



Queens and First Ladies from Eight Nations Unite to Help Missing and Sexually Exploited Children



(L-R) Former First Lady Jolanta Kwasniewska, First Lady Laura Bush, First Lady Suzanne Mubarak, Queen Silvia of Sweden, First Lady Bernadette Chirac, Queen Paola of Belgium, First Lady Lyudmila Putin, Mrs. Margarida Sousa Uva Barroso, and Governor Valentina Matvienko. Photo courtesy Elysée Palace.

The Honorary Board of Directors of the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC) met in January at the Elysée Palace in Paris, hosted by Bernadette Chirac, First Lady of France. Other members attending included Queen Paola of Belgium; Queen Silvia of Sweden; Laura Bush, First Lady of the United States; Lyudmila Putin, First Lady of Russia; Suzanne Mubarak, First Lady of Egypt; Margarida Sousa Uva Barroso, wife of the President of the European Commission; Jolanta Kwasniewska, Former First Lady of Poland; and Valentina Matvienko, Governor of St. Petersburg.

Called “the G-8 for Children” by Paris newspaper *Le Figaro*, these nine powerful, committed women representing eight nations gathered in Paris to review the worldwide problem of missing and sexually exploited children, including the global epidemic of Internet child pornography. ICMEC Chairman Daniel Cardon told the Honorary Board that “ICMEC is not an international organization, it is a world movement.” He urged them to use their power and influence to “change the world for children.”

Ernie Allen, ICMEC President and CEO, reported that “enormous progress has been made. Law enforcement is better prepared. There are new laws, new international agreements, and greater commitment to regional and global cooperation than ever before. There is also far greater public awareness. Yet, the problem of missing, abducted, trafficked, and sexually exploited children remains a large, growing, under-recognized and under-reported problem.”

France Hosts Conference on Missing and Exploited Children



First Lady Bernadette Chirac and Queen Paola of Belgium. Photo courtesy Elysée Palace.

As a continuation of the meeting of the ICMEC Honorary Board, a plenary session was hosted by the First Lady of the Republic of France, Bernadette Chirac, at the Elysée Palace in Paris. To open the session, French President Jacques Chirac called the tragedy of missing and sexually exploited children “one of the largest plagues of our time.” He called for “a mobilization of the whole of society,” and urged “the broadest international cooperation to stop the frightening development of pedophilia and child pornography on the Internet.”

Paola, the Queen of the Belgians, said, “I speak to you as a mother, a grandmother and as a European. Our children live in a world that is, at the same time, marvelous and dangerous... To protect them as best we can, we must absolutely link our efforts.”

Suzanne Mubarak, the First Lady of Egypt, noted that the problem

of “abused and exploited children affecting all countries, has remained in the shadows for too long. The time has come for us to expose the facts we have at our disposal, design prevention strategies and focus on their implementation.” She added, “this issue is a global phenomenon – if not attended to, it may reach epidemic proportions.”

Each member of the ICMEC Honorary Board participated in the discussions at the plenary session, as did Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel, Interpol Secretary-General Ron Noble, European Commission Vice President Franco Frattini, among others. The meeting was attended by more than 200 representatives from organizations including the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, financial and Internet leaders, law enforcement officials, child advocates and non-governmental organizations.

“If not attended to, it may reach epidemic proportions.”

Suzanne Mubarak,
First Lady of Egypt

New Missing Children's Phone Number for Europe

In October 2005, ICMEC convened the first U.S./European Summit on Missing and Exploited Children in Buonas, Switzerland. At that time, top officials from the United States and 19 European countries adopted an aggressive 15-point Action Plan that aimed to, among other things, create a universal three-digit phone number for reporting missing children.

In January 2007, the first step toward realizing this goal was taken when it was announced that the European Commission would launch a toll-free, six-digit telephone number – 116 000 – that will act as the single hotline number for reporting missing children through the 27 Member States of the European Union.

A single telephone number for missing children was proposed by the European Commission in July 2006. The creation of the number was subsequently approved by all EU Member States.

The number will be operated nationally, and each Member State will be responsible for managing the hotline within its national borders. The number is expected to be operational throughout the European Union by summer 2007.

Microsoft Executive Joins Board

Tim Cranton, Senior Director, Legal and Corporate Affairs Worldwide Internet Safety Programs, has been elected to the ICMEC Board of Directors. Tim is leading Microsoft's efforts that address Internet safety threats.

