

terre des hommes  
Bundesrepublik Deutschland e.V

Crime  
and other small things

The Case  
"pro infante . action: child in danger regd. association"  
and its consequences

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The number of such couples who remain unintentionally childless is increasing day by day in Germany. When medical science proves fruitless in such cases, many of them start thinking of adopting a child -- even from another country, in spite of the difficulties they may face in doing so.

### I. The Problem

For years such attempts have been subjects of discussion. Some time ago it was clearly criminal trade of children and several cases of irresponsible private adoptions made the adoptions from foreign countries a subject of discussion. Therefore, it gives sufficient reasons to make it amply clear that the government recognised voluntary organisations involved in adoptions at the international level and the government officers working alongwith them (that is the department concerned with adoptions or the central offices for adoptions) are not completely above suspicion. The information in the following pages is based on Pro Infante . Action : Kind in Not e v. (Pro Infante . Action : Child in danger registered society ) which was founded in 1977 as an adoption agency . This report does not intend to completely discredit the work of the Association , but the unprofessional or rather criminal machinations of the Association in processing adoptions that have come to be known to us make it undoubtedly clear that the current German laws on adoption, which are now 20 years old, need to be completely overhauled. This is necessary for protecting the adopted children, their natural parents and the parents proposing to adopt the children. That means, to begin with, a regulatory and monitoring governmental body should be formed which carries out its duty with full responsibility

### II. The case of Seema Knuth

The couple , Gertraud and Peter Knuth are the former adopted parents of Seema Knuth who was born on 09 January 1981 in the north Indian city of Jalandhar in Punjab. In 1990 Seema was offered to the couple for adoption by the German Pro Infante . Action : Child in Danger regd. Association having its office in Kempen on Lower Rhein . At that time the girl was living in one of the homes of Missionaries of Charity in Delhi. This organisation was offering children for adoption and is till today working in close cooperation with Pro Infante . On 17 November 1990 after the sessions court in Delhi handed over the guardianship of Seema to the Knuth couple, she could leave the country. The adoption proceedings in her case were completed in Germany on 29 June 1992 . In her case the lower district court in Aichach ruled that the consent of the natural parents was not necessary under Section 1744 paragraph 4 (well-meant Section 1747 ) as their identity was not known . But after Seema had learnt enough German language and had generated trust in her adopted parents , it was found that her natural mother was still alive and that she had not given her up for adoption , but due to a severe problem in the family in the Autumn of 1989 was handed over temporarily in the care of the missionaries. Thanks to her accurate memory and the circumspection of her adopted parents, Seema found her natural mother and returned back to India. On 4 April 1995 the lower district court in Aichach declared that the adoption is reversed . The ground given by the court was that the court and the adopted parents were "deliberately cheated ."

*Where did this cheating take place ? who or which institution was involved in this and why did this not come to anybody's notice for so long ?*

#### 1. The Lower District Court Aichach

It appears that the lower district court Aichach had used very different terminology in German in both the judgements -- decision on adoption on 29 June 1992 and reversal of adoption on 4 April 1995. In 1992 it had formulated the judgement as follows : " The consent of the parents is under Section 1744 paragraph 4 (well-meant Section 1747, BW) Civil Code not required as their identity is not known ." In the decision on reversal of the adoption it was said, "At the time of pronouncing the judgement on adoption the court had gone by the corresponding certificate from the district court in Delhi issued on 7 (meaning : 17 , BW) November 1990 which said that Seema is an orphan and does not have any natural parent ." What do these two different observations mean ?

They are clarifying their stand from the evidently indiscriminate use of the three most important Indian documents laid before the court , the guardianship decision of the court in Delhi of 17 November 1990 in which it has been said , " and the court was satisfied, that the minor was an orphan." and the affidavits signed by the then chief of the Charity Home Sr Joann and certified by the notary on 7.12.1990 in which the status of Seema has been given as "born of unknown parents and abandoned with the Missionaries of Charity ". That the adoption judgement was pronounced on the support of Sister Joann's affidavit in which it is sworn that the child's parents' identity was not known is confirmed in a letter that was sent by lower district court Aichach to Knuth family on 7 July 1997 in which it is written that "an adoption under Section 1747 paragraph 4 of Civil Code would not have been permissible if the court had not based its decision on the statement that the names of the parents are not known."

Now it implies that even if the child is shown as an orphan the basic knowledge about the parents identity exists. This does not match the claim that the parents are unknown. Had the court in Aichach overlooked this contradiction ? Or did the court go by this that both the things in the description of family status of Seema were identical ? If yes, then on what grounds ?

