

Children Separated By Borders From Parents or Carers

Given that some branches of ISS provide a substantial direct service to migrant groups focusing on their adaptation locally, along with the intercountry link where the problems extend across borders, while other branches work primarily on the intercountry cases, their experience of separated young people varies. This is reflected in their contributions to the discussion of this topic. ***There is, of course, a common philosophical standpoint among the social workers that separation from customary carers is to be avoided wherever possible and, when it does occur, every effort should be made to keep the contact alive.***

The ages of the children, coming to the attention of the ISS offices and in need of help, extend from very young children, who may be with a relative they barely know, to older teenagers, mostly boys, who have arrived in a new country and may be living by themselves, in groups or in unsupervised informal fostering arrangements. At the intercountry level they figure in most caseloads, either as potential family reunion cases, or as candidates for being returned to birth families away from unsatisfactory care arrangements.

In some branches the service for the older children is geared to helping them settle and integrate into the host country, through direct counselling and linking them up to the relevant welfare provisions and facilities. In **France** and in **Hong Kong**, where ISS branches provide direct service, separated children are a significant part of the caseload in local ISS offices. In **Hong Kong** they are assisted through the post-migration service for new arrivals. In **France** many are asylum seekers as well as immigrants, and the branch has a long history of responding to their needs. Because their numbers, and the difficulties they experience has grown, work with this group has become an important part of the Triennial Programme of the SSAE for 2002/2004.

The French branch, (SSAE) having been a member of the National Commission concerned with the admission and supervision of minors from South East Asia and, with the

French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless People (OFPRA), is involved with meeting their care needs and seeing that they have legal representation. The various SSAE offices in France deal with them individually. Thus the branch has acquired considerable expertise. In their handling of the cases they draw on their specialist knowledge and this covers the international dimension.

From the French point of view the title "isolated minors" is thought to represent their situation more accurately than "unaccompanied". A number of them are quite alone, others are living with members of the family and others are living in groups. The SSAE service is available to the lot. Generally our French colleagues argue that the description "isolated" better represents the fundamental problems confronting the young people, under eighteen, who find themselves without the assistance and guidance of their parents, and without legal representation. Some have been "accompanied" when they arrive in France but the adults who have accompanied them have not been disposed to assume responsibility for them.

In terms of how they are classified in France there is no particular classification for the group but they are covered by the law protecting all minors (i.e. covering their health, security and morals when they are in danger).

The SSAE workers co-operate with the appropriate child protection and legal services: the Departmental Social Services and the Judicial Child Protection Services of the State, Magistrates (Procurator, children's Judges, tutors) and associations of managers of relevant care institutions.

The problems presented to the SSAE workers and others in contact with the isolated children include finding appropriate placements, in a field which is saturated with demands. Our colleagues are also meeting problem of defining who should take responsibility for them. Some regional Departments send back cases of isolated minors to the State arguing they are asylum seekers or immigrants. The experience is that there is a lack of

understanding of the problems of isolated minors. Further they suggest that the law is not generous towards them.

The SSAE, because of its particular expertise, and its international dimension, has an information giving role in relation to other services regarding:

the specific problems facing the young people
the situation in their countries of origin
the particular experience of the young person
the status of being a foreigner in France
the asylum request
the acquisition of French nationality
Family Reunification

In some cases the SSAE workers turn to the international network of ISS in order to look for family members in other countries, or in the country of origin, so as contact can be re-established. There is frequently a long-term aim of family reunification in a third country. The SSAE workers state that in certain cases the responses received back are helpful and provide the information about the minor needed by the responsible services. However often the delays are too long, the reports are too superficial and unsatisfactory, and do not help with the formulation of a care plan to meet the needs of the particular young person. When this happens doubt is cast over the usefulness of the international dimension.

The extent of the needs for service for unaccompanied or isolated young people in France is not known, there being no national register. There is information about the numbers in holding camps but these are not the responsibility of the SSAE.

Judicial Representation in France

In France for many years there has been debate about the status of the isolated minor and who represents him at law. This is particularly problematical in regard to young people who are asylum seekers and held in reception centres. They are in general, but not always, authorised to enter France when the administration requests the judicial authority and to maintain them in the centre for the latter constitutes an irregularity in procedure because they cannot be represented. In regard to the asylum procedure the OFPRA

neither interviews them nor gives a verdict nor notifies a decision to the young person always because of the irregularity of his situation. It is necessary therefore to request the intervention of the tutorship which is very long and also increases the procedure associated with the asylum request. The government has initiated a contentious measure in the form of an amendment to the law relative to parental power.

