

19 December 2015

Dear Friends of ACT,

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

Our last Christmas newsletter was in December 2013. In 2014 we were too overwhelmed with work so we did not have the time to prepare another newsletter. So here you go: ACT's Christmas newsletter for 2014 and 2015!

These years have been a whirlwind.

We had good and bad news. Positive and negative experiences. But overall, ACT expanded. Our help was requested by more and more people whose lives were affected by the intercountry adoption system. Also, we keep a close tab on policy and legislative developments worldwide. Media finds its way to ACT and we spent a lot of time sharing our expertise and knowledge.

This 2014-2015 Newsletter summarises a few of ACT's 2014/2015 highlights.

We thank all friends of ACT for their support. We could not have done it without you. With a relatively small private donor support group, we have been able to do miracles.

The New Year, 2016, will bring new challenges. We will take them on.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

The ACT TEAM

Visit ACT's website : www.againstchildtrafficking.org

Grateful for Donations: via Paypal

or on ACT's Bank Account:

IBAN: NL41 INGB 0672 6820 60 BIC: INGBNL2A

ACT 2014-2015 HIGHLIGHTS:

SOME IMPORTANT CHANGES DURING 2014-2015:



ACT's child rights expert, Roelie Post, had to leave ACT in August 2014. The European Commission's secondment contract with ACT ended, and she went back working inside the European Commission. She is not allowed to work on children's rights or anti-trafficking. This meant that she could not bring her ACT experience back into the European Commission, as should be the ultimate goal of any secondment contract.



ACT handed in complaints on multiple levels about this situation (European Commission, Anti-Fraud Agency (OLAF), European Ombudsman, European Parliament). For example, Arun Dohle/ACT put the issue to the European Parliament and Julian Assange and Sarah Harrison (lawyer Snowden) during a [European Parliament Conference](#) on whistleblowers in June 2015.

It seems that there is not much willingness on the European side to deal with this issue, but ACT will stay on it. To be continued.

againstchildtraffickingusa



ACT also got enforced! In 2014 ACT-USA was registered with as goal to spread awareness and fundraise for ACT.



ACT also extended its mission by including surrogacy. ACT joined the [STOP SURROGACY NOW campaign](#).

ACT's ADVOCACY:



In 2013, ACT/Arun Dohle started asking the EU for disclosure of internal documents (through the website www.asktheEU.org – run by transparency NGOs). In 2014 and 2015 this activity continued, and by now [a total of 100 questions](#) were handed in.

The documents that were made public, as result of these requests, give a harrowing inside in how children's rights were distorted since 2007. The Hague Convention's principles are followed, and not the binding law of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Exactly

how the Adoption Lobby wants it. See for example [this letter](#), in which the Swedish adoption agency Adoptionscentrum spells out their dissatisfaction with the European Commission's implementation of the UNCRC that led to the closure of Romania's intercountry adoption system.



European Parliament - Petition Committee on forced adoptions: On 19 March 2014 the European Parliament Petition Committee dealt with Petitions on Forced Adoption. ACT was present, and took up the case of Laila Brice, Latvian mother of a child removed by the UK Social Services. ACT sent a letter to the Latvian Embassy in London, [letter of support](#). The case is still in the UK Courts. ACT is following closely.

Terre des Hommes – Children on the Move



TdH Conference 'Closing a protection gap for European children on the move', 5 March 2015 in Brussels. ACT put a question about Serbia/Montenegro's monitoring on children's rights and intercountry adoption. Mr. Paquet, Director of the European Commission, recognised there were 'some concerns' and committed to follow-up. To be continued...

9TH EUROPEAN FORUM ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD



ACT participated to this Forum on 3/4 June 2015. One of the themes was 'Integrated Child Protection Systems'. One of ACT's priorities is the monitoring of developments at the European Union level. We are greatly concerned that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is no longer considered as part of the EU law (*acquis*). ACT inquired again.

Side Event – Unicef



ACT also was at the Unicef side event "Children's Access to Justice", Arun had a good coffee talk with Susan Bissel (Unicef Head of Child Protection) and Sandie Blanchet (Unicef Romania). Since then ACT is having an interesting e-mail conversation with Unicef. To be continued...

Danish Forum 24 October 2015



ACT spoke at a conference organised by *Adoptionspolitisk Forum*, *Adopterede 30+* and *Projekt Planet Love* in Copenhagen, Denmark. Theme: The Rights of the Transnational Adoptee: the Convention on

the Rights of the Child vs The Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Inter-Country Adoption.