#### 2. The Central Office for Adoption of the Bavarian state youth welfare department

In the case of adoption by Knuth family of 3 April 1992 the central office for adoption of Bavarian state youth welfare department had in its opinion before the district court of Aichach referred to Section 1747 Paragraph 4 Civil Code and without going into the discussion on the word "orphan" in the guardianship case of the Indian court held that the consent of the natural parents was not necessary "as they were not known" the lower district court of Aichach had based its adoptions judgement on this ground. It appears strange when the same state youth welfare office convincingly states in a letter on 23 April 1997, " in our opinion for the judgement of the lower district court Aichach under section 1747 paragraph 4 of Civil Code the Delhi district courts judgement of 17.11.90 was decisive " It says further " according to our opinion the affidavits also serve as proofs for the status of the child , specially when neither the birth nor death certificates were available"

The officials examining the case of Seema say that both the family status descriptions of Seema are not contradictory. For this no clarification has been given. The only clear stand is that according to the opinion of the state youth welfare department the Indian documents showing Seema as "without parents" allows for adoption foregoing the consent of the natural parent/mother.

Now the International Social Service German chapter regd. Association which next to pro Infante and terre des hommes has maximum experience in child adoption cases from India to Germany says that in guardianship cases of High court in Delhi the children are shown as "Orphan" although the affidavits of children homes say that the child was "abandoned" at the door of the home or given up by the mother. The International Social Service says, "it appears that we associate different legal meanings with the words "relinquished", "abandoned" and "orphaned", whereas they are used for the same term in the Indian judicial process." In any case the ISS puts forward that in cases taken up by them "it was always examined whether the child's documents correspond with that of the charity home, that means whether the information covers the history of family origin of the child. This is exactly what does not appear to have been done in case of Seema Knuth by the State youth welfare department in Muenich. Had the officers not noticed that the guardianship judgement as well as the affidavits do not match? They were in complete contradiction to the proposal given by the Kempen based Association to Knuth family wherein a document dated 14 February 1990 confirms that Seema's mother "very poor and sickly(.....) gave up this child to our Home in Jalandhar on 20.1.1987." Should it not have been cleared with Knuth family during the examination of proposed papers for adoption that the contradictory details ought to be cleared up? And would it not have been obvious to at least check at random other files of Pro Infante to find out if there were other such contradictions? Or the adoption proposal should not have been put up before the State youth welfare office in Muenich?

### 3. The youth welfare office Aichach- Friedberg

It is sure that the Indian documents ( guardianship judgement and affidavits) alongwith complete proposal for adoption were put before the concerned youth welfare office in Aichach. But here also the contradictory documents about the status of Seema did not raise any suspicion. The adoption proposal papers and guardianship judgement should be somehow similar ( in practice a child who is offered for adoption becomes an orphan following the death of its mother) -- the proposal for adoption of 14 February and the affidavits of December 1990, both issued by the Missionaries of Charity, should have been undoubtedly checked for the facts of the matter. But this did not happen. Should it be called negligence or were the specialised agencies assigned to examine, check and verify the documents simply overburdened? Whom had they asked for advise or information?

### 4. Pro Infante

It is not seldom that the government officers inquire from the concerned voluntary organisations which are mediators in adoptions from foreign countries. If this had

happened in case of youth welfare office of Aichach, then the answer would have been the same as Knuth family and their lawyer. In fact till today Pro Infante believes that the mentioned contradictions in Indian documents can be cleared by following tips :

\* The natural mother of the child had on 20.1.1987 given the child to Sisters belonging to Mother Teresa's group legally before the court in Punjab. This certificate is in the court in Delhi which gave the Knuth family the guardianship rights on 17 November 1990.

\* With the death of her mother, her status remains legally relinquished, she is really become an orphan and , therefore, the court which handed over her guardianship can rightly show her as an orphan.

\* The affidavits were necessary for the Passport authorities. The remarks made here were necessary in India to get a Passport. The first statement is challenged by the natural mother of Seema in an attested declaration of 18 march 1994. The truth of this declaration is clear from the fact that neither the Missionaries of Charity not Pro Infante have been able to bring a document till today proving the child was relinquished ; they cannot do it also. As per information given by an Indian lawyer who was assigned by Knuth family to investigate, such a document of surrender does not exist in the files of district court Delhi. The purpose of affidavits also appears to be different as claimed by Pro Infante. The terms used here are not necessary for issue of Passport in India but they are certificates of personal status, which according to Joint center for Adoption in Hamburg and the state youth welfare department of Bavaria play or have played an important, if not decisive, role in the process of adoption.

