



# *What I think, in images and words*

Articles from COE recommendation CM/Rec(2018)5,  
chosen and illustrated by children.

# COPE's 'Not my crime, still my sentence' campaign

## An illustrated selection of articles from *It's Time to Act*

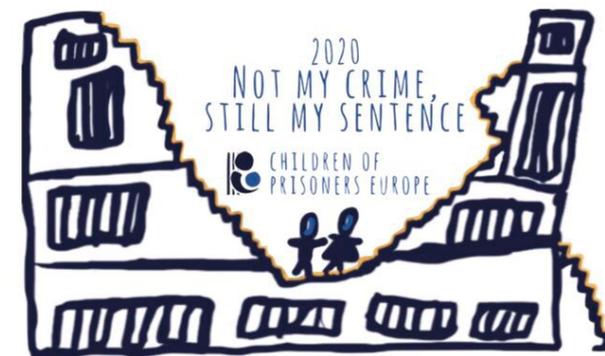
For the 2020 “*Not my crime, still my sentence*” campaign, COPE members were provided with a selection of ten articles from the Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)5 concerning children with imprisoned parents.

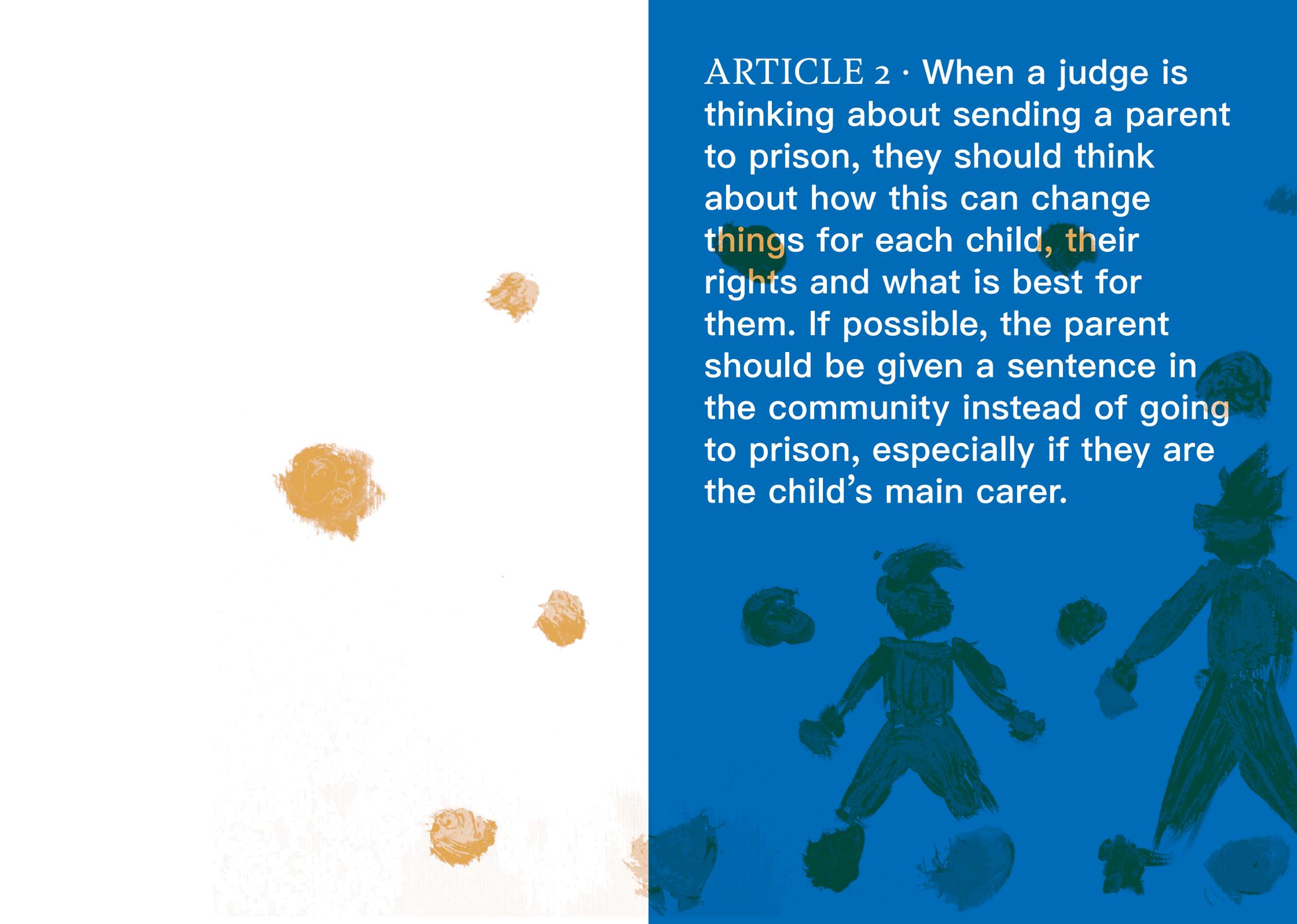
The Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)5 is landmark legislation regarding children with imprisoned parents. It does the work both of recognising parental imprisonment as having long-lasting effects on the well-being of millions of children, and of addressing the needs of those children with a parent in prison through fifty-six guidelines for good practice. Members then shared these articles with children, who were invited to choose the article that they found to be the most meaningful or the most important to them. They were asked to draw or paint a visual representation of the article they chose, and then to write one or two sentences explaining why they chose the article.

