EVENT PRESS NOTE

**A delegation of young ambassadors will call on EU member states to close the gaps which leave thousands of children without a nationality**

**Brussels, 13 July –** A group of 35 young ambassadors will call on European leaders to act to prevent children from growing up without a nationality at a meeting in the European Parliament hosted by MEPs Anna Maria Corazza Bildt and Caterina Chinnici, Co-Chairs of the EP Intergroup on Children’s Rights.

This event in Parliament will conclude the first Youth Congress on Statelessness organised by the European Network on Statelessness, taking place over three days, bringing together a group of 50 young ambassadors and civil society organisations from across Europe who work at a

 national level towards the eradication of childhood statelessness.

Recent research by the European Network on Statelessness revealed that although all EU member countries have signed one or more international treaties which set out the right of every child to a nationality, less than half (13 out of 28) have fully incorporated these obligations and necessary safeguards into domestic laws.

Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, Co-chair of the Intergroup on Children's Rights, said "It is unacceptable that in Europe children are still stateless. No child deserves to be deprived of his or her basic rights because of the situation of their parents. A child is first and foremost a child regardless his or her legal status and we have the responsibility to protect them. It is of paramount importance to join forces and take action to put an end to childhood statelessness. Today, with the EP Intergroup on Children's Rights we call on Member States to take the necessary legislative changes to ensure that every child enjoy his or her right to a nationality in all Europe".

Chris Nash, Director of the European Network on Statelessness said: *“No child chooses to be stateless. Yet statelessness continues to* *exist because European states are failing to ensure that all children born within Europe’s* *borders or to European citizen parents acquire a nationality. For a child, the inability to secure* *any nationality can have enormous consequences and can mean missing out on healthcare, education and other opportunities in life.”*

The European Network on Statelessness, which represents civil society organisations from across Europe, is spearheading a campaign called #StatelessKids to raise awareness and promote positive solutions on the issue. For more information go to <http://statelesskids.eu> (this includes a campaign animation, case studies and a petition)

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MEDIA CONTACT

For media enquiries please call ENS Head of Communications Jan Brulc on +44 7522 525673 or email jan.brulc@statelessness.eu.

**A number of speakers and youth ambassadors** **at the event will be available for broadcast interviews.**

NOTES TO EDITORS

The reception will take place on **13 July (12.30pm-2pm) in European Parliament, Library Reading Room - ASP 5th floor**. The event is co-hosted by Anna Maria Corazza Bildt and Caterina Chinnici and organised by the European Network on Statelessness with the the European Parliament Intergroup on Children’s Rights.

The [European Network on Statelessness](http://www.statelessness.eu/) (ENS) is a civil society alliance with 103 members in 39 countries. It is committed to ending statelessness and ensuring that the estimated 600,000 people living in Europe without a nationality are protected under international law. To find out more about the issue visit our “No child should be Stateless” page <http://www.statelessness.eu/no-child-should-be-stateless>

The first youth congress on statelessness is organised by the European Network on Statelessness and supported by the Maastricht University Campus in Brussels and the UNHCR.