

Brussels, 8 June 2012

Note for the File

Subject: European Parliament Round Table and Exhibition, 6 June 2012

I participated to the EP Exhibition and Expert Roundtable 'Children need families, not institutions', hosted by MEP Mairead McGuinness, at the request of the John Mulligan (Focus on Romania).

The event was co-organised by Eurochild, Hope & Homes and Absolute Return for Kids (ARK). The meeting was chaired by ARK's chairman, the French-Anglo banker Arpad Busson.

Speakers included:

- Dr. Charles Zeanah from the Bucharest Early Intervention Research
- Dr. Delia Pop, Hope & Homes Romania
- Ms. Lieve Fransen, Director DG EMPL

Mr. Busson, in his presentation at the Exhibition, compared institutions to Auschwitz and also stated that previous EU funding was spent on painting the walls and toys. The current progress was thanks to ARK's financing of Hope & Homes Romania. I spoke to Mr. Busson in private and requested him to correct his statement about the use of European Commission funding in public. He did indeed; he apologized and lengthily thanked the COM for its good work, including the financing of part of Hope & Homes' work in Romania.

The main issue of the event was to invite the NGO's present to put pressure on the COM to make funding from the Structural Fund available for closure. It was mentioned, however, that currently the EU is spending 100 million euros in Bulgaria, without a clear idea about the costs and the outcome.

The Director of DG EMPL expressed her dismay to the number of 1 million children in institutions (for which no data are available) and stated that there must be people who want to adopt them.

The event was reported by Euronewsⁱ

[SIGNED]

Roelie Post

cc. Catherine Day, Simon Mordue

ⁱ <http://www.euronews.com/2012/06/07/eu-told-to-do-more-to-end-child-institutionalisation/>