

January 8, 2007

KABINETT WALLSTRÖM
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AUSVARIG KÄSMEDELM: FS
ATGÅRD:

Vice-President of the European
Commission
Margot Wallstroem
European Commission
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium

cc: LA

Dear Margot Wallström,

We turn to you about the policy of the European Union on matters of inter-country adoption. We turn to you because you are the vice president of the commission, but also because you are Swedish. We believe that you know our organization. You may even remember that you spoke at our congress once in the 1980'ies when you were Sweden's minister of social affairs. Your co-worker Lena Ag has met our organization more recently. Other co-workers of yours may turn to our web page (see below).

We have heard from several sources that the European Union has an attitude towards inter-country adoption which is rather negative, labeling it a very last resort, even to be applied in subsidiarity to institutional care, and using words like "export of children".

We have also been told by the Swedish Central Authority for inter-country adoptions (MIA) that no decision on the matter has been taken by the European Commission.

We understand that the EU does not deal with most social issues in the member countries. This issue seems to have been dealt with in connection with the conditions put up for new members' entrance in the EU.

As we have understood it, the conditions of EU have resulted in Rumania permanently stopping its program for inter-country adoption. In Bulgaria the policy and the condition of EU referring to inter-country adoption are under debate. This has led to the inter-country adoptions having been drastically reduced in Bulgaria. The number of children in institutions now vastly exceeds the numbers for which the institutions are equipped.

Adoptionscentrum is of the opinion that well managed and well controlled inter-country adoptions are a child protection measure which is needed and will be needed in many countries of the world. It should be considered only when a suitable permanent family cannot be found within the child's birth country. It is an individual measure, and must be applied with the individual child's best interest in mind.

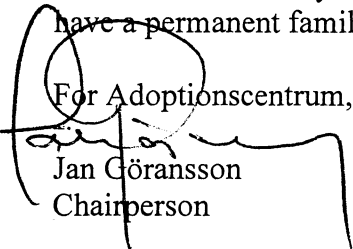
There are governments which allow their citizens to travel abroad with a home study and money to look for a child for adoption on their own. This happens even under the formal application of the 1993 Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in respect of Inter-country Adoption. We believe this practise puts the countries of origin for adoptive children in a very difficult situation. We believe that the EU could have a role in preventing such malpractice. But we believe that banning ethical adoptions in the children's best interest and recommending institutional care is no solution. It may even provoke more malpractice.

Adoptionscentrum has a co-operation with several countries in Eastern and South-eastern Europe. We have been engaged in supporting national solutions like family reunification, foster families, programs for young persons leaving care, and improvements of necessary institutions. We know that there is a need for intercountry adoption.

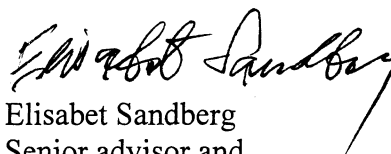
The EU has now become a member of the Hague Conference on Private International Law. So, we are confident that after some time the policy of the EU will be the same as the one expressed in the Conference's 1993 Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in respect of Intercountry Adoption. But we are worried that too many children will be institutionalised during this process.

Margot Wallström, we hope that you will give us a reaction to this letter, and your views on what can be done in the EU structure to find a policy towards inter-country adoption which is based on both the child's right to have a permanent family and good adoption ethics, and to make it known.

For Adoptionscentrum, Sweden



Jan Göransson
Chairperson



Elisabet Sandberg
Senior advisor and
chairperson of EurAdopt