A total of thirty-six children participated from seven countries. You can see their submissions below. The phrasing of the articles from the Recommendation in this document comes from *It's Time to Act*, a child-friendly version of Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)5 produced by COPE.

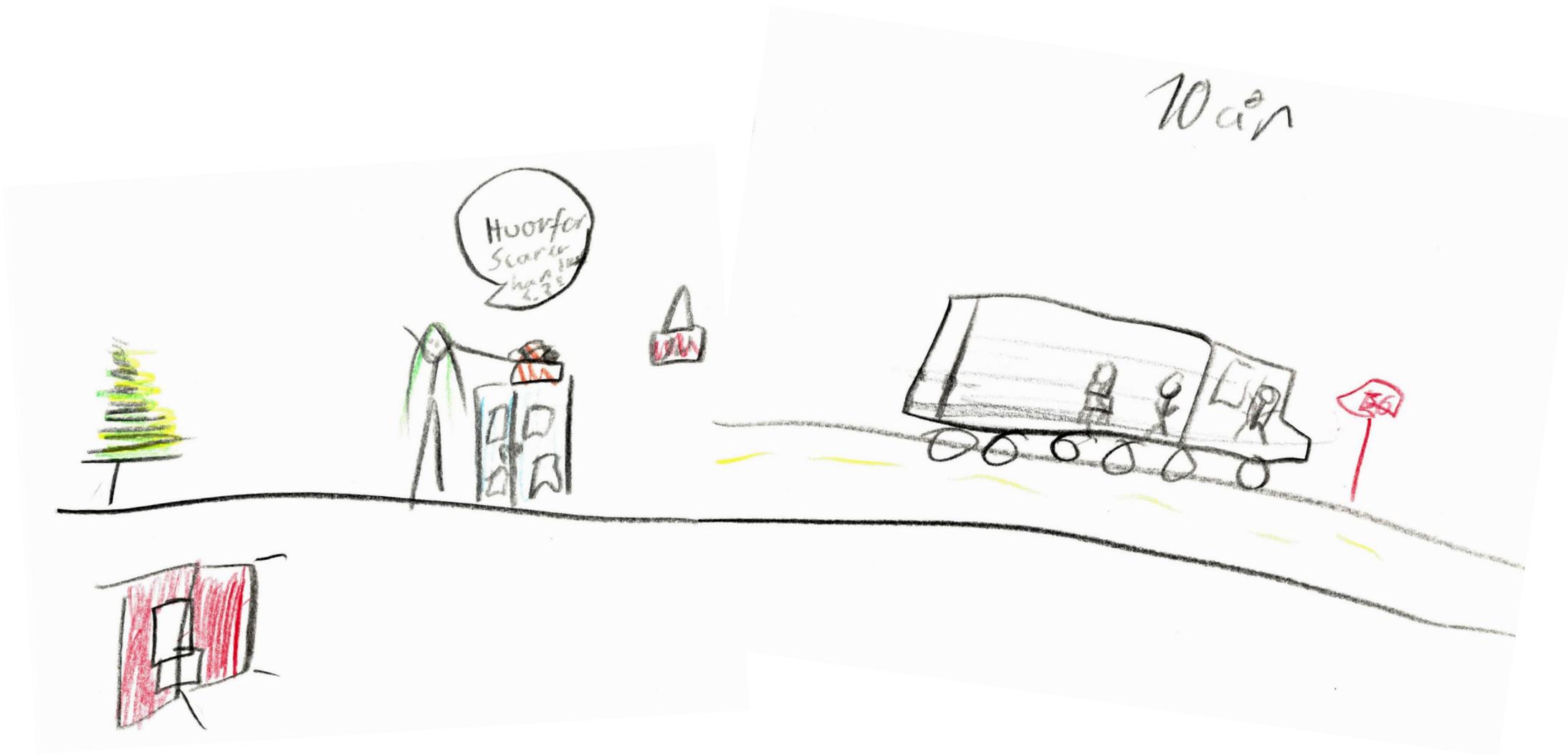
This document aims to provide a platform for the voices of children with a parent in prison or in conflict with the law. The interpretations of the Council of Europe Recommendation included are children's own articulations of their needs, and assertions of their rights. The hope is that lawmakers will be motivated to commit to positive steps on behalf of these children.

