

I apologise the long delay in replying. The subject of the Conference is the best interest of the child in relation to the adoption, as reflected in the title of the Conference: "Challenges in adoption procedures in Europe: ensuring the best interests of the child." Thus the item that you mention, "the re-opening of Romanian adoptions" is not under discussion in the Conference. The Conference will focus on the question, if there is an international adoption, how it should be best arranged from the point of view of the child. In addition, the first day of the Conference deals totally with the national legislation on adoption, not on international adoptions. This conference is part of the regular joint conferences by the European Commission and the Council of Europe, the previous of which took place in 2004.

The unit Fundamental Rights and the Rights of the Child has been indeed involved in the organisation of the Conference, e.g. in the preparation of the Commission presentations to the conference.

**Salla Saastamoinen**

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<http://ec.europa.eu/adoptions>

<http://ec.europa.eu/adoptions>

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**From:** Rupert Wolfe-Murray [mailto:[rupert.wolfe-murray@ec.europa.eu](mailto:rupert.wolfe-murray@ec.europa.eu)]

**Sent:** Saturday, November 07, 2009 12:48 PM

**To:** SAASTAMOINEN Salla (JLS)

**Subject:** Re: Your policy to open international adoptions

Dear Ms Saastamoinen

Thank you very much for your quick reply. I am still a bit concerned about some of the issues with regards to your conference that were raised in the Jurnal National article I mentioned. Have you seen that article? And have you seen the book by the EC Official Roelie Post *Romania, for Export Only?* It all makes for very worrying reading as there is evidence to suggest that international adoptions can be used by child traffickers, especially in countries like Romania with weak legal regimes.

Thanks for the update about the website and I am glad to see that <http://www.adoptionprocedure.net/init.xhtml?event=9> is now functional.

I would be most grateful if you could answer these additional questions:

- Is it true that one of the aims of this conference is ? the re-opening of Romanian adoptions
- is it true that the participation of 10 NGOs will be paid by the EC? If so would you be able to give me the names of these NGOs?
- is the unit "*Fundamental Rights and Rights of the Child*" involved in the organising of this conference?

With kind regards

Rupert Wolfe Murray

2009/11/6 <[Salla.Saastamoinen@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Salla.Saastamoinen@ec.europa.eu)>

Dear Mr Wolfe Murray,

The European Commission is indeed organising, jointly with the Council of Europe, a Conference on "**Challenges in Adoption Procedures in Europe: ensuring the best interests of the child**". This event will be held at the Council of Europe Headquarters, in Strasbourg from Monday 30 November (09h30) to Tuesday 1 December 2009 (16h30). My unit is in charge for the organisations in the side of the Commission; as regards practical arrangements, we are assisted by a private conference organiser on the basis of a service contract.

For our side, the invitation for the Conference is published in the website of the European Judicial Network for Civil and Commercial Matters, please see the link:

<[http://ec.europa.eu/civiljustice/news/whatsnew\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/civiljustice/news/whatsnew_en.htm)> . The Council of Europe has published the invitation in its website

<[http://www.coe.int/t/DGHL/STANDARDSETTING/FAMILY/Adoption\\_conference\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/DGHL/STANDARDSETTING/FAMILY/Adoption_conference_en.asp)>

These publications are open invitations for any interested parties. As they mention: "The event is open to European Union and Council of Europe Member States as well, as all law practitioners and institutions or associations concerned with the adoption of children". From the above-mentioned websites, you will find the link to the website dedicated for the practical arrangements including registration to the Conference:

<<http://www.adoptionprocedure.net/init.xhtml?event=9>> There is no participation fee to the conference, but please notice that participants are expected to make their own travel and accommodation arrangements.

I am sorry if you have had problems in functioning of the websites. Currently, they seem to function. Please let me know in case of problems and we can e.g. e-mail or fax the same information to you.

My unit is in general responsible for matters relating to the private international law aspects concerning adoptions in the European Union, i.e. issues relating to jurisdiction, applicable law, recognition and enforcement, judicial and administrative cooperation etc. We are not dealing with the substantive law on adoptions; this is rather covered by the work of the Council of Europe and its revised Convention on Adoptions. In Directorate-General Justice, Freedom and Security, there is also a unit "Fundamental Rights and Rights of the Child" dealing with the issues related to the best interest of the child.

Yours,

**Salla Saastamoinen**

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<<http://ec.europa.eu/civiljustice>>

<<http://www.adoptionprocedure.net/init.xhtml?event=9>>

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**From:** Rupert Wolfe-Murray [Redacted]  
**Sent:** Friday, November 06, 2009 2:46 PM  
**To:** SAASTAMOINEN Salla (JLS)  
**Subject:** Your policy to open international adoptions

Dear Ms Saastamoinen

I am looking into an article in Romanias Jurnalul National about a conference your office is organising in Strasbourg at the end of this month.

I would like to ask some questions

- Can you confirm your office is organising a conference on 30 November and 1st December in which "European Adoptions" will be discussed?
- Is your office responsible for child welfare or adoptions issues within the EU?

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- Did you know the website for this event is not functional
  - How is it possible to get an invite to this event?

Kind regards

Rupert Wolfe Murray

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Romania [REDACTED]

UK: [REDACTED]