Thus under Article 17 of the law of 4th March 2002, relative to parental power.

On the part of the minor without legal representation living in a reception centre, an ad hoc administrator is required to assist him during his time in the reception centre and assure that he is represented in all administrative and judicial procedures relative to his maintenance. 9 modification of Article 35 of the Ordinance of 2nd November 1945 (relating to the condition of entry and of staying as a foreigner in France).

On the other side for the minor without legal representation who is requesting the status of refugee, an ad hoc administrator is required to assist and assure his representation in the framework of administrative and judicial procedures relative to the request for recognition as a refugee (introduction of the Article 12-1 of the law of 25th July 1952 relating to asylum).

These ad hoc administrators will be appointed by the procurator of the Republic, informed and kept in the reception centre or from the depositing of a request for recognition for the status of refugee of a minor without legal representation.

The procurator of the Republic will designate an ad hoc administrator, of preference from competent associations in the field of education and immigration or asylum requests according to a list to be consulted.

The Branch is awaiting the decree which will define the conditions and methods for being enrolled in the list.

Contact : Mrs. Catherine Bourgeade.

The SSAE has contributed to several articles and studies on this subject:

Migrations of Minors in France; Administrative, Juridical and social actions - February 1988. This study looks at 250 situations of minor asylum seekers, and refugees who came to the SSAE between 1984 and 1986.

Minors demanding asylum in French territory but without legal representation - March 1992. This study is of 225 isolated minors asking for asylum between March and September 1991.

Elements of reflection on the reception of minors - December 1997. SSAE participated in a co-ordinated study.

Minors and asylum seekers. The double handicap - 2000 Revue Accuellier no. 225.

Isolated minors - Separated minors, a technical dossier. September 2001, partnerships.

French branch colleagues have taken part in two European workshops. The objective of a workshop in **Budapest** set up by Save the Children and the UNHCR was to familiarise the participants with the programme for unaccompanied children in Europe and produce further training guidance, drawing on the principles and teaching aids provided. A meeting in **Madrid** devoted to this topic took place over two and a half days. Again this involved the UNHCR and voluntary organisations. The points debated included: the taking of fingerprints of children over 14, returning children to their country of origin, (points covered in a document edited by Thomas Elber of **ISS Switzerland**), future directions and the financing of them.

In **Paris** in April our colleague, Catherine Bourgeade attended an international conference on the treatment of unaccompanied minors in the **European Union** organised by the IOM and the Institute for Higher Studies in Internal Security. The aim was to study the effectiveness of the studies financed by the Commission in the following countries: Germany, Belgium, Spain,

France, Greece, Italy and the Netherlands. There were three workshops, one on the protection of unaccompanied minors, in which Catherine Bourgeade participated, another on cross-border co-operation between the services and the third on public education. **Catherine Bourgeade has made a synthesis and this is available from her.**

ISS **Italy** working with colleagues in the **ISS Albanian delegation** have established a large intercountry programme for those who are being returned to Albania to assist them in their reintegration with their families. This has been co-ordinated with the official agencies and is comprehensive. **A research study on Albanian unaccompanied minors has been made in co-operation with the Psychoanalytic Institute for Social Research in Rome (the study is in Italian).** The study made by the two ISS units shows that certain children will not participate in the programme and return to Italy or another country. 40% of the children who were repatriated remained in Albania.

Our **Italian branch** colleagues have been involved in the training of partner agencies in **Moldova, Romania and Morocco** who are working with the group of returning unaccompanied young people. These are covered under the agreement between the Italian branch and Ministry of Labour. The Branch has also been providing updating seminars in the twenty municipalities of Rome on working with unaccompanied foreign young people in the city and the setting up of data processing systems. This training helps in the referrals to the branch.

With the co-operation of other branches and correspondents **ISS(UK)** is assembling information about the services available for returning failed asylum seeking minors to inform the UK government.

The **US branch** equally has been very active in advocating the needs of unaccompanied foreign children in a number of important forums in the USA and in representation to the State Department. **ISS Canada** too has been working with the International Bureau for Children's Rights to enhance protection of separated children and adolescents.

Our correspondent in **Chile**, SENAME, the National Child Service, writes that unaccompanied foreign children in the country, receive the same service as local children in need of care. They may be assisted by statutory care centres or voluntary agencies.

