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17th COPE International Conference

Stigma dismantled, dignity upheld

Child rights standards for children affected by parental imprisonment

12 June 2025, Caritas Malta Community Centre, Malta

hosted by Mid-Dlam għad-Dawl

Agenda

Conference chair: Rachel Brett, *human rights lawyer and former COPE President*

9.30 – 10.00

Opening speech, welcome, greetings

- Rachel Brett, *Conference chair*
- Mireille Farrugia, *Lawyer*
- Sina Opalka, *Photographer & photo journalist*
- Mid-Dlam għad-Dawl representative
- Michael Falzon, *Minister for Social Policy and Children's Rights (Malta)*

I: Setting the context: children's rights and parental imprisonment

10.00 – 10.10

Glenn Micallef, *EU Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport (Malta)*

10.10 – 10.20

H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, *Former President of Malta, Former President of EuroChild*

10.20 – 10.30

Juliana Scerri Ferrante, *member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (video presentation)*

10.30 – 11.00

Coffee break

12 June 2025

9.30 – 16.00

Caritas Malta Community Centre

Triq Mountbatten, Hamrun

HMR1577 Malta

<https://childrenofprisoners.eu/>

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II. *Dismantling stigma, respecting rights*

11.00 – 11.10

Keep up hope: critical reflections on a targeted stigma-reducing intervention

Fiona Donson, Aisling Parkes & Daragh Bradshaw
University College Cork (Ireland)

11.10 – 11.20

The child's right to access child rights standards

Ruth Farrugia, *University of Malta (Malta)*

11.20 – 11.30

Parental Imprisonment Collective - challenging the secret sentence

Tasha Cowperthwaite, Evie Mae Stevenson & Jemmar Samuels,
Parental Imprisonment Collective; Jemmar Samuels also founder of Collective Punishment Campaign (UK)

11.30 – 11.40

Art as a means to dismantle stigma and humanise family spaces in prison

Belén Masola & Helena Cabo Vila, *Projecte Nius (Spain)*

11.45 – 13.15

Lunch

III. *Models for change*

13.15 – 13.25

Addressing stigma in Roma communities: developing support projects for children and families affected by imprisonment – Game with Mum & Dad

Šárka Vlková, *Romodrom (Czechia)*

13.25 – 13.35

The ASPIRE project: Exploring a national approach to improve outcomes for children in Wales with a parent in prison

Nancy Loucks, *Families Outside (UK)*



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13.35 — 14.45

Breakout Groups Session

1. Voices of lived experience: empowerment and agency

Centering the perspectives of children and young people affected by parental imprisonment to drive change and reshape narratives.

2. Supporting mental health and well-being

Addressing the emotional and psychological impact of stigma on children affected by parental imprisonment and promoting trauma-informed support systems.

3. Education without barriers: support at school

Addressing stigma in educational settings, training educators and creating supportive school environments.

4. Advocacy and policy change: shaping fairer systems for children affected by parental imprisonment

How laws, policies and grassroots movements can challenge systemic discrimination and improve support structures.

14.45 — 15.50

Feedback from Breakout Groups + Q&A session

15.50 — 16.00

Concluding Remarks