Whatever the responsibility of Pro Infante in the legal sense may be from the point of view of *tenes des hommes* the following critical questions are unavoidable:

\* After the lower district court in Aichach declared the adoption of Seema Knuth reversed in April 1994. what did Pro Infante do to clear without any loopholes the procedures that were adopted in India for the adoption of the girl ? Without any investigations in Delhi court the Association chairperson Mrs. Wiedeking claims till today that the certificate of surrender of Seema by her mother is in records. She not only blames Seema's natural mother who had proofs to show that she had searched her daughters for years , but also charges that the reversal of adoption of Seema by court was based on wrong assumptions. Accordingly Pro Infante is not ready in several other similar cases to contribute in answering the questions and problems that have cropped up.

\* What precautions were taken by Pro Infante after 1994 to ensure that such mistakes do not occur again? As long as the Organization does not appear to take in consideration the possibility that the mediator Missionaries of Charity are responsible for the sad story of Seema, her natural mother and sister- brothers as also the adopting family Knuth, it can be concluded that Pro Infante is not willing to learn from the events in the past.

\* Considering its moral responsibility towards Seema, her natural mother or family Knuth what had Pro Infante done to be fair to them ? Indeed one of the workers of the

Association accompanied Seema on her return to India and the search for her mother on request from Knuth family but that was the end of their willingness to cooperate. The Knuth couple are still not discharged from the guardianship of Seema in India. Instead of constructively clearing up the questions and accusations of the family and thinking over its possible omissions, Pro Infante blames them openly that they failed in bringing up Seema and ever since her puberty they had no longer any affection and acceptance for her. "Specially Mrs. Knuth is obsessed with the thought that the problems of the girl were related to her past."

#### 5. The court in Delhi

Without any verdict on the concerned court in Delhi and its work, the following are conspicuous: According to the information provided by the lawyer engaged by Knuth family there is no sign in Seema's file of the declaration by her mother relinquishing Seema or the permission to transfer Seema ever being presented before the district judge. The Missionaries of Charity should have requested permission from the concerned officials for transferring Seema from Punjab to Delhi. As is evident from the court files this happened in spite of the request by the Indian Council for Child Welfare (ICCW) to the court to ask for these documents. Why did the court, which had itself asked for the report of the ICCW, not accede to this request? In view of the missing documents why did the court not abandon the guardianship decision? Was the court also actively involved in the cheating process against the German officials and the adopted parents, or was it itself a victim of deliberate misleading by the Missionaries of Charity and its lawyer?

#### 6. The Missionaries of Charity

Lately since Seema has returned, though unwillingly, to her mother in Jalandhar with the help of Mother Teresa's sisters, there should be no doubt left that the sisters knew about her mother from the beginning. When in late summer of 1990 the news of this woman's death was put forward, they must have known long before Seema's return to India that the woman was still alive and had made active efforts for over four years to find out from the sisters themselves what had happened with her child.

If the Missionaries of Charity did not cheat the lower district court of Aichach then who did it? Till today and that is even after the report in Stern magazine on 7 January 1999, the sisters have not been able to convince that the declaration of the natural mother and the necessary permission to transfer the child from Punjab to Delhi exist. They were the ones who made Seema an orphan through the guardianship judgment in the district court of Delhi and they were the ones who with their signatures on the oath declared that Seema's parents were unknown. According to them Seema was not in a position to decide on her adoption although she should have been in this position due to her age. According to a doctor the girl was two to three years older than the age given by the sisters and further more this was not mentioned in the adoption papers, that during her stay in the charity home she was affected by leprosy as it was considered a minor thing. Soon after the girl came to Germany, this painful truth came to be known to Knuth family

which was a crime by the sisters but this disgraceful type of taking away of child is hardly of any consequence.

