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# Illegal immigration and loss of children in the Aegean Sea

**Reply to Written question**[1]: Written question No. 646 (Doc. 13337)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Honourable Parliamentarian rightly points out that the Council of Europe has a full range of binding human rights instruments, recommendations of a non-binding nature and monitoring procedures which also cover irregular migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. This system is complemented by the provision of practical assistance to member States, such as legislative expertise as well as training and capacity building for the many different authorities who deal with the situation of irregular migrants with the aim of strengthening a human rights approach to the handling of these cases.

2. As regards the situation of children, mention can be made of the recommendation on life projects for unaccompanied minor migrants (CM/Rec(2007)9); different activities have been undertaken to promote the implementation of this recommendation. The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings lays out specific rights for children; GRETA's newly released third general report of activities highlights how States must pursue policies in favour of groups vulnerable to human trafficking, including asylum seekers, who should benefit from integration measures to avoid them being targeted by criminal networks. The Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2012-2015) also addresses questions related to "migrant children and children on the move".

3. With regard to FRONTEX, this is an European Union agency and the Council of Europe cannot as such have any role either in the management of migration flows of individual member States or the external border management of the European Union, as they fall outside the scope of its activities. However, as member of the Consultative Forum of FRONTEX, which held its inaugural meeting on 16 October 2012, the Council of Europe can offer its knowledge and expertise to FRONTEX, in order to promote compliance with human rights standards in the Agency's activities.

4. The Committee of Ministers reiterates the need for burden sharing and has often called for solidarity concerning the management of massive arrivals of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in individual member States. The Council of Europe stands ready to assist member States, for example on how to optimise and simplify procedures in processing the arrival of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and apply fundamental human rights standards when it comes to overcrowding within host countries.

1. Adopted at the 1189th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (22 January 2014).