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End the travel ban for Chernobyl children

Motion for a resolution
presented by Mr Omtzigt and others

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only the members
who have signed it

1. Every year, children affected by the Chernobyl disaster some of whom are still suffering from devastating effects on their mental and physical health, visit a number of countries including Germany, Spain, Great Britain, Ireland, Belgium and the Netherlands, where they are offered temporary visits by private organisations and public administrations.
2. However, following the decision of one Belarussian girl to stay in the United States, Minsk authorities imposed recently a blanket ban on any children traveling on such trips. After this event, the Belarussian authorities decided to entirely suspend the Belarussian exchange programmes for children abroad.
3. The Assembly deems it essential that these exchange programmes be managed in the best way possible. Obviously, the children's interests should come first and it is necessary to ensure the respect of fundamental children's rights and in particular the right to health, as defined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child signed in New York on 20 November 1989. Moreover, it considers it as a grave human rights violation in general when a government arbitrarily denies its citizens the right to traveling abroad.
4. The Assembly therefore calls on the Belarussian authorities to end the travel ban for children who participate in the various assistance and solidarity programmes offered by international NGOs, local and regional authorities, and government agencies in different Council of Europe member states – and it entrusts its relevant Committee to prepare a report on this subject.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed ¹:

OMTZIGT Pieter, Netherlands, EPP/CD
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ÇAVUŞOĞLU Mevlüt, Turkey, EDG
CHOPE Christopher, United Kingdom, EDG
GARDETTO Jean-Charles, Monaco, EPP/CD
GJUL Gunn Karin, Norway, SOC
GLESENER Marcel, Luxembourg, EPP/CD
GROSS Andreas, Switzerland, SOC
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¹ EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group
EDG: European Democratic Group
ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: not registered in a group