Many thanks to all the COPE members and children across Europe who contributed their time and artistic talent to the creation of this document.





ARTICLE 2 · When a judge is thinking about sending a parent to prison, they should think about how this can change **things** for each child, **their** rights and what is best for them. If possible, the parent should be given a sentence in the community instead of going to prison, especially if they are the child's main carer.



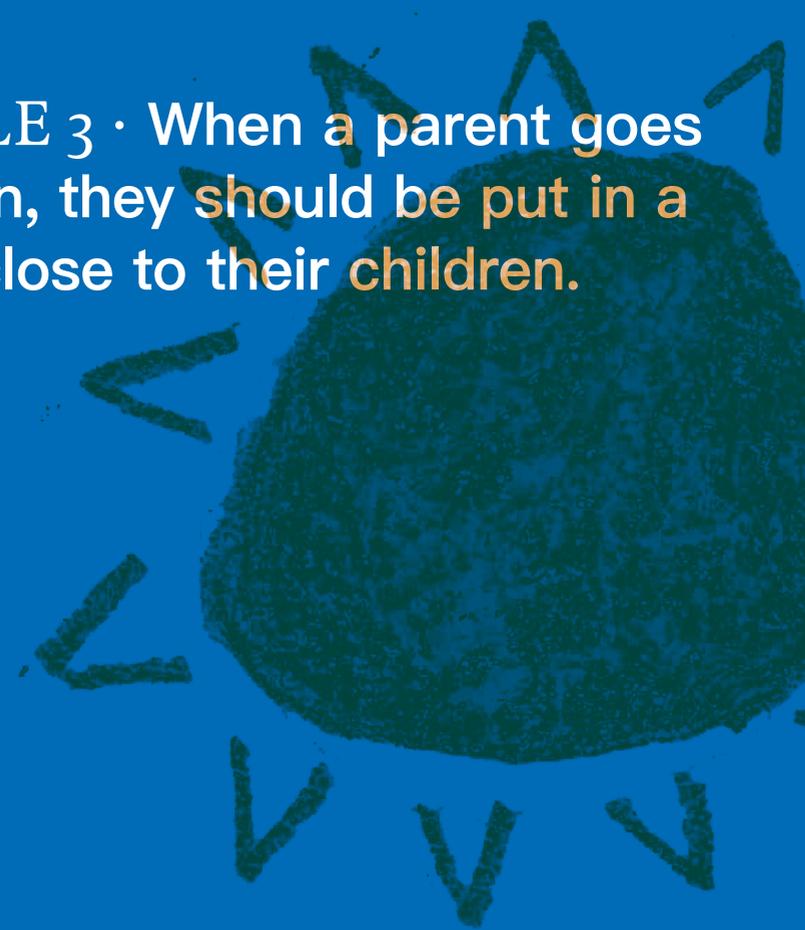
FIONA, aged 10  
Norway

“If your mum or dad is important to you and they do something daft or shoplift and if you are a single mum or dad and you are really close to your child, then your child might do something silly and copy the parents actions. Then it means the child might have to go into foster care or something.”



