelie Post)

Romania for export only... no I do not know this book. Because yes I know that Cavada, and Baroness... very complicated story....

Romania very complicated issue.

Maybe not very, now there is this problem with Romania, abolished adoptions. Yes, (2006) this was the first conference, Frattini was there, Van Loon Hague, pres Unicef Ro, Francois de Combret. Yes this is like a second follow up, this conference. Our conference is more larger. One theme will be, because there are really problems for European citizens, lack of harmonisation. We expect from this conference to raise awareness. And also to in a certain way Romania that EU is not against intercountry adoption, all Member States have intercountry adoption. To convince Romania that intercountry adoption can be authorized in a certain way. Because we want to make a comparison between Romania and Bulgaria, they acceded to EU at same time. They both had problems with intercountry adoption and institutionalisation. Similar situation. Then BG and RO blocked ica for a certain time – moratorium – then I think BG first had same law as RO to block ica. Now BG has a law that allows ica, with some guarantee, everyone says very balanced law. On the contrary Ro is stuck.

This is fault of Baroness Nicholson.

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If Romanian law is so, is fault of Nicholson because she was appointed ...

This is a book against ica. I can quote to you some sentence of BN , on internet – public. She says Intercountry adoption is like child trafficking. This is the idea. So, if you imagine that she used all her influence on Romania to stop ica, saying that if you don't stop you cannot enter the EU.

I can imagine this is not a well balanced book [sic. Romania for Export Only) . I can write her name, just to recall. But uh, already from the title you will see.. it is clear that it is against intercountry adoption... She worked, let's see, for the European Commission? maybe as a consultant. Normally officials are not allowed to write books, you know.

Our aim is to explain to Romania our point of view, make them understand that we are not against intercountry adoption, but some guarantee for the child should be there. Not like in the past with problems like child trafficking. But considered that all Member States have ica we don't see why Romania should not have it.