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PRESS RELEASE

Gaps in European nationality laws leave thousands of children stateless

Strasbourg - A new report published today by the European Network on Statelessness reveals that thousands of children are growing up without the basic protection a nationality offers to citizens because of gaps in nationality laws and laws governing procedures for birth registration. The report *No Child Should be Stateless*, which draws on extensive analysis of nationality laws in all 47 Council of Europe states, details a worrying array of problems and makes a series of recommendations designed to guide actions to address – and ultimately end – childhood statelessness in Europe.

The European Network on Statelessness, which represents over fifty civil society organisations from across Europe, is spearheading a new campaign: 'None of Europe's Children should be Stateless' to raise awareness and promote positive solutions on the issue.

Commenting on the launch of the report Chris Nash, Director of the European Network on Statelessness said: *“No child chooses to be stateless. Every child belongs to a community. 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 amounts to a severe violation of their human rights.”*

Endorsing the report as an important contribution to solving the issue Nils Muižnieks, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, said *“Statelessness increases the vulnerability of children to serious human rights violations, such as trafficking, labour and sexual exploitation, as well as illegal adoption. Stateless children often face multiple, mutually reinforcing forms of marginalization. But statelessness is a solvable issue and as this report shows if governments, regional actors, UN human rights bodies, UN agencies and civil society work together, strategies for action can be developed to tackle and solve this issue once and for all.”*

ENDS

MEDIA CONTACT

For media enquiries please call ENS Director Chris Nash on 0044 (0)20 7354 9631 or email chris.nash@statelessness.eu or info@statelessness.eu. Both ENS Director Chris Nash and Nils Muižnieks, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights will be available for broadcast interviews on 21 Sep.

NOTES TO EDITORS

- The report will be launched at the “No Child Should be Stateless” event held in Strasbourg on 21 September. Speakers include Nils Muižnieks, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights. The event is co-organised by ENS and the UN Refugee Agency whose [#ibelong](#) initiative seeks the eradication of statelessness within a decade. The event programme is available [here](#)
- The [European Network on Statelessness](#) (ENS) is a network of over 50 nongovernmental organisations, academic initiatives, and individual experts committed to address statelessness in Europe. Based in London, ENS is a coordinating body and expert resource for organisations across Europe who work with or come into contact with stateless persons
- As part of its campaign to end child statelessness ENS draws on comparative research conducted by its members in eight countries, supplemented with analysis of how all 47 Council of Europe states are performing with regard to their international obligation to ensure every child's right to acquire a nationality. The report entitled *No Child Should be Stateless* will be published on 21 September and available online at www.statelessness.eu (embargoed copies are available on request)