### III. Not an isolated case

Even though the exact number of such cases where Missionaries of Charity in Delhi deliberately ignored or simply overlooked the manipulations is not known, it can be said that the story of Knuth family and their former adopted daughter Seema are not the only cases. The following cases which are summarized, underline this fact.

a) Born on 19 March 1985 in Indian Sangeeta Brosinger came to Germany on 4 November 1990. According to the affidavit issued by the sisters of Mother Teresa on 23 October 1990 she was "born of unknown parents" and abandoned with the Missionaries of Charity. The district court of Delhi in its guardianship judgment of 15 September 1990 also noted her as an "Orphan". She was also older than the age mentioned in her adoption papers. She also required immediate medical help after her arrival in Ingolstadt for behavioural disturbance. In case of Sangeeta also the Missionaries and Pro Infante from the beginning and the concerned city youth welfare office in Ingolstadt since October 1994 knew that she had a mother who had given the child in the care of Missionaries of Charity in Ambala (Haryana), but had never relinquished the child. A lawyer who was hired by the family to look into the court papers also could not find the transfer permission from Haryana to Delhi. In this case also the contradictions were not important for Pro Infante and German officials. It appears that all was left on the presumption that what has been certified by the Indian court is correct. As the Brosinger family refused to adopt Sangeeta due to diverse papers and information on her family background, Pro Infante filed an application at the end of 1992 for cancelling the guardianship. This in spite of the fact that Mrs. Wiedeking was informed that time about Sangeeta mentioning concrete description of her natural mother. In 1994 the youth welfare office of Ingolstadt became the guardian of the child and kept her in a home for several months before offering it in July 1996 to another family for adoption. This took place without the knowledge of the court in Delhi which should have been legally informed. Till today the Brosinger family still continues to be the legal guardian of Sangeeta in papers in India whereas she lives with another family for more than three years.

b) Carola Supriya Moraitis: This girl came to Germany when she was hardly four years in October 1990. According to the declaration by the Missionaries of Charity on 13 February 1990 she was "an abandoned child (...) free for adoption". Alongwith the adoption documents there was a letter according to which Supriya was born in Ferozepore, Punjab on 26.12.86 of a unwed mother who "gave her up" for adoption when the girl was seven months old. Not the least the district court court in Delhi in its guardianship judgement cited the child as "Orphan" and acknowledged an affidavit saying the child was "Born of (...) unknown parents." When this discrepancy was pointed out to Mrs. Wiedeking she tried to convince by saying that this was necessary to complete legal formalities without which the child could not leave Delhi and go out. The concerned youth welfare office in Syke (district Diepholz) as also the common central adoption office in Hamburg appear

neither to have noted the contradiction in the papers showing the background of Supriya nor the fact that the two affidavits in her case were not signed. The adoption of supriya was done speedily and apparently without any critical checking of Indian documents by lower district court in Sulingan. According to the information provided by the lawyer engaged by Moraitis family neither is there an declaration giving up the child for adoption by her natural mother nor any permission to transfer her in the files of district court in Delhi. After the Moraitis couple realised that in spite of all therapeutic help the child could not integrate in the family, Carola Supriya returned to Indian in July 1996. She settled in India. All her expenses towards schooling, housing , clothing were borne by the Moraitis family right from the beginning. The attempts by Pro Infante to take away the child's bringing up rights from Moraitis family failed in August 1999.

c) Bharathi Kueppers: Supposedly born on 19.7.96, but in reality three years older, the girl came to Germany in November 1984 end. A few weeks before this she was in "Snehalaya" a "socio-medical Relief center" run by an Italian Order of sisters in Solur near Banagalore(Karnataka) where she was given in care of the Home by her mother Sarojamma." Her husband had deserted her and she found herself unable to take care of all three children she had. According to the documents presented by the nuns, which became the basis of court order on guardianship in India and adoption in Germany , Bharathi was born of a widow without any means of living and she had given her written consent for adoption . The relevant documents "declaration" appears to have been signed by the mother on 1 June 1984. The stamp of the court paper vendor, however, has the date of February in the same year. The time difference according to the Indian habit is as much noticeable as the remark on the nonjudicial paper which fails to show what purpose it was bought for. These questions are answered by the chargesheet raised by the mother according to which she had been looking for her child since autumn 1984 and on 15 March 1991 charged the sisters in court and spent a lot of money on this. It is mentioned there that the "accused got some blank papers signed by the complainant and when asked what these papers were, they replied that they were application for admissions to the new schools. They also informed the complainant saying that they should have some documents to show to those who inquire from where the child has come " These papers were then falsely used by the accused sister to arrange for the transfer of the child out of India and to fabricate the consent of the mother for adoption in Germany. According to the Indian law father's consent is also necessary. To circumvent this the nuns had carefully made Bharathi a half-orphan. The adoption was carried out on 26 September 1985 as per the judgement of the lower district court in Obernburg -- branch office Miltenberg