Before a decision is made as to how best to meet their needs their social and family circumstances are considered and they may be sent to a residential centre. Until the end of 2001 the government agency SENAME, had dealt with 21 unaccompanied children from Argentine, Peru, Paraguay, Venezuela and Rwanda.

In regard to the care arrangements these can include international adoptions, again with the same norms being applied as is the case with local children. This includes investigations to establish whether or not they are legally adoptable. Final placement decisions are the responsibility of the courts.

In regard to the experience of working directly with a young person our correspondent in **Sweden** has written up a case study, with general comment about unaccompanied young people in that country which we are reproducing in its entirety. The general observations made about how and why the young people arrive from abroad is reflected in the experience of other countries.

SWEDEN – EPIKUR CONSULT

“In Sweden we have few children separated from their parents, in comparison with other countries even in Europe.

About 300 children arrive in Sweden alone every year and ask for asylum. There are also some others who come for reunion with their parents.

In most cases they had been separated from their parents, due to war, for example in former Yugoslavia or in Somalia. The parents had a residence permit. Their children had ended up in an orphanage abroad, for example in Italy.

Other children came to Sweden with adults who later were found not to be their parents. Many of the children had to be placed in foster homes due to ill treatment or, because of their

psychological problems, the new family could not manage them.

Most of the unaccompanied children are teenagers. Many come from the former Soviet republics, the Baltic countries, the Middle East and/or African countries, such as Nigeria, former Somalia and Uganda. Some of these are sent to Sweden by their family in the hope that, if they receive a resident permit, it might be possible for their parents to join them. Many feel very bad psychologically and some have tried to commit suicide. For psychologists or psychiatrists it is difficult to help them since they do not often feel that they can tell the truth about their background to anybody.

Other teenagers, for instance from Russia or the Baltic countries, have a very complicating situation in their home country with drugs and crime. Their problems often increase when they come to Sweden.

When an unaccompanied child comes to Sweden they mostly arrive with false papers. When they need support, they turn to the Swedish Migration Board and ask for asylum. Most are without identity papers.

There are also children reuniting with their parents in Sweden. Mostly they have lived apart from their families for many years and find it difficult to be quickly attached back into the family. Some have been in institutions for years are damaged and suffer from the experience of war and primary separation. Some do not speak the same language as their parents any more. If the local social services authority picks up this problem they will arrange for treatment for the young person and his family. If they do not the child will have no help at all.

In one case, Epikur, the ISS correspondent agency worked as a psychotherapeutic team for about 3 years to help a young girl and her mother to communicate and to find their roles as mother and daughter after 11 years of separation. In the beginning both the girl and her mother felt very much disappointed – they thought everything would be easy and smooth. The girl found it difficult to adjust to the new society and needed much time to understand what life in a modern town was like. There

were quarrels and attempts at suicide and much more before the girl calmed down and got used to her new life. The most difficult problem for her was to get used to living in a family instead of an institution.

In Sweden unaccompanied children are taken care of by the Swedish Migration Board in Refugee Camps and many are then placed in foster care. Some of the children have relatives here or say that they have relatives who can be their foster family. The relatives are assessed as foster parents. Many times it works out well but sometimes it does not. The relatives might not have enough strength to take care of children who are emotionally damaged. They might treat them badly or throw them out. Many relatives do not understand that the social welfare services have a responsibility for children placed in foster care.

Last spring there was much discussion in the press about the unaccompanied minors being badly treated at the refugee camps. The Swedish Migration Board was criticised, and they themselves passed the criticism on to the local social services authorities, who according to the law are responsible for all minors, including those without a residence permit.

An investigation is now underway by the government. New regulations are to be drawn up.

At the moment Epikur deals with cases of reunion initiated from ISS colleagues abroad or from social service authorities here. Epikur is also handling cases about unaccompanied minors background on the initiative of the Migration Board and from local social authorities. They are assessing their backgrounds with the help of colleagues abroad. All these lonely children feel bad and if it is possible they will be better if they can be reunited with their parents. Epikur believes already that the Russian colleague has been a great help to them in establishing the background of the children. Epikur is also busy finding suitable foster parents for them.

There are beginning discussions about future projects together with the Swedish Migration Board but this will grow slowly.

Until now Epikur believes that what is most important in working with the children is to understand that they have gone through many problems and are often in the need of psychological treatment".

