

Brussels, 23 December 2013

**Dear Friends of ACT,**

On behalf of the ACT Team we would like to thank all those who donate, fundraise, research, think along and in any other way support the work of ACT.

On the year 2013, the fifth year of our existence, we can look back with pride and gratitude. For the first time we were able to raise a significant amount of funding. That was much needed, as we also expanded our activities and thus spent all the money immediately. All money was spent on our project activities – as we have no overhead costs at all.

Working with and on behalf of victims of child trafficking is in many ways always emotionally exhausting, legally difficult and generally complex. We sure had our ups and downs, but the fulfilment of joy when we reach a success gives us the strength to continue.

That's also what the support of donors and other friends of ACT means to us. It gives us the strength and courage to continue. Therefore, we hereby thank you wholeheartedly!

And even more important: your donations made it possible that ACT could ACT.

ACT is working on many, many cases: searching roots, reconnecting families, unraveling the crimes behind these adoptions. Some are ongoing since years. Some are in Courts, some are blocked, for some we miss the funding to take them up.

Also, we keep a close tab on policy and legislative developments worldwide.

Again, in 2013, ACT's work got impressive media attention, an overview of the over 50 articles/documentaries can be found [here](#).

It is quite impossible to describe at this stage all ACT undertook this year. But we'll gladly give you some of what we consider ACT's 2013 highlights.

We sincerely hope for your continuous support.

**And we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!**

**Roelie Post  
Arun Dohle**

Donations: [via Paypal](#)  
or: [Indiegogo Operation Mercy Mercy II \(until 25 December\)](#)

ACT's account: IBAN: NL41 INGB 0672 6820 60 BIC: INGBNL2A

## **2013 – SOME HIGHLIGHTS:**

### **Restoring the UNCRC to the European *Acquis*-List, while getting rid of The Hague Convention**

ACT's aim remains to prevent trafficking in children for intercountry adoption. ACT advocates for child rights in compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which is the universal standard and the best safeguard against child trafficking.

The UNCRC is part of the European laws (**so-called *Acquis***). That means that all EU Member States must have ratified it, and that future Member States also must do so. The Hague Convention is not part of the *Acquis*, as (intercountry) adoption is not an EU competence, but from the EU Member States.

However, in 2004, the European Commission had taken the UNCRC from the *Acquis* list. Wrongly so, and had to restore it – [see here](#).



Beginning this year, in light of ACT's monitoring of children's rights and child rights policies, Arun Dohle started asking the EU for disclosure of internal documents (through the website [asktheEU.org](#) – run by transparency NGOs). A total of 54 questions were handed in.

Thereby it came out that the UNCRC had again been removed, and replaced by the Hague Convention. This could have had a huge impact on child rights policies worldwide, as the European Commission could thus become active in promoting the Hague Convention – including financing of adoption related activities and policies.

ACT wrote a complaint letter to the European Commission and as a response the European Commission took The Hague Convention from the *Acquis* list, and also re-affirmed that the UNCRC is a Convention to which EU Member States must accede.

Mission accomplished... but we'll need to continue to be vigilant.



### **February 2013**

#### **Betty: Adoption Revoked**

After a long process of reconnecting Betty with her Ethiopian family, ACT assisted Betty's parents to revoke her adoption in Ethiopian Court. Betty continues to live with her foster mother in the Netherlands.

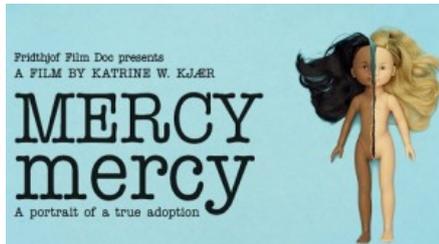


### **February 2013**

#### **Manifestation India**

ACT: Giving a face and voice to the parents of stolen children – they travelled from all over India to Dehli. Indian Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) organised a two-day conference on child adoption to promote intercountry adoption.

Some 20 parents demonstrated and had meetings with the Indian authorities and other stakeholders.



**March 2013 – Operation Mercy Mercy – ongoing**  
After watching *Mercy Mercy, Against Child Trafficking* felt something needed to be done to re-connect Masho with her parents. We felt something had to be done to oppose the **condoning of a crime**. We had researched Ethiopian adoptions before, and had the needed trustworthy contacts.

**Thus: Operation Masho was born.**



ACT went to Ethiopia in April to meet Masho's parents. At the same time we took up another similar case that had been in the Danish media (the case of Amy) and met Amy's mother in Ethiopia too.

While in Ethiopia, many more mothers whose children are now in Denmark showed up, and these mothers had not, and still do not, understood the concept of adoption and miss their children.



ACT accompanied them to the Danish Embassy, so that they could make themselves heard.

So, we broadened the project into "Operation Mercy Mercy", intending to help more Ethiopian parents.



Masho's parents and Amy's mother appointed Arun Dohle of Against Child Trafficking as their legal representative in Denmark. In Ethiopia we hired a lawyer for the parents, who started the process of reversing the adoption. We have been several times in Denmark, where we also have a lawyer on the case, and where we met with politicians and the commune (Child Protection) in whose care Masho is.

We started the process of applying for passports for Amy's mother and Masho's parents. Since Masho is in state care - to arrange a meeting very much depends on the commune. **It is still a long and bumpy road.**



In Amy's case, we have brought her mother for a week to Denmark end October.

One happy re-connection!



### **Ekambaram and Kathirvel vs. The Netherlands**

ACT supports this Indian family since many years. The Dutch Courts refused their request for DNA testing with the boy they believe to be their son. He was kidnapped in 1997 in India and adopted in the Netherlands.

ACT has organised that this case has now been brought to the European Court on Human Rights in Strasburg. To be continued...



### **Reconnected**

Letter from Martijn:

[...]

We then got in touch with the organization '**Against Child Trafficking (ACT)**'. This organization has successfully performed many searches. [...] We trusted them because they showed to have much experience with these searches, especially when it comes to trying to obtain the documents from the orphanages.

[...]

The priest of the orphanage did not want to release these documents but he has eventually given them

after considerable pressure from ACT. Thanks to these documents all our mothers were found. I myself went to India last September to meet my family. This time accompanied by Anjali, who was present to help with any social differences. We have also been looking for my biological father, whose name was also described in the documents and thanks to Anjali we eventually found him and I could meet him. [...]



### **8<sup>TH</sup> EUROPEAN FORUM ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**

ACT participated to this Forum on 17/18 December  
One of the themes was 'Children on the Move'.

ACT has pointed EU policy makers to the need to include also children who came to the EU Member States for intercountry adoption. ACT is faced with increased demand of adult adoptees, who want to re-connect with their families, inside or outside the EU. At the same time there are families

abroad, looking for their children who were adopted into the EU.

The subject of illegal adoptions was already included in the [EU Anti-Trafficking Directive](#) in 2011. However, according to ACT there is a need to now further define illegal adoptions. And there is a need to provide European funding for this issue.