With the passage of years it was discovered that Bharathi was psychologically and physically very ill. Possibly she was the victim of repeated sexual abuse during her early childhood and to add she was burdened with adoption which she wanted to refuse, she refused also as she knew that she had a mother and father in India. As the news of Bharathi's mother and her proceeding against the sisters from Stella Maris convent in summer 1991 through Pro Infante reached Kueppers family and Bharathi was forced to make a statement, her stay in the adopted family became an agony to her. Ever since the beginning of her last school session in 1993-1994 she lived in the boarding school during the week. Her training as a nurse which began in April 1995 was terminated after six



months by the hospital management because she had mishandled patients, among other things. Before her treatment for the behaviour could begin as an in-patient at the youth psychiatry in the university clinic of Wuerzburg, the 22-year-old girl returned to India to her mother. A little later she decided never to go back to Germany. The Kueppers family was not prepared for the problems in the background of the adoption. In November 1984, a day before she was to come to India, the Kueppers family went to bring her and found that the child had a big disfiguring scar on the face. Bharathi's treatment for her short height was also not possible medically when she came to Germany. She was about 1.45 metres. When the Kueppers family finally got to know in 1995 that Bharathi was suffering from Borderline syndrome together with multiple personality disturbance, they had lost contact with Pro Infante long back. Instead of concrete help they were given pious quotations or other wisdom. On Christmas in 1993 Mrs. Wiedeking wrote, "Love is the water of our heart". This can be attained only through prayers" Today the Kempen based Association makes cynical strange accusations, saying they sent back (the already grown up) Bharathi to India "as they did their second polio (leg) inflicted adopted daughter."

e) The mention is of Seema Kueppers or "Seema" as she was named in the adoption documents "Born on 10.2.1981 (estimated age) she had no father. Seema came to Kuepper family in July 1989. Her mother is blind and, therefore, could not take care of her. In an accident Seema's right leg was burnt. The sisters brought her to the hospital and she underwent a minor operation. After this the leg became a little shorter. This is not the place to discuss all details of Seema's actual health history. As a small child affected by polio with severe after-effects, infected with Hepatitis B shortly before her journey to Germany in October 1989, defect in teeth and tongue, untreated eye disease etc., Seema could not relate things and persons and her fully disturbed social development made it difficult for the adopting family. This can not be the subject of discussion here that Seema lives in India since 1995. On the other hand it was Pro Infante which in case of Seema also did not provide enough preparation and escort. This shortcoming of specialised service is still not equal to the what Missionaries of Charity appear to have done by providing false information. While in the above mentioned adoption proposal it is suggested that Seema's mother had given a certificate relinquishing her for adoption, in the relevant Indian documents she has been shown as "Orphan" and "born of unknown persons".

In spite of the adopting parents asking for clarifications on these contradictions several times, no reply has come either from Pro Infante or sisters of Mother Teresa. They are not able to bring a certificate from the mother saying that she had given up the child. The concerned German officials i.e., the youth welfare office in Obernburg, the Bavarian State youth welfare office in Muenich and the lower district court in Obernburg -- branch office Miltenberg who had delivered the adoption decision on 19 September 1990, appear not to have noted this contradiction, although the affidavits dated 18 October 1989 were not signed by the sisters of Missionaries of Charity.

In this case also can it be said that the child was taken away from her mother illegally? Or was it the other way round that an older child of poor health, with psychological disorders whose parentage was not known, was being given a chance of finding parents in

a foreign country. If one studies the up-bringing of Seema, it can be seen that she in fact never came to know her natural parents. Moreover, she was found as an infant in a refuse bin in Sonapur in Bihar and there she had grown up in an orphanage. As they were not able to cope with her, she was sent to Patna in October 1988 to Missionaries of Charity. In July 1989 she was brought from there to the Order's charity home in Delhi.

As always, about the truth in the story of Seema little can be said -- according to the information collected by the Kuepper family assigned lawyer Mr. M. S. Krishnan in Madras on 16.8.99 there seems to be no file of Seema Kueppers in the court nor was there any ever. "As regards Seema's case in Delhi, the entire case records appear to be fictitious as no such case has been registered in the court." Does it mean that a guardianship case for Seema Kueppers never took place in the district court of Delhi?

In the beginning of 1994 Seema returned to India of her own wish and after thorough preparation by her adopted parents. There she was taken care of by her godmother and had in the meantime started her training as a tailor.

