



Svenska Inner Wheel  
[www.innerwheel.se](http://www.innerwheel.se)

## Ceja Gregor-Hu samt Gerda Back



### INNER WHEEL REPRESENTATIVES AT THE UN

In Vienna IIW is represented in the NGO Committees "on Ageing", "on the Status of Women", "on Sustainable Development" and "on Drugs and Crime".

As for myself, I was born in the Netherlands and live in Vienna since 1988. I joined IW in 1993, was Club-President 1996/97 and 2016/18 and District-Chairman 2013/14. I am UN-Representative since 1998 and work in the Committees "on Ageing" and "the Status of Women", in which I am a Board-Member.

The focus of the "Committee on Ageing" is on a sustainable society for all ages. The Committee advocates on behalf of older persons' rights and promotes further integration of ageing issues into UN policies.

The "Committee on the Status of Women" promotes gender equality and the empowerment of women. We are drafting Statements for the Sessions of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York.

Meetings take place once a month at the UN Building and are attended by Representatives from Vienna based NGO's. Our work is mainly connected with Human Rights issues and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Over the years this work has not only changed my perspective of these subjects, it also has had a deep impact on me personally. I'm convinced that our Organisation can play an important role in changing society.

Do check out these websites : [www.ngoageingvie.org](http://www.ngoageingvie.org), [www.ngocsvvienna.org](http://www.ngocsvvienna.org)

I am pleased to send you my report on the activities of the Vienna NGO Committees.

#### **Committee on Ageing**

Unfortunately I was not able to attend the April-Meeting. However, I received information that preparations for the Int. Day of Older Persons on October 1st are in an advanced stage.

Furthermore the Committee discussed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Older people are not recognized explicitly under the international human rights laws that legally oblige governments to realize the rights of all people.

Regrettably Age discrimination and Ageism are still issues of great concern. It is a hidden crime against humanity which by nature is mostly suffered by women.

A working group is collecting information from several countries and will prepare a statement.

#### **Committee on the Status of Women/Committee on Sustainable Development**

During the 32nd Session of the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the Committees on the Status of Women and Sustainable Development will host an "on-site" and "on-line" event on 25th May, 8am. Title: "Gender Based Violence: Rethinking the Definition of Torture". Participants will include UN officials and experts on "non-state torture".



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**Gerda Beck**

I was born in Freistadt/Upper Austria and worked more than 39 years in Erste Group with a professional focus in cooperation between the EU and the Central- and Eastern European countries. I am married and have a daughter and 2 grand children.

For IW I am an active member in various functions (District Chairman, Club President, Delegate, Lecturing Officer, Webmaster) since 20 years. More ever I was a founder of IWC Linz, our 9th club in the District 192 Austria & Czech Republic. The Charter of the new club was 17th of September 2022. This foundation closed the gap between the clubs in South, West and East of Austria.

For an UN Representative in Vienna I was nominated in the middle of April. My first experience as Representative was the 75th Anniversary of the Conference of NGO's (Non Governmental Organisations) in Consultative Relationship with the UN. The conference subject was:

"Defining the Present, Shaping the Future, Making the Change – Now!" and took place at the UN Vienna, where I had the pleasure to get in contact with representatives of other NGO's based in Vienna.

The celebration was also dedicated to the adoption of the International Bill of Human Rights in 1948. The main players of the development of these rights were NGO's and not States and all keynote speakers emphasized the importance of the collaboration of NGO's and the UN. Having just arrived in this position I am still trying to understand how I can best support the UN while taking into consideration the issues of Inner Wheel.

#### **UN Report Geneva**

International Inner Wheel report on UN activities  
Council of the Right of the Child, UN Geneva

#### **Preamble :**

As an NGO, the IIW appoints observation delegates to the UN in social and economic matters (ECOSOC). These delegates are vetted and obtain credentials (passes) following a request by IIW.

The session's attendance of this delegation is on a strict observation basis, no questions or interventions of any sort are allowed during the sessions.

