U.S./European Leaders Unite to Protect Children from Predators

Amid mounting concern about the growing problems of child abduction and child sexual exploitation, including child trafficking and child pornography on the Internet, top officials from the United States and Europe attended the first U.S./European Summit on Missing and Exploited Children.

Top officials from the United States and 19 European countries attending the Summit adopted an aggressive 15-point Action Plan that aims to: eliminate commercial child pornography worldwide by 2008; create a universal three-digit phone number for reporting missing children; establish an expanded database of convicted pedophiles; create a new system to track child traffickers that cross borders; and establish new operational centres across Europe and other countries.

Keynoting the Summit, Margarida Barroso, wife of the President of the European Commission, said, “More than ever, Americans and Europeans must stay close together in the defense of the most vulnerable. But the task is so urgent and so immense that all actors must mobilize.” She added, “The good news is that we already have the appropriate framework. The International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children has already united Europeans and Americans in common action.”

Participants at the Summit included government leaders, law-enforcement officials, judges, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), business executives, prosecutors, physicians, researchers, scholars, and victim parents. Among the organizations represented were the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Department of State, and the United Nations.

The Summit was sponsored by the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children in partnership with Child Focus of Belgium. The meeting was hosted in Buonas, Switzerland, by Swiss healthcare company, Roche.

U.S./European Leaders Unite to Protect Children from Predators

The International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (ICMEC) works with government leaders, NGOs and law enforcement around the world to create a network of national and regional centres to combat child abduction and child sexual exploitation. ICMEC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

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Sahara Desert Race to Eliminate Child Pornography

Board member Mike DeNoma is participating in a series of grueling foot and bike competitions to raise enough money to shut down 21,280 child pornography web sites and to save 21,280 children.

The next competition begins on 7 April 2006, when he will participate in the Marathon des Sables, an endurance race across the barren wilderness of the Sahara Desert in Morocco. Considered the toughest footrace on Earth, the 6 day run covers approximately 230 kilometers (140 miles) across sand dunes and rocky/stony terrain. During the day, temperatures will reach 120°F. He will carry his own backpack containing food, sleeping gear, and other essentials.

Support Mike by making a donation of $60 per kilometer. For each $60 donated, one Internet child pornography web site will be eliminated and one child will be saved.

Learn more about how you can save innocent lives and how to make a donation by visiting <www.Race2Innocence.org>.

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Details of the New 15-Point Action Plan Unveiled

Representatives attending the first U.S./European Summit on Missing and Exploited Children adopted a 15-point Action Plan to combat the growing problems of child abduction and child sexual exploitation. The Action Plan includes the following:

- Promote the creation of new operational centres throughout Europe;
- Eradicate the commercial viability of child pornography by 1 January 2008;
- Raise awareness about the problems of child abduction and child sexual exploitation;
- Implement an expanded database in the United States and Europe of known, convicted pedophiles and other sexual predators against children;
- Develop new technology to track child traffickers;
- Establish a three-digit phone number that can be used worldwide for missing child reports;
- Create a system to distribute missing child photographs more quickly;
- Create a common, criminal DNA databank in Europe;
- Implement the U.S. Amber Alert system throughout Europe;
- Create uniformity between U.S. and European child protection legislation and conventions;
- Implement joint training for U.S. and European law enforcement and other professionals to ensure that there is the highest level of expertise and sophistication in working missing and exploited child cases;
- Establish formal agreements of cooperation between law enforcement, NGOs, and other public agencies;
- Establish a uniform definition of child exploitation to be used throughout the United States and Europe;
- Develop expanded support programs for families of missing and sexually exploited children; and
- Implement the provisions of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child and similar international instruments to ensure that children everywhere are protected.

Belgian Senate Honors New Chairman

In December 2005, Baron Daniel Cardon de Lichtbuer was honored by the Belgian Senate for his new appointment as Chairman of the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children. He was invited to speak to the Senate and used the opportunity to discuss the U.S./European Summit on Missing and Exploited Children and the resulting 15-point Action Plan. He discussed at great length the growing problem of child pornography on the Internet as well as the global campaign that has been launched by the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children in partnership with Microsoft Corporation.

European Leader Elected Chairman of ICMEC

Baron Daniel Cardon de Lichtbuer of Belgium has been elected Chairman of the Board of the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (ICMEC). Cardon, recognized worldwide as a staunch advocate and leader for the protection of children, is a founder and the first Chairman of Child Focus (European Centre for Missing and Sexually Exploited Children), and a founder and current President of the European Federation for Missing and Sexually Exploited Children.

Asian Banking Executive Joins Board

Mike DeNoma has been elected to the Board of Directors of the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children. DeNoma is Group Executive Director of Standard Chartered PLC and joined the Board of Standard Chartered in 2000 with responsibility for the consumer banking business worldwide. He joined Standard Chartered in 1999 with specific responsibility for consumer banking in the main Asian markets. He is also a Director of Standard Chartered Bank (Hong Kong) Limited. He is based in Singapore.

Prior to joining Standard Chartered, DeNoma held positions as the founder, Chairman, and CEO of Asia Foods Limited; the Chief Operating and Marketing Officer at Hutchinson Whampoa; and Senior Vice President for Marketing and Sales for Asia at Citibank. Previously, he held senior positions at PepsiCo Inc. and Proctor & Gamble.

Microsoft Expands Global Training

Training sites for law enforcement that have been confirmed for 2006 include Bangkok, Thailand; Istanbul, Turkey; and Tokyo, Japan. The four-day training program, entitled “Computer Facilitated Crimes Against Children,” is designed to provide law enforcement around the world with the tools and techniques needed to effectively investigate Internet-related child sexual exploitation cases. The training is conducted by the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children and Interpol. Funding for the training is provided by computer industry giant, Microsoft Corporation.

The recipient of many honors, Cardon received the Commander of the Order of the Crown (Belgium), Officer of the Order of Leopold II, Officer of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic, ICMEC’s 2003 Global Vision Award, and in 1998, he was nominated Baron by the King of Belgium.

Cardon has been a member of the Board since 1998. He succeeds the Honorable Arnold I. Burns, Founding Chairman and former Deputy Attorney General of the United States.

Cardon, a distinguished business leader, served as President and CEO of Bank Brussels Lambert and, after his retirement in 1996, was named Honorary President. In 1992, he became the Executive President of Europa Nostra, the Federation of European Heritage Organizations, and since 2003, he has served as Honorary Executive President. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the European Movement and Honorary President of the European League for Economic Cooperation. He is past President of the first Belgian Commission on Corporate Governance and serves on the Board of National Suisse Belgium and VP Bank Lichtenstein.

Plans for New Office in Lyon Announced

Through the generous support of Alain Mérieux, Chairman and CEO of French biomedical corporation, bioMérieux, the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children will open a new European office in Lyon, France.

Staff at the Lyon office will work with Child Focus to create national and/or regional centres throughout Europe to combat the growing problems of child abduction and child sexual exploitation. The office will also serve as the primary liaison with Interpol, which is headquartered in Lyon, and the Hague Conference on Private International Law, which is based in The Netherlands.

The European office will be housed on the premises of the Fondation Mérieux, Mr. Mérieux’s long-established charity and research institute, which is recognized by the French government.

Asian Banking Executive Joins Board

Microsoft Expands Global Training

Roche Hosts Meeting at Buonas Centre

The idyllic Buonas peninsula in Switzerland was the location of the U.S./European Summit on Missing and Exploited Children. Summit participants were surrounded and inspired by the beauty and splendor of the “pearl of the Lake of Zug.”