



# **GWI United Nations Representative Advocacy Report Vienna 2024**

## **Report on Side Events at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Session CCPCJ, May 2024**



Over 90 side events were held during the week of the CCPCJ 33<sup>rd</sup> Session. They covered a great range of crime-related subjects where Member States, UN agencies and NGOs wanted to share expertise and best practices and bring attention and focus on key issues. Each side event could merit a full report. Here I will focus on side events where GWI was a co-sponsor or the events were organized by groups or committees in which GWI participates and provide a very brief summary.

### **GWI co-sponsored two side-events:**

**‘New Forms of Criminal Acts Against (and Abuse of) Older Persons - a rapidly growing threat to vulnerable persons using ordinary and advanced communication tools’ – 14/5/2024.**

GWI was pleased to co-sponsor this side event on such an important subject for older persons. It was organized by EURAG and the NGO Committee on Ageing (CoA). We are an active member of the Vienna NGO CoA.

Criminals are increasingly using more sophisticated communication tools to target older persons. From the criminal’s perspective, such crimes are considered low risk and are often not fully investigated or prosecuted. With older persons increasingly active on the internet, often seeking friendship and romance to escape loneliness, they can be particularly vulnerable to sophisticated fraudsters. They can also be vulnerable to financial abuse from family members, (‘the domestic sphere is a ‘dark field’’) where such events are rarely prosecuted.

The expert speakers described the different forms of abuse and discussed how older persons can better be made aware of the dangers and how they can best protect themselves – and be protected – from theft and criminal fraud. Older persons need to be recognized as a group particularly at risk and special measures taken. Appropriate training sessions and awareness raising needs to be provided.



## **‘The Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) for building a sustainable economy and society – challenges and opportunities’ – 15/5/2024.**

GWI was a co-sponsor of this side event, whose main organizers were the NGO Committee on Sustainable Development (GWI is a member) and Zonta International.

The aim of the EU’s CSDDD is to foster sustainable and responsible corporate behavior and to anchor human rights and environmental considerations in companies’ operations and corporate governance. The CSDDD requires larger businesses to identify and manage the social and environmental impacts of their actions throughout their supply chains inside and outside the EU. Although the final version was watered down in the face of opposition from some EU countries, it is an important first step against exploitation and for the promotion of fair and humane working conditions worldwide.

Panelists explained the working of the CSDDD and described how it will help to prevent crime / abuse in many industries / countries where vulnerable labor forces, often women, are employed to drive down costs. For instance, conditions in the global garment industry were much discussed, where women and girls often have to work in difficult conditions. The shocking Rana Plaza building collapse in Bangladesh in 2013 when over 1100 garment workers were killed, was mentioned. The CSDDD will help significantly to ensure better working conditions for women in many countries.



*L - the panel from the OSCE side event on Engaging Youth in Crime Prevention: R – screenshot from the Decarbonising Organised Crime virtual event.*

### **Other side events that GWI attended:**

#### **‘Effectively engaging youth in crime prevention – examples and lessons learned from whole-of-society approaches in South-Eastern Europe and Central Asia’ – 13/05/2024**

This side event, arranged by the OSCE, with the support of Germany, Albania, Kyrgyzstan, discussed how youth can be engaged in crime prevention, drawing on the OSCE’s experience in South-Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Youth crime has a significant and direct impact on community safety and feelings of security. On average, a multiple youth offender has 100 victims and generates social



costs of \$1.8 million by the age of 25. Prioritizing prevention costs far less and means addressing the underlying reasons why young people turn to crime. Various partnership initiatives in Albania and Kyrgyzstan that promote youth engagement - and the role of girls - in crime prevention as part of a **'whole-of-society'** approach were highlighted. An awareness raising campaign in Tajikistan is to start. There were many interesting insights. The role of education programs and sport was shown and much stressed.

Take-aways included: Youth mainstreaming; the need to start early, with both formal and informal education; the importance of a multi stakeholder approach not just within the government, law enforcement, schools, but including all of civil society; the benefits of involving – and empowering - children and youth in the decision process – youths to say what they would do - the 'Minister for a Day' campaign resulted in ten recommendations which were all taken up and put into practice; the need to strengthen regional cooperation.