Inter-Branch Meetings and Exchanges

Mikhael Nekhoroshev, the **ISS Russian correspondent**, spent a development week in the **General Secretariat** in January. He also visited **ISS Switzerland**. The extent of his co-operation in finding service in such a huge country is very much appreciated.

Carman Chan, assistant to the Executive Director in **Hong Kong**, spent two days in Geneva considering the administration. She also had meetings with **ISS Switzerland**.

Debby Cheung and Lam Siu Yo from the Intercountry Programme in **Hong Kong** visited the ISS correspondent in

Thailand in February, while attending to the needs of Hong Kong residents in Thai prisons. The purpose of the visit to the prisons was to help maintain the links of the residents with their families in Hong Kong.

Joanne Selinske, Director of **ISS USA**, visited the **Canadian branch** office in July for a working breakfast.

Anne-Marie Narbot, Director, and Lucienne Chibrac, Head of social work practice from the **French branch** made an orientation visit to the **General Secretariat**, following their appointments to the French branch.

Both colleagues also visited the **Swiss branch**. A team of new officers of the French branch also visited the General Secretariat. The visits were a part of the focus in the branch to build the expertise of the staff in handling cross-country cases involving other ISS units.

Lida Leskaj from the **Albanian delegation** and Anna Rosa Loiacono, consultant from the **General Secretariat**, took part in a training event in the French branch considering migration and cultural factors in migratory movement in Eastern Europe.

Florence Fontana from the **General Secretariat** and Jeanette Conradi from the **German branch** paid a visit to **Poland**, where they were hosted by the ISS correspondent in the TPD, Bozena Traciewicz. The visit was to become better acquainted with the country's structures needing to be understood in asking for service from Poland and to publicise the availability of ISS service to the Polish administrative bodies handling cases with an intercountry element.

Debby Cheung and Grace Ma of **ISS Hong Kong** spent a productive day with the staff of **ISS(UK)** in October, prior to attending the supervisors' meetings in Geneva. The UK staff appreciated the opportunity to meet and talk with both colleagues over specific cases as well as general services, such as intercountry adoption.

Damien Ngabonziza was in **Rome** for meetings concerned with the programme for unaccompanied minors. Florence Fontana was in **Hungary** for a meeting organised by the **Swiss branch** concerned with children's rights.

Damien Ngabonziza was the main speaker at the **AGM of ISS(UK)** in London addressing the meeting on the international dimension of ISS and the role of the General Secretariat.

Damien Ngabonziza from the **General Secretariat** and Chris Kondoyanni of

ISS Greece were on mission to **Madrid** to consider the arrangements for the handling of cases when the Spanish Red Cross takes over from the Spanish Affiliated Bureau.

Damien Ngabonziza visited **Kosovo** to arrange with UNMIK for the absorption of the ISS intercountry work into the developed welfare system in the country.

Dr. Shatatchandra D. Gokhale from **India** visited the **General Secretariat** in Geneva to discuss the role his agency might be able to play supplementing the service in India.

ISS Italy arranged the updating seminars for the co-workers of **Morocco, Moldova, Romania and Albania**. The meeting took place in Romania.

During the ICSW conference in Rotterdam the **Netherlands branch**, acting on behalf of the whole organisation, received visits at the ISS booth from Stephen Yau of **ISS Hong Kong** and Demet Gunes, representing the ISS correspondent in **Turkey**.

Heloise Kareem and Judy Baba, from **ISS(UK)** visited **Egypt** in the exploratory stage of setting up contact visits for children and left behind parents in failed UK/Egyptian marriages. Both colleagues took a party of seven mothers from the **UK to Libya** for a two week visit to their children in August. Working relations with the staff and volunteers of the Higher Committee for Children were essential to get the visit underway.

Presentations

In his speech to the **AGM of the UK branch** Damien Ngabonziza outlined the structure for helping families and individuals with intercountry problems and pointed to the uniting service of all the branches - the intercountry case work.

He briefly considered how the network of correspondents and new bureaux had developed over the years and focused particularly on the role of the General Secretariat in this. He identified the characteristics required of the social worker staff - sensitivity to national differences and open mindedness.

The General Secretariat has the responsibility of inducting the new correspondents and for deciding when the formal agreements would be introduced. The General Secretariat casework division channels the cases between the correspondents and also cases from branches where the Geneva referral point has a significance in the receiving country. He stressed the need for adaptability in the General Secretariat and a recognition of the variability of services around the work and the need to find the best fit.

