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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
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Children without identity in Europe and around the world: a crucial challenge for fundamental rights

Motion for a resolution
tabled by Mr Régis BERGONZI and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

Legal personality, or the "right to have rights", is the essential foundation for any protection within a State governed by the rule of law.

Although enshrined in several international texts (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Convention on the Rights of the Child), UNICEF estimates that 166 million children remain unregistered. This situation exposes them to human trafficking, economic exploitation, and social exclusion.

The causes of this administrative invisibility are manifold: non-existent or ineffective civil registry systems, prohibitive registration costs, and difficulties in accessing administrative services. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romani children are denied birth certificates due to their parents' inability to pay hospital fees. Cultural traditions, low levels of maternal education, and armed conflicts destroying civil registers, further exacerbate the problem. Moreover, orphaned children or those with unknown parents, particularly among migrants in Europe, face significant difficulties in obtaining civil status, further jeopardising their recognition and protection.

Faced with this urgent issue, concrete and effective solutions must be sought. The Parliamentary Assembly should advocate for adapting laws to local realities, deploying mobile units to register births, and increasing awareness among vulnerable populations. It should also emphasise the need to promote gender equality. Such initiatives cannot succeed without the strengthened support of organisations like UNICEF. Finally, regional co-operation and the integration of civil registers into biometric databases appear to be essential tools for ensuring a harmonised and effective approach to citizenship management.

Granting every child a legal identity is a fundamental moral and legal imperative, safeguarding them from abuse and ensuring an inclusive future for all. This mission falls upon the Council of Europe, which must guarantee its effective implementation.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed[1]*:*

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