



International Foster Care Organisation

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IFCO calls on all Euro Parliamentarians to enforce the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, see below) and back the Romanian Governments moratorium on inter-country adoption.

Article 21 of UNCRC:

States Parties that recognize and/or permit the system of adoption shall ensure that the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration and they shall:

(a) Ensure that the adoption of a child is authorized only by competent authorities who determine, in accordance with applicable law and procedures and on the basis of all pertinent and reliable information, that the adoption is permissible in view of the child's status concerning parents, relatives and legal guardians and that, if required, the persons concerned have given their informed consent to the adoption on the basis of such counselling as may be necessary;

(b) Recognize that inter-country adoption may be considered as an alternative means of child's care, if the child cannot be placed in a foster or an adoptive family or cannot in any suitable manner be cared for in the child's country of origin; (c) Ensure that the child concerned by inter-country adoption enjoys safeguards and standards equivalent to those existing in the case of national adoption;

(d) Take all appropriate measures to ensure that, in inter-country adoption, the placement does not result in improper financial gain for those involved in it;

(e) Promote, where appropriate, the objectives of the present article by concluding bilateral or multilateral arrangements or agreements and endeavour, within this framework, to ensure that the placement of the child in another country is carried out by competent authorities or organs.

The Romanian Government has made great strides forward to improve its child-care system. One central part of this improvement has been the ban on inter-country adoptions brought in 2001. Inter-country adoption created massive corruption and hindered the development of social services within Romania.

How a society cares for its children reveals its innermost values and principles. Following the extreme problems created under the Ceausescu regime, the Romanian Government has taken responsibility for tackling this legacy. It has turned round a very difficult situation. IFCO is currently carrying out an evaluation of the maternal assistant network, comprising of foster families for many of the children who now live in a substitute family instead of an institution. There are many such initiatives helping and supporting the Romanian authorities take responsibility for improving the care of children.

We are asking Euro Parliamentarians to back these efforts by resisting the powerful international adoption lobby. While these lobbyists are concerned with the rights of the adults who wish to adopt Romanian babies, IFCO is concerned with the rights and best



interests of the children. We think the best interests for children are to be brought up in their own country and culture. If they cannot live safely with their biological parents, then their extended family, a foster family, an adoptive family or a family-type home should be found, within their country.

Whilst recognising the desire of childless couples in rich countries to adopt children, IFCO argues that there are many children in their own countries in out-of-home care who need a family. We think they should be encouraged to adopt or foster children from their own nation and culture.

Countries should not be allowed to export children. Since this would not be acceptable in Western Europe or North America, we should apply the same principles to Romania. We should not have double standards in the EU; there must not be one rule for Romania and another for the other members. We should be seeking to raise standards and to ensure that governments meet their responsibilities to their children by not allowing them to abrogate these standards in favour of a lucrative trade in babies.

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