
Document **8**



Keeping Scouts Safe From Harm Policy Proposal



**36th
World Scout
Conference**

**36e Conférence
Mondiale
du Scoutisme**

H E L L A S 2 0 0 2

Conference Documents

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- 3 - Registration Fee System
- 4 - A Strategy for Scouting: The Proposed Concept
- 4a - A Strategy for Scouting: Working Methods at the Conference
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KEEPING SCOUTS SAFE FROM HARM

Policy Proposal

In 1990, the World Scout Conference adopted the following resolution:

16/90 Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Conference

- considering that the respect and protection of the dignity of the child and his or her moral, social, legal and cultural rights represent a basic condition for a healthier and safer future of humanity
- recognising the fundamental obligation of a youth movement to protect and promote the best interests of children and young people
- welcomes the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20 November 1989
- expresses its support to the provisions of the Convention
- invites all National Scout Organizations to play an active role in encouraging their Government to ratify the Convention and in promoting its dissemination among adults and children
- encourages National Scout Organizations to find creative means to familiarise their leaders with the articles of the Convention and to use them in understanding the needs of children and young people.

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Scouting in common with all youth organizations has a duty to ensure that all its members come to no harm, whether physical, emotional or sexual.

The incidence world-wide of high profile cases of abuse of children, including child pornography and paedophilia, some of which occur in youth organizations, have emphasised the need for a thorough consideration of this issue by the Scout Movement.

Two recent surveys have been undertaken of national Scout associations, one in November 1998, Circular N° 26/1998 and the second in October 2000, Circular N° 24/2000. Responses were received from 35 national Scout associations which indicated that:

- 22 associations have some policies and procedures in place to protect members of the association from sexual and other forms of abuse.
- 26 associations have some plans in place to deal with problems when they arise, including publicity.
- 16 associations have published some materials on this topic.
- 16 associations work with other youth organizations and government officials on this topic.
- All associations that responded expressed an interest in knowing more about what other associations are doing in this area.

The feedback received indicates that some associations are doing a great deal. However, the low response to the questionnaire might be a reflection that many associations are not undertaking specific steps to ensure that young people are protected from abuse or are prepared to deal with incidents which arise in the association.

In light of the above and while recognising the existence of differences in traditions and cultural values, the World Scout Committee proposes the following resolution **'Keeping Scouts Safe from Harm'** for adoption at the 36th World Scout Conference in Thessaloniki:

The Conference:

- recognising that the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child requests States to ensure that children are protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse
 - noting that there is a growing awareness in society of the need to protect young people from all forms of abuse
 - considering that Scouting is an educational Movement whose mission is to help young people develop their full potential in accordance with the Scout Method, which involves the effective functioning of the peer group under appropriate adult guidance
 - emphasising that the achievement of Scouting's mission makes it essential for the Movement to provide young people with a 'safe passage' which respects their integrity and their right to develop in a non-constraining environment
 - further emphasising that providing this 'safe passage' is possible only if young people are protected from all forms of abuse i.e. verbal, physical, sexual and emotional, abuse, neglect and peer pressures
 - welcoming the fact that a number of NSOs have developed effective policies and procedures aimed at ensuring the safe passage for their young people in Scouting
1. urges NSOs to adopt and implement policies and procedures to ensure the safe passage of young people throughout their time in the Movement.
 2. recommends that in developing such policies associations should ensure that legal requirements within a country, and the standards set out within the Convention on the Rights of the Child, are met.
 3. further recommends that NSOs ensure that such policies are duly reflected in the totality of the association's activities, in particular:
 - at the level of the youth programme - that it instils self-confidence and self-esteem in young people and develops the ability to protect and express themselves
 - at the level of adult leadership - that recruitment policies ensure that only appropriate adults are recruited and that all adults, irrespective of their role, receive training and support in this area

- at the level of management of the association - that policies and procedures for intervention, including risk management, incident management and public relations are put into place.
5. recommends to the World Scout Committee that tools and documents are developed to support National Scout Organizations with this implementation.
 6. urges the World Scout Regions to strongly advocate and support this course of action.