LIAM, aged 12  
Scotland

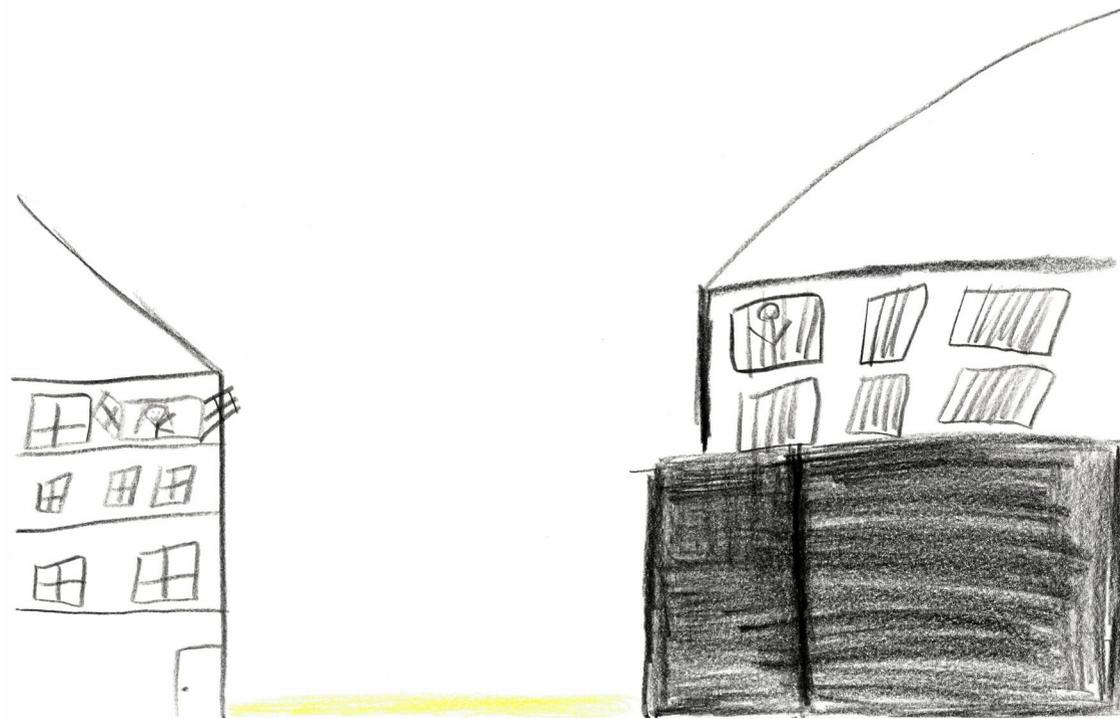
ARTICLE 3 · When a parent goes to prison, they should be put in a prison close to their children.



“The bridge takes us directly from home to dad in prison, fortunately we are close!”



2 boys, aged 9 and 12  
one girl aged 6  
Italy

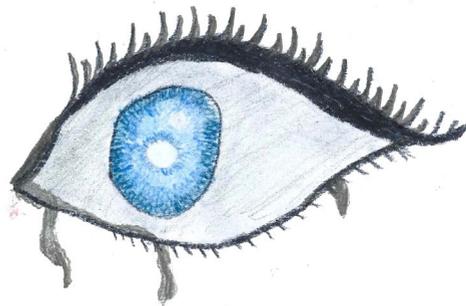


GABRIEL, aged 15  
Norway

“I wish my dad were closer to home.  
Then I could see him more often.”