#### IV. The Suspicion

If Pro Infante had refuted the accusations levelled against it, or atleast accepted that it had not adequately taken care in the mentioned cases, then it would not have been necessary to unfold the oft mentioned story in press of Seema Knuth and others who suffered like her. The Kempen based adoption agency denies any wrong doing against the affected children, their natural and adopted parents and also claims that the Missionaries of Charity are not guilty. This leads to the suspicion that the described cases are only a tip of the iceberg whose real dimensions are not known. According to a responsible employee of State youth welfare office of Bavaria, all such cases of adoption of Indian children which have come through Pro Infante in collaboration with Missionaries of Charity have similar court judgements ("the court was satisfied, that the minor was an orphan"). In addition to this, each of the affidavits signed by the regional head of the Missionaries of Charity have the same content "born of unknown persons and (...) abandoned with the Missionaries of Charity". How is it possible that of the approximate 1580 children passed on through Pro Infante for adoption till now, 80 per cent have only their mother? What has Pro Infante and the concerned offices in Germany (youth welfare offices, State youth welfare offices) done upto now in view of these basic contradictions to remove all suspicion out of the world that the family status information of Indian guardianship judgements as also the affidavits issued by the Missionaries of Charity are not true, not only in the five described cases? Could it be that a large number of children, though only a presumption, through false personal information about their real origin and identity and/or -- as one can presume separated from their mothers illegally?

In any case terre des hommes has knowledge of other "cases" also which need to be cleared up, but it cannot make them public, because the adopted parents -- warned of the reaction to the article published in Stern magazine of 7 January 1999 -- would withdraw themselves back fearing consequences of such publicity for their adopted children, their

natural parents and / or themselves. Moreover, it cannot be ruled out that many adopted parents , who had adopted with the help of Pro Infante , would not be really interested in rechecking of the adoption process which could lead them to face bitter and painful facts like the Knuth couple where the adoption of Seema was negated and she was returned to her family and home in India .

## V The Consequences

According to terre des hommes three consequences can be drawn from what has been said.

1. The process of mediation of Pro Infante requires a thorough inquiry . We demand the concerned adoption offices of the youth welfare departments as also the central adoption offices of the State youth welfare departments to check the files received whether the guardianship judgements and affidavits tally with other information on the history of children which can be obtained from the adoption proposals. In addition to this we appeal to the Regional Association Rheinland / State youth welfare department as the appropriate officials that the recognition to Pro Infante as adoption agency be withdrawn with immediate effect. The stories of Seema Knuth , Sangeeta Brosinger , Carola Supriya Moraitis, Seema and Bharathi Kueppers contain enough proofs to take such action independent of a further investigation of the files.

2 The dispute should not be allowed to die out with "the case Pro Infante" and by looking for scapegoats for the misdemeanors of the past and punishing them. For the future cases of adoptions in Germany a lot can be considered drawing consequences from this case . Following a long time demand by specialists on 25 May 1993 an agreement on protection of children and cooperation on international adoption was passed in The Hague, which would hopefully be ratified in Germany too in the near future. In this connection necessary changes in the laws related to adoption agency rights will have to be framed keeping in view the example of Pro Infante so that permission to new agencies is granted on strict criteria. It is not to be disputed that such special agencies which work only or considerably in the field of international adoptions and must finance themselves from private sources like charity and fees , work from the beginning for their own organisational existence not considering the danger to those involved , the rights, law and the quality of their work. When a well established and widely accepted reliable organisation like Pro Infante starts offering children in a manner which according to specialised standards are not responsible , then what about the groups who with regard to their (indefinite) aim of establishment , membership structure and financial possibilities have earlier described themselves as "selfhelp groups" of involuntary childless applicants ? It can be predicted that such new groups will increase in future to try to get permission as adoption agencies. In these circles how will one know about the rights of the child to food, shelter and education in his native land and about the knowledge of his background and identity, if a catholic-christian organisation like Pro Infante seems not to be taking these rights in consideration ? Sections 3 and 4 of the valid adoption mediation law does not have any solution for such structural problems.

3. Last not least : The mediation cases of Pro Infante cited here make it very clear that inter-country adoptions require continuous supervision in the country where the children are adopted . There is hardly any doubt about it that in the past such supervision was not always done . It is true that there is a dearth of trained personnel. A thorough restructuring of the organisation and the way of functioning of the adoption departments of the youth welfare offices and State youth departments is desired in Germany, but due to paucity of public funds this shortcoming can hardly be removed . In other words : The number of offices dealing in foreign adoptions in local youth offices should be drastically reduced and the resources gained in this way should be utilised for strengthening the specialised jobs of the remaining offices . The incorporation of The Hague convention in the German law would offer a chance to think seriously on the problems and questions that have come up.