Denmark Adoptee Meeting, Copenhagen:



On 25 October 2015, ACT's Arun Dohle met with Indian adoptees from Denmark and Sweden discussing re-connecting Indian roots.

Bashy's Corner – TV Denmark



In March 2015, ACT's Jin Vilsgaard was interviewed for the Danish TV program Bashy's Corner about Trafficking in Denmark and the Western world.

In English, watch it [here](#).

RAISING AWARENESS

An important book, giving a voice to those who “live” adoption.



Adoptionland, from Orphans to Activists

Contributors: Casper Andersen, Lily Arthur, Trace DeMeyer, Peter Dodds, Arun Dohle, Darelle Duncan, Erica Gehringer, Jeffrey Hancock, Bob Honecker, Cameron Horn, Tobias Hubinette, Sunny Jo Johnsen, Kristina Laine, Lakshmi, Tinan Leroy, Georgiana A. Macavei, Marion McMillan, Khara Nine, Colette Noonan, Cryptic Omega, Vanessa Pearce, Michael Allen Potter, Paul Redmond, Lucy Sheen, Joe Soll, Vance Twins and Daniel Ibn Zayd

ACT ON THE GROUND:



India : Supreme Court Petition

In 2012 the Indian NGO's Sakhee and Advait handed in a Petition at the Indian Supreme Court. India does not have a comprehensive adoption law, the main rules are set by the Supreme Court.

The Petition details many of the ACT cases (trafficked/stolen children, re-connected Indian adoptees) and asks the Supreme Court for a in-depth investigation. Also the Petition argues for a moratorium on intercountry adoption until all issues are addressed.

Last but not least, the Petition suggests that the Supreme Court orders the Indian Government to set up a mechanism through which Indian adoptees can be assisted with their family searches.

The Petition has been dealt with at the Supreme Court several times, and is still awaiting its final judgment.

Operation Mercy Mercy (2014/2015)

[Remember Masho? She still does not have contact with her parents](#)



End 2012 a gripping documentary 'adoption price of a child' [Mercy Mercy] put Denmark upside down.

In 2013 ACT went to Ethiopia, met the parents, and many other parents who lost their children too. A lawyer was hired, and a local contact person. Since then, a lot of work has been done. But all to no avail. No contact with Masho is possible. Right now, there is a Court case in Ethiopia, in which the Ethiopian parents request the revocation of the adoption, information and access to their daughter. It's a long process, with many obstacles. To be continued...

Amy:

Must watch: [A 13- year-old adopted girl puts a bomb under the adoption system](#)



Then there is Amy. As part of Operation Mercy Mercy, ACT assists her Ethiopian mother Genet in getting back her parental rights, as Amy is no longer living with her Danish adoptive parents. Danish authorities decided Amy is not allowed to travel to Ethiopia until she is 18. It's too much to describe here, but ACT is working hard to resolve this. A Court case is pending in Ethiopia. To be continued...

ABC AUSTRALIA - DOCUMENTARY ON SURROGACY



The extraordinary case of a twin boy left behind in India was first revealed by Foreign Correspondent and ABC in 2015. But his identity and fate had stayed a mystery.

As part of ACT's new mission to monitor surrogacy, ABC Australia teamed up with ACT's Arun Dohle and Anjali Pawar. In India, they weaved through Delhi's labyrinthine bureaucracy and backstreets on a hunt for the twins' birth records, the boy's adoption papers and details of the surrogate mother and Australian parents. The result was a painful documentary "**About a Boy**", which you can watch [here](#).

RECONNECTING INDIAN ROOTS



ACT reconnected in 2014/2015 a record number of 17 Indian adoptees with their mothers/families in India. Some rather quick, while others took many years.



From the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden... ACT searched, went to the villages, hospitals, the police. Sometimes to the Indian Courts.

**Long travels, strategizing, disputes, despair.
But then, the final news: FOUND!**



A dream fulfilled! Emotional visits to the family, always with ACT's social worker. Careful, respectful. Protecting all involved. Building the bridge between cultures.

Not always easy, not always perfect. It remains a challenging task.



ACT is proud that its yearlong investment in building a network, gaining knowledge and experience, has paid off.



Looking forward to many more successes!