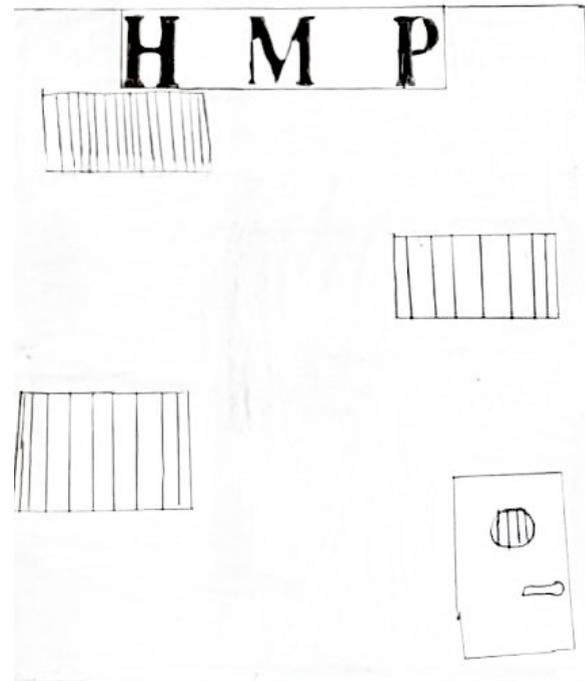


HELI, aged 12  
Finland



“I chose this recommendation because  
it’s really important to be able to see  
your parent when they’re in prison. It’s  
not fair if children have to travel really  
far just to see their mum or dad.”

prison close to home.

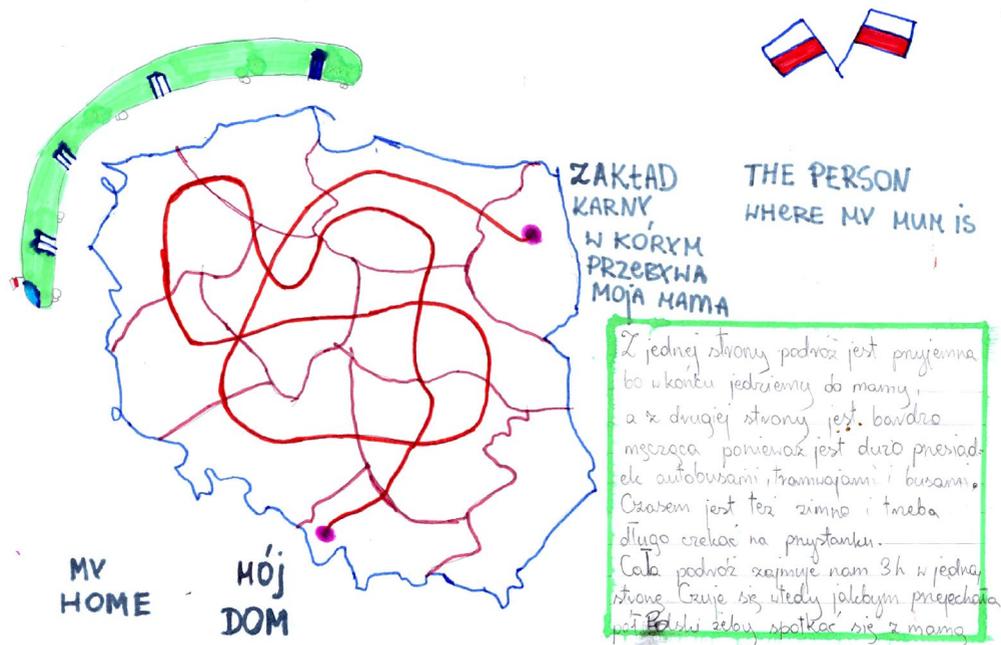


Luca age 10



LUCA, aged 10  
England

“On one hand the journey is nice because at last I am going to meet my mum, but on the other hand is very tiring because are a lot of changes of buses and trams. Sometimes it is cold and we have to wait for a long time at the bus stops. It takes us three hours one way to get there. I feel like I travel through half of Poland to be able to meet my mum.”



ULA, aged 13  
Poland

ARTICLE 8 · When arresting a parent, the police should, if possible, make sure children are not there. If a child is present during an arrest, police should be sensitive and try to make sure not to upset them.

“It’s important that the kid is being distracted because it’s very hard to see when your parent is being arrested. It’s important to be distracted because that’s nice for the kid.”

Reden 1: Het is Belangrijk. dat Het Kind wordt afgeleid. want Het is niet voor Het kind dat Hij/zij. Ziet dat Haar vader/of. moeder. wordt opgepakt.

Reden 2: Het is ook fijn voor het kind zelf Zodat Het kind ook afleiding heeft.



