

Children of Prisoners Europe launches annual pan-European campaign “Not my crime, still my sentence”

1 June 2017 – Every June since 2010, Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE) has organised a pan-European campaign entitled “Not my crime, still my sentence”, which aims to raise awareness on the issue of parental imprisonment, while promoting positive solutions, targeting key stakeholders using online tools, videos, artwork, communications and social media. COPE is the only network of organisations and individuals across Europe working solely to protect the rights and meet the needs of children separated from a parent in prison.

The objectives of the 2017 campaign include **co-constructing positive solutions for improving prison visits** for children and **supporting “out of reach” children of prisoners in schools**.

COPE members are participating in multiple ways throughout the month of June in the **Netherlands, Poland, Scotland, England & Wales, Italy, France, Croatia, Switzerland, Sweden and Romania**.

Campaign focus I:

Improving prison visits for children

The UNCRC stipulates that all children, including children with imprisoned parents, deserve the opportunity to give their opinions about issues that affect them. The experiences children have during prison visits are no exception. Our first campaign focus includes **co-constructing positive solutions for prison visits with prison directors, staff and children**. Our members are **working with children to illustrate their experiences of prison visits** by writing and drawing examples of positive experiences and progressive changes they would like to see. The expression cards the children have been writing on are being sent to directors of prisons where the children visit. COPE’s goal is **to move away from the negative language surrounding the “problems” and the “issues” when talking about prison experiences** for children with imprisoned parents. A summary of the children’s ideas that prison directors across Europe will receive this month can be viewed [here](#).



Campaign focus II: Support for children of prisoners in schools

Schools can be game-changers for children affected by parental imprisonment. School staff members are often the child's first point of contact outside of the immediate family, giving them a unique opportunity to meet the child's needs. Our second campaign focus aids school officials in addressing any issues children of prisoners may face at school and at home. **Support from school staff can mean the difference between bullying or discrimination, and social inclusion and security.** COPE is providing tools such as posters and teaching aids to schools across Europe to help support children with imprisoned parents. This will allow school staff to reach out to children facing the challenges that come with having a parent in prison in order to support their healthy development and boost school performance.



In 2015, “Not my crime, still my sentence” was awarded the Guardian’s Charity Campaign of the Month. [Read Anna Isaac’s article here.](#)

COPE is currently raising money to support its actions in schools: learn more about the project [here](#). To stay informed about the campaign, be sure to check out our [website](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

Campaign and press relations:

Hannah Lynn

hannah.lynn@networkcope.eu

+33(0)1 42 53 71 85