

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3341/08  
by Hanna Foltyn-Kubicka (UEN)  
to the European Commission

Subject: German Child Welfare Office (**Jugendamt**)

Reports and discussions with families that have suffered at the hands of the German Child Welfare Office (Jugendamt) show the office to be acting in breach of EU human rights standards. The restrictions placed on the right to choose the language in which parents speak to their children during meetings supervised by Jugendamt officials are a matter of particular concern. On the basis of a misinterpretation of the 'Kindeswohl' (best interests of the child) principle which is not backed up by any piece of legislation, Jugendamt officials are able to take decisions on a child's future, and many such decisions go against the wishes of one or both of the parents. This practice is contrary to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Is the Commission aware that such practices are being used by the Jugendamt? If so, how does it intend to oblige Germany to comply with international law, with particular reference to the right to choose the language spoken during conversations between parents and their children (as referred to, inter alia, in paragraph 116 of Parliament's resolution of 16 January 2008 entitled 'Towards an EU strategy on the rights of the child')?

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