CHEYENNE, aged 14  
Netherlands

“The blue mum crying yellow, the red child in the arms of the mum, the green dad drawn and then erased, two yellow policemen with outstretched arms taking dad.”



Boy, aged 3  
Italy

“I chose this article because in my opinion it’s important that no kid ever sees their parent being arrested.”



PILHA, aged 8  
Finland

“I chose this one because when the police come, they should talk to the child to explain what is going on – be friendly and kind at all times because this will mean children like the police and be less afraid of them.”



LOIS, aged 12  
England

ARTICLE 11 · Parents in prison should be able to leave prison to be with their children on special days like birthdays, first day of school and when children are in hospital.

“Dad finally came to my birthday party, we had a lot of fun!”



Boy, aged 7  
Italy

“I chose this statement because my dad is in prison and he missed my little brother being born. We miss him so much.”



LILY-JESS, aged 7  
Scotland

“When I was 10 I couldn't get to see my dad and it was a special birthday. I was a decade. It would have been nice to go for a nice meal all together. Or even to just see him even with a prison officer.”



JOHN, aged 10  
Scotland

“This article is meaningful to me because I wish my daddy could come home for my birthday.”



IDA, aged 11  
Finland

“You want the person who is in custody to come if it’s a special day, like your birthday or something.”



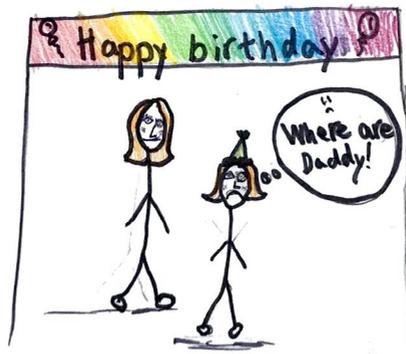
SANDRA, aged 9  
Sweden

“The children should have the right to be with their parent on one of their important days in life. For example birthdays, first day at school or pre-school.”



11. Barnen ska ha rätt att få vara med sin förälder på en av sina viktiga dagar i liv  
tex: födelsedagar, start på skolan/förskolan.

Emmerlie 11.



EMMERLIE, aged 11  
Sweden

“I chose this one because it’s not a child’s fault that their parent is in prison so they shouldn’t be the ones that miss out. I would love to see my parents on my birthday.”

ZAC, aged 9  
England

“My dad should be allowed to leave prison and come home for few days so he could spend time playing with us and our family could be together. For me, being together and being able to spend time together is the most important thing.”

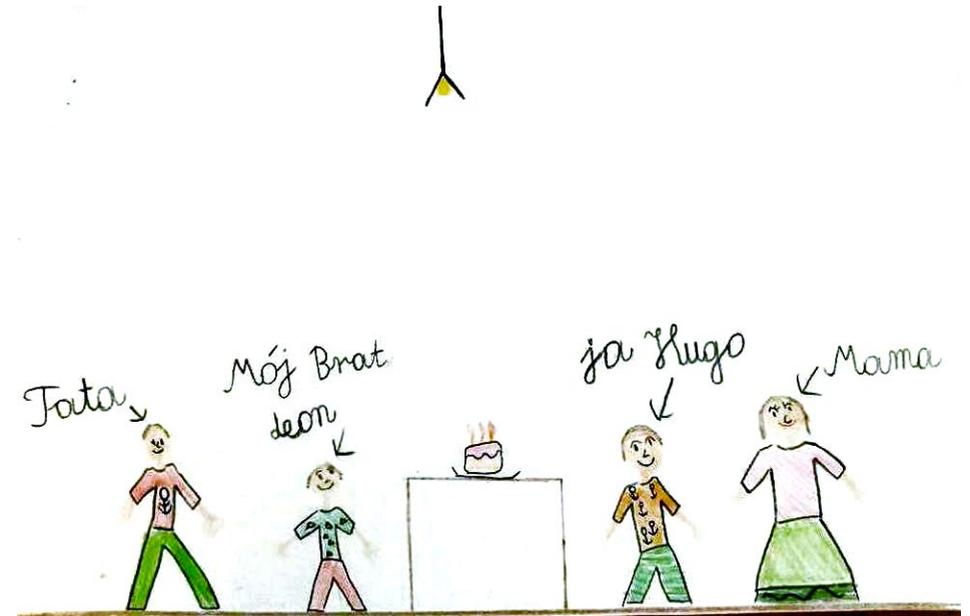
Zalecenie nr 11: Tata powinien zostać puszczany na przepustki do domu, by móc z nim spędzić jak najwięcej czasu. Pobawić się i pograć wspólnie w gry by rodzina była razem. Bo dla nas jest to najważniejsze czyli rodzina która powinna być razem i mieć możliwość wspólnego spędzania czasu.