Some sessions are « closed » about half of the sessions are closed to public attendance including NGOs.

The UN Committee of the Rights of the Child is not a court and has no power to enforce a regulation. The aim is to assist the countries in bettering children and mother's social and economic welfare. The Periodical Country's Reviews, which we attended, are aimed at issuing recommendations and reviewing these recommendations on a recurrent time basis.

Each reviewed country must submit a written report which follows a predefined pattern of topics. Each country is reviewed every five years following a predefined schedule.

The sessions start with a report by the head of the reviewed country's delegation, followed by questions on this report by the Committee members and answers to these questions by the reviewed country's delegation. This process takes several days to complete, for each reviewed country.

The 18 Committee members are designated for a term of 5 years, they originate from various countries member of the UN, representing the five continents. They act on a personal level and are not representing a specific country.

The chair for the 2023 sessions, is Mrs Ann Skelton, she is assisted by 3 vice-chairpersons, several rapporteurs and several task force members.

The official language spoken is English, simultaneous translation is provided for all UN official languages. Written reports are in English, they can be downloaded from the UN's website.

Due to the Covid pandemic, after a period of two years, where NGO's were not permitted to attend Geneva UN sessions, Evie Marinoni and Karin Rivollet resumed IIW's attendance and participated in the meetings on France and Jordan at the 93rd session of the Council of the Right of the Child in May 2023.

#### **France:**

Constitutional republic. Europe territory: 18 regions divided in departments. Overseas: 5 departments.

Population: 68 million, under 15 years: 11.8 million.

Secretary of State Mrs Marie Leon presented the delegation's report. Last review: 2016.

Due to the emergency created by the worsening of the condition of the children in the aftermath of the 2020-2022 pandemic, President Emmanuel Macron has made this point central to his mandate and created a new State Office directly linked to the PM on a ministerial level. Governance has been reorganized to avoid silo work which had been a concern of the CRC experts in the previous report.



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#### 7 Major Guidelines:

- Strategic coherence to fight domestic violence, especially sexual violence.
- Protection of childhood with emphasize on previous shortcomings of social services.
- Better support for children with a handicap, support of inclusive schools and medical services.
- Massive financial investment to provide extension of the right to education from 3 years of age to 21 years of age.

Development of the system of apprenticeship, lowering number of children per classes in special zones. Fighting non scolarization.

- Priority to "1000 days" for the 0 to 3 years of age. Extended parental leave. One in four families is mono-parental, creation of a fund to supplement or replace parental pension payments.
- Minors have no judicial responsibility under 13 years of age.
- Creation of a children forum.

The government is aware that children in the overseas departments are more vulnerable and should have an accrued protection.

Protection against cyber vulnerability is an overall concern.

#### Questions by the CRC Committee members:

- Financial means attributed to this new State Office is a concern as the task remains important. There seems to be a disparity in territorial spending and data collecting.
- Nondiscrimination is a concern, especially in overseas departments, where, as the head of Delegation pointed out, children are more vulnerable.
- Cultural identity versus equality induced by state laicity needs to be defined. No guidelines for professionals other than teachers (ex: social workers, medical staff).
- Birth registration in overseas territories and remote communities needs to be reinforced as statelessness prevents access to certain social services.
- Social services organization has many levels and overlaps, this should be simplified for more effectiveness.
- How will the 2019 prohibition of corporal punishment be put into proper application?
- There is a lack of tools to report abuse, especially cyber abuse.

#### Answers by Delegation:

- The CRC should be aware that the French Constitution differs from the Declaration of the Right of the Childs, in that it recognizes the protection of the individual right of identity and not that of a community. Thus, ethnic, religious or cultural minorities members are protected as individuals.
- The State finances public and private education on a similar level. Special care is put on exiting education at the age of 18.
- Regardless of the special emphasize of spending in education, children in special zones and overseas departments remain a concern.