### **'Decarbonising Organised Crime; The Role That Women and Girls Play in Accomplishing this Goal' – 14/05/2024**

Organized by Soroptimist International, this online event discussed the linkage between environmental crime, climate change and organized crime. It highlighted the way women and girls are impacted and the role they can play in improvement.

- Environmental crime has become highly lucrative and contributes significantly to carbon emissions, for example through i) 'narco-deforestation' where profits (appr.15-30%) from drug trafficking are used to buy up forested land, threatening biodiversity and rural and indigenous livelihoods and ii) 'waste crime' – the illegal burning of waste in search of metal scraps;

- If criminal asset recovery (only 2% in the EU) could be increased by only a little it would make a big difference. The recovered funds could then be used for land recovery and the implementation of sustainable practices – leading potentially to a new, circular economic model.



L – The side event on New forms of Criminal Acts against Older Persons; C, R – the launch of the Global Analysis on Crimes that Affect the Environment.



- The gender dimension of climate change and the role of heroic ‘Women Environmental Defenders’ (WEDs) was highlighted, women who are actively engaged in helping to tackle the climate crisis and get persecuted and killed. Such brave women.
- A young member from Kenya gave a moving presentation on how climate change and organised crime are impacting her life and the lives of her contemporaries. - The impact of floods, which recently caused many deaths, the closure of schools, the impact on her education, the consequences of illegal logging, wildlife and other environmental crime (only two old white rhinos are left). She and her friends fear for their future, the survival of their culture and environment - they feel betrayed by their government.

Here is the link to the Soroptimists’ report.

<https://www.soroptimistinternational.org/decarbonising-organised-crime-the-role-that-women-and-girls-play-in-accomplishing-this-goal-webinar/>

**‘Strong Family – An Essential Support for Healthy Development of Children and Youth. A relevant factor in preventing criminal activity’ - 15/05/2024 – ‘The Day of Families’.**

Organized by the Women’s Federation for World Peace. With child / youth violence increasing worldwide, this side event covered the importance of ‘the family’ in preventing increasing criminality. It covered communication and parenting skills, ‘education starts at home (do’s and don’ts)’. The speaker on the role of fathers quoted a child molester: ‘when he notices that a father is no threat, he proceeds’. There were good presentations about communication training for parents, strengthening communication within the family including the UNODC ‘Prevention through Family Skills’ program. All with the idea of helping to reduce criminality and child violence.



L – World Crime Trends Report publication R - Screenshot – Women Environmental Defenders (‘WEDs’)

**‘Access to justice for victims after nuclear disastrous accidents: who is responsible? What are the consequences on health, on the environment?’ – 16/05/2024**

Organized by the International Association of Democratic Lawyers with the support of the NGO CSW Vienna, the NGO Committee on Sustainable Development, and others. (GWI is a member of the Vienna CSW and CSD committees). Points covered included: the right to a toxic-free and sustainable environment (the UN Special Rapporteur was a



speaker), the right to information (need for transparency!), the right to science, prevention of building in earthquake and other high risk areas, access to justice and substantive remedies; mandatory vs voluntary migration; the burden of proof, the obstacle to remedies posed by high legal fees, the importance of the acknowledgment of guilt, an apology.

**‘The Launch of the Global Analysis on Crimes that Affect the Environment – The landscape of criminalisation’** – 17/05/2024, organised by UNODC, supported by France and Germany.

This side event discussed the results of a major project to analyse the environmental legislation of the 193 UN Member States to determine whether and how environmental harm is criminalised. The analysis covered air, noise, soil and water pollution, forestry, fisheries, wildlife, mining and waste. It also reviewed the geographic patterns of the criminalisation of environmental harm. Emphasising the importance that the United Nations is giving to environmental crime, this side event was attended by Ghada Waly, the Executive Director of UNODC and Director General of the UN, Vienna.

Here is the link.

[https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Crimes%20on%20Environment/ECR\\_1.Legislative\\_Review.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Crimes%20on%20Environment/ECR_1.Legislative_Review.pdf)

During this CCPCJ, the World Wildlife Crime Report 2024 was also presented.

[https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/wildlife/2024/Wildlife2024\\_Final.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/wildlife/2024/Wildlife2024_Final.pdf)

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