Agnieszka I. 12



AGNIESZKA, aged 12  
Poland

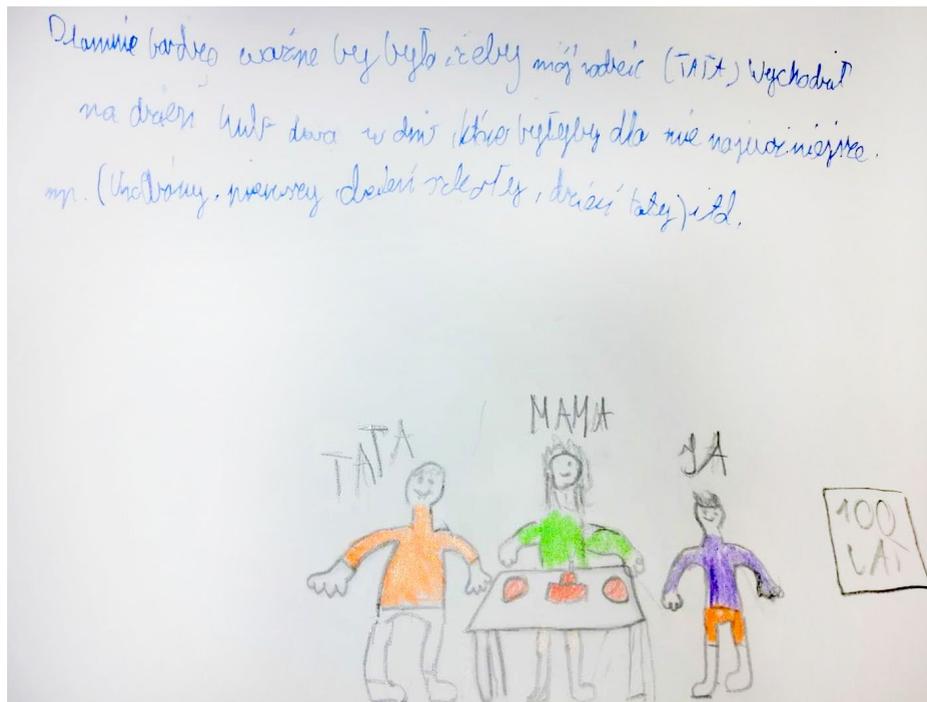
“I chose this article, because I think it is important that a parent in prison could leave prison to spend time with his/her children on special days. I believe that every child should be allowed to spend their birthday with mum and dad.”



HUGO, aged 7  
Poland

“For me, the most important thing is that my dad could leave prison for day or two, to be with me on important days, such as first day at school or Father’s Day.”

ARTICLE 20 · Every prison should have child–friendly waiting and visiting rooms; where children feel safe, welcome and respected (for example with toys, books and equipment for all ages). The visits space should be good for play and quality time including physical contact with the parent. There should also be the choice of having visits outside but near the prison, so children and parents can spend time together as if they lived in the community.



MARCEL, aged 11  
Poland

“I like to talk to dad and with a green area, we can play more!”



Boy, aged 9  
Italy



LEAH, aged 10  
Norway

“I would like the visiting room to be nicer for children to visit.”



CARL, aged 9  
Finland

“I would like the visiting room to be nicer and I wish I could jump on a trampoline in prison.”



LAURI, aged 8  
Finland

Var



FRIDA, aged 10  
Norway

“It is more fun to be outdoors instead of sitting indoors in a small room for a really long time. And it’s good for your health to be outdoors.”



ISAC, aged 7  
Sweden



FRIDA, aged 10  
Norway