He noted the relations between ISS, a voluntary agency, and a large number of government departments who agree to work with the agency, depending more on the expertise and professionalism of the work, than the formal bilateral agreements.

He then turned to the international programmes and projects under the auspices of the General Secretariat: referring to the historical interest in and expertise in intercountry adoption which has led to the establishment of the current Resource Centre concerned

with sharing information and promoting best practice.

He referred to the second General Secretariat development project: the foster programme for displaced and orphaned Rwandan children in which 950 had been placed voluntarily.

He outlined permanent values of ISS which he hoped would determine the work in the future. He saw this as including: permanent and direct contact between children and absent parents where the family life had broken down and members were in different countries; and the establishment of more protective measures for the increasing number of unaccompanied children moving around the world and often finding themselves in invidious positions.

Finally he outlined the status ISS had received from other international governmental and non-governmental organisations: ECOSOC, UNICEF, and The Hague Conference on Private International Law, with its conventions on adoption and abduction, to which ISS had contributed case experience for examination.

In regard to advocacy, he stated that through the information contained in its 16,000 new cases each year ISS is in a position to detect trends in the development of social problems and gaps in legislation which might be needed to address them.

Training and Conference Activity

Having first hand knowledge of the MA in International Child Welfare Programme provided by the University of East Anglia in England we are recognising its relevance to the interests of many of our readers in the following description.

MA in International Child Welfare – University of East Anglia, Norwich, England
Post Graduate Child Welfare Programme:

The programme, now in its eighth year is aimed at professionally qualified child welfare workers, planners and trainers in social work in mid career and, to a lesser extent, health professionals. It is particularly valuable to people who have responsibility for national welfare programmes, and who need to establish or provide services in the best interests of the child.

ISS(UK) provides a workshop about intercountry work in the first semester of the programme and has recently been involved in a review. We would thoroughly recommend it.

It has attracted students from more than 30 countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Europe as well as Canada and New Zealand. A small number of social workers from English services have also joined in.

It is one academic year in length comprised of two semesters, the first being presented in four sequences of taught seminars and the second semester provides for a dissertation, conducted under supervision. Student learning is closely monitored and supported. With appropriate background experience, adequate English and good motivation on the part of the students the outcomes have been impressive. For the dissertation students may choose to remain in the UK or return to their home countries supported by distance supervision.

The taught sequences combine lecture input and seminar discussions with students being expected to actively contribute from their own experience. The content of the course draws on academic and applied disciplines of social policy, developmental psychology as well as social work planning and practice. Management and development in relation to services are addressed in a sequence of workshops.

In their feedback evaluations students report they have found the programme has presented them with issues they have found illuminating and challenging. They have gained knowledge and a point of view which has been important in their work. It was to be noted that being up to date with current thinking about child welfare policy and knowledge and theory about child development has influenced them in taking decisions about children for whom care away from their customary carers is under consideration. Obviously the similarities and differences in the child welfare service of the countries represented by the students provide for creative and adaptive thinking.

Graduates keep in regular contact via the course alumni magazine. Accounts of their current work illustrate many exciting and enterprising practice and career developments.

The staff group works well as a team. Several members have been involved in child welfare development and training in Eastern Europe and have written about it in professional journals.

Anyone wishing to receive information about the programme, including details about funding possibilities, should contact the Course Administrator: Ms. Jackie Watson, School of Social Work and Psychological Studies, Elizabeth Fry Building, University of East Anglia, Norwich, Norfolk NR4 7JT, England, United Kingdom. Tel: +44-1603 593313. Fax: +44-1603 593552. E-Mail: j.watson@uea.ac.uk

Other Training Events

Switzerland

The new regional office in Zurich organised a Seminar in April 2002 on Families in Africa, in the Middle East and in the West: different concepts of the family and the consequences for social workers.

The seminar was mainly for local partners in Switzerland dealing with the intercountry cases.

Last November the first module of a training event was held in Dakar in collaboration with the International Institute for the Rights of the Child for social workers in the field of child protection from nine West African countries, Guinea, Senegal, Togo, Ivory Coast, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Niger, and Benin. Theme the convention on the Rights of the Child, displaced minors and reception facilities.

Second Asia Pacific regional meeting in Tokyo, 14 delegates child protection, women's issues strengthening the ISS network.