His career at Microsoft began by specializing in Internet and intellectual property issues, where he headed Internet anti-piracy initiatives. Prior to joining Microsoft, Tim was a senior attorney at the Seattle law firm of Bogle & Gates. Previously, he was a prosecutor for King County, in Washington state. He graduated *magna cum laude* from Duke University, and obtained a law degree from Yale University.

Amber Alert Expands to Europe

In 1996, nine-year-old Amber Hagerman of Arlington, Texas in the United States was abducted and murdered. Angry, heart-broken leaders of her community came together and created a simple but powerful new tool, the Amber Alert. Through this system, law enforcement works with radio and television media, cell phone, and Internet users to ensure that the maximum number of people in the area receive key descriptive information about the abduction immediately after it occurs.

In the US the response has been overwhelming. Today, there are 117 Amber plans across the country, including a statewide plan in all 50 states. More than 325 children have already been saved as a direct result of Amber Alerts.

US First Lady Laura Bush said, "some of the most important work to recover missing children is done by the American people. Just last week in Missouri, a tip from an observant child led to the rescue of two kidnapped boys."

French First Lady Bernadette Chirac, whose country has recently implemented the Amber Alert system, cited the recovery of two French children the week before the ICMEC meeting, and attributed their safe recovery to the Amber Alert. Mrs. Chirac issued a call for the implementation of the Amber system across Europe.

OSCE Passes Groundbreaking Resolution



The Honorable Anne-Marie Lizin
President, Belgian Senate

In July 2006, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) met in Brussels, Belgium. ICMEC Board Member Anne-Marie Lizin, the President of the Belgian Senate, convened a special meeting to discuss the growing challenge of child pornography. The meeting was attended by members of parliaments from many of the 56 OSCE member nations.

ICMEC Chairman Daniel Cardon and ICMEC President Ernie Allen addressed the meeting and outlined the importance of legislative action. In addition, President Lizin, Chairman Cardon and President Allen also met with various national delegations in order to promote legislative action.

At the close of the Assembly, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly unanimously adopted the "Resolution on Combating

Trafficking and the Exploitation of Children in Pornography." The Resolution urges action on ICMEC's child-pornography legislative plan as outlined in the ICMEC report, "Child Pornography: Model Legislation & Global Review." The Resolution condemns the sexual abuse and exploitation of children, commends ICMEC for its research and report, and urges OSCE Member States to pass legislation aimed at combating child-pornography offenses and enhancing global cooperation and law enforcement's ability to investigate and prosecute those responsible for the sexual exploitation of children.

The Resolution was included in the larger "Brussels Declaration," which was adopted at the close of the Annual Session.

Honorary Board

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President, Il Faro Foundation

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Wife of the President of the European Commission

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First Lady of the United States of America

Bernadette Chirac
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Marta Sahagún de Fox
Former First Lady of the United Mexican States

Jolanta Kwasniewska
Former First Lady of the Republic of Poland

Valentina Matvienko
Governor of Saint-Petersburg

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Her Majesty
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Board Member Finishes Grueling Challenge

ICMEC Board Member Mike DeNoma, is the father of six and an avid athlete. His love for his children motivated him to establish the multi-year "Race4Innocence," a quest to raise \$1 million to help ICMEC eradicate child pornography. From October 2005 to October 2006, DeNoma tested his limits in three grueling, physical challenges: the Greatest Race on Earth, the Marathon des Sables, and the Furnace 508.

The Greatest Race on Earth is the only marathon series in the world. It includes races in Kenya, Singapore, Mumbai and Hong Kong.

For the Marathon des Sables, DeNoma endured a six-day, 230 kilometer foot

race over the sand dunes and rocky terrain in the Sahara Desert. He battled excruciating heat, blinding sandstorms, blisters, and dehydration to successfully finish 242nd out of 731 who started.

From one desert to another, in October 2006 Mike competed in the Furnace 508, a 508-mile bike race through Death Valley. Billed as "The Toughest 48 Hours in Sport," DeNoma rode day and night across the Mojave Desert, braving harsh winds, brutal extremes in temperature and 35,000 feet of cumulative climbing on a high desert route. Mike crossed the finish line in 47 hours, 55 minutes, and 57 seconds.

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Chairman and CEO, bioMérieux

Ernest E. Allen
ICMEC President and CEO

The International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (ICMEC) works with government leaders, NGOs and law enforcement to create national and regional centres around the world to build a strong network of organizations and programs to combat child abduction and exploitation. ICMEC is a 501(c)(3) nongovernmental organization.

For more information or to make a donation contact:

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