



IFSW EUROPE RESOLUTION ON THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN AGE DETERMINATION OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

IFSW Europe draws attention to:

- The large number of children under the age of 18 years on the move into and across Europe as a result of war, social conflict and poverty.
- The significant number of unaccompanied child migrants without any formal documentation.
- The protections provided for children under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, The Refugee Convention and other international agreements concerning refugees and asylum seekers.
- The need to determine the age of an unaccompanied child migrant in order to decide whether they are eligible for children's services.
- The absence of any objective way, medically or socially, to determine the age of a child with total certainty.
- The reality that the determination of age is an arbitrary judgement which can have serious adverse personal consequences for the individual.
- The fact that social workers frequently experience ethical and practical dilemmas when involved in age determination.

IFSW Europe therefore resolves that:

- Social workers have an ethical duty to ensure the voice of the child is heard, that children's best interests are respected and that the rights are protected.
- Age determination must be a multi-professional process.
- Social workers have an ethical duty to enable people to appeal against any adverse decision.
- IFSW Europe calls for a global IFSW position statement and guidance for social workers on age determination, taking account of existing good practice and making explicit reference to the global context for this work.

IFSW Europe Delegates Meeting
28.5.2017