Germany

The branch organised two national conferences on the implementation of the Hague Convention on International Adoption and the role of accredited bodies and their supervision. Both conferences were well attended.

The German branch has also been involved in organising two other conferences, one on child abduction the other on the rights of the child in family conflicts across borders. Two other national conferences have been organised on step-child and relative adoptions.

Venezuela

Participation on the production of guidelines for the application of the agreement relating to the protection of children and co-operation in matters of international adoption. The guidelines are to ensure transparency and precision in the procedures for such adoptions.

International Family Mediation

A document has been prepared by Arnaud Stimec for the SSAE proposing a new methodology for dealing with family matters and conflicts. For many years the SSAE, along with other branches has such cases on its caseload.

Also the SSAE has a convention with the Office of the International Judicial co-operating in social and commercial matters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to assist in arising at solutions through mediation. This can be put in place with bilateral accords.

There has been considerable international mediation in the SSAE over the years with a working group studying in 2000. It has new techniques. The study days on mediation have concentrated on France and the Lebanon. In June 2002 the SSAE requested the publication of the study made by Arnaud Stimec who is himself a mediator, teacher and researcher. The study argues that the co-mediation in ISS/SSAE cases takes place in a particular context.

Two attached people residing each one in a different country following separation with for example, illegal removal of a child facing difficulties over visiting rights and the housing of the non custodial parent have stretched the existing bonds.

There are therefore two professionals, also involved, one in each country trying to put in place a process of mediation with the goal of finding an accord of the parties in the interests of the child. There are two countries, each with its own legislation presenting different approaches which are specific to their own traditions.

Arnaud Stimec joined the Franco-Lebanese group in the role of facilitator contributing a model of intervention

adapted to the needs of the network. The study, writes Claudine Vermauwat contributes a new theoretical and technological methodology in intervention and it elaborates the different and useful steps which need to be taken. It argues that there are two distinct professional approaches between social work and the new function of mediation. The goal of the study for the French branch is to share the reflections of the study with the other branches of ISS. There is a debate going on in France with the Ministry of Justice.

Claudine Vermauwat would very much appreciate her being contacted by any other branches.

Search for Origins – Change in French Law and Procedures

Marie-Paule Guntzburger writes on the implication of the law relating to access of origins of persons adopted under the care of the State. Law 2002.93, 22nd January 2002 official journal 23rd January 1519.

The French law has up until recently provided that the circumstances of the origins of a child remain secret and this has impeded access for some children to information about their biological parents.

This is the case when the mother request while she is in labour that the secret of her admission to hospital and her identity is kept secret. The birth is referred to under anonymous. The parents give the child over to the state under one year and requests that their identities remain a secret.

The parents have had recourse to assisted medical treatment and the sperm donor was anonymous.

There is opposition to this secrecy when the child is seeking to re-establish its roots which, of course is supported by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The latter strives to provide such information as well as the opportunity for the child to be brought up by his parents.

Recognising the principle of the rights of both are legitimate the new law tries to reach a compromise. In effect the law has always maintained the possibility of anonymity for the parent on to the secret but has set up a national council for access to personal origins and to aid those who are looking for them and to try to harmonise responses to them.

The respect of the wishes of one and the other on the one side the mother is able always to ask that the secret of her admission and of her identity is respected and she is not obliged to give information about her identity, even in a

form which respects the confidential nature of the information. She will be informed of the legal consequences of her request for anonymity and the importance of everyone knowing his origins and history.

The importance of everyone having information on their health and that of the father, his origin and the origins of the child and the circumstances of the birth as in a closed file. The possibility of lifting it at the moment or another secret of the identity and the condition under which this would be released and communicated.

On the other side the fact that the collection of the information does not carry with it the implication that the child will have such information provided to him if he does not want it. Only the request for access to details about his origins would allow for the revelation of the identity of the parents.

Another important factor is the establishment of a national council for access to personal origins. The setting up of the organisation it is hoped should produce a unified response to those searching for their origins. This is to overcome the variations in the way requests have currently been handled by the different offices around the country. At present two representatives from each department assists the relations with the central body.

Now all people searching for their origins of those wishing to lift the ban or simply declaring their identity have now to apply to the CNAOP. The CNAOP is responsible for providing someone to accompany the enquirer, searching for personal records. It has to provide information for the departments, overseas possessions and authorities agencies instantly.

The procedure for so doing is being set down. The costs are to be met by the state.