
International Conference

**THE MIGRATION OF UNACCOMPANIED MINORS IN EUROPE: THE CONTEXTS OF ORIGIN, THE
MIGRATION ROUTES AND THE RECEPTION SYSTEMS**

POITIERS, FRANCE, OCTOBER 10TH & 11TH 2007

They can be teenagers facing a lack of perspectives and leaving their homeland on their own searching for adventure and a better future. It can also be a new strategy of the families giving the children the financial responsibility for the whole family welfare. In any case, the migration of separated children and youngsters under 18 years old becomes a recent but consolidated manifestation that shocks our European sensibilities: we are no further talking about adults but “kids” risking their lives in extremely dangerous migration routes like those children squeezed inside a pirogue trying to reach the Canary Islands coasts (more than 1.000 minors have arrived there along 2006) or those ones hidden in the underside of a lorry to cross the border. An adult pretending to be a relative of them whereas he really is a smuggler can also accompany them or they can be cheated by false promises and become victims of traffickers.

What is the reaction of European countries facing this increasing reality? Up until now, the different countries remain quite ambiguous as they combine repressive policies to control the migration flows with the timid implementation of the international rules regarding children’s rights. Consequently, unaccompanied minors are subject to a **double treatment**: they are entitled to care measures and services as children but removed and rejected as illegal immigrants. Some countries, such as Germany and the United Kingdom have preferred to establish a restriction on the implementation of CRC to their “*unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors*.” Other South Mediterranean countries like Spain and Italy tend to instrumentalise the interpretation of the best interest principle as a tool to justify the forced return of “*unaccompanied foreign minors*” under their national care systems as the only and most suitable solution in their best interest. In France, the “*isolated foreign minors*” are entitled to the services of the care system until they reach the age of majority as other children “at risk”, but the authorities do their best at the ports of entry- including the minors’ deprivation of liberty and immediate *repatriation*- to avoid them entering into the country.



This conference aims to generate a forum of exchange and discussion on this issue and pretend to establish **two main objectives**: on the one hand, to establish a dialogue between researchers and specialized practitioners in order to put forward a more coherent social and legal treatment that should make prevail the respect of children’s rights over immigration rules (as a recent judgement from the European Court of Human Rights has established); on the other hand, to integrate the research findings on this issue with the purpose of achieving a better understanding of the current migration trends and to develop a methodological thought in order to get a better knowledge of the contexts of origin and the different dimensions of this increasing depart of separated children from numerous countries.

Call for papers.

The research centre **MIGRINTER**, Université de Poitiers, CNRS, the **Centre Jacques Berque**, Rabat and the **International Juvenile Justice Observatory**, Brussels, hereby open an invitation to researchers from a wide range of academic disciplines as well as experts and practitioners from field work to propose papers in one of the following fields:

- Analysis of the different care systems and policies concerning the legal and social treatment of unaccompanied asylum seeking/ migrant minors in Europe as well as the reality that these children face in their everyday life.
- Research findings on the situation of unaccompanied minors victims of trafficking or exploitation in the different European countries besides those getting out from the care facilities and becoming invisible to the authorities.
- The implementation, interpretation and inclusion of the fundamental principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly the best interest principle, in the European state policies and legal rules concerning the treatment of unaccompanied asylum seeking/foreign minors.
- The different contexts of origin of migrant children: the profiles of children in migration and potential migrants, sociological and anthropological analysis of their families and local communities; the different migration projects and perspectives.
- The migration routes: the migration paths, the means of transport, the situation at transit countries, the methods used for illegal border crossing.

The Scientific Committee will establish a priority for papers coming from researchers or practitioners from the main countries of origin or destination concerned by this type of migration.

Abstract deadline (350 words + brief CV): Mars 15th 2007

Complete selected papers deadline: July 15th 2007.

Please send your abstracts to

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And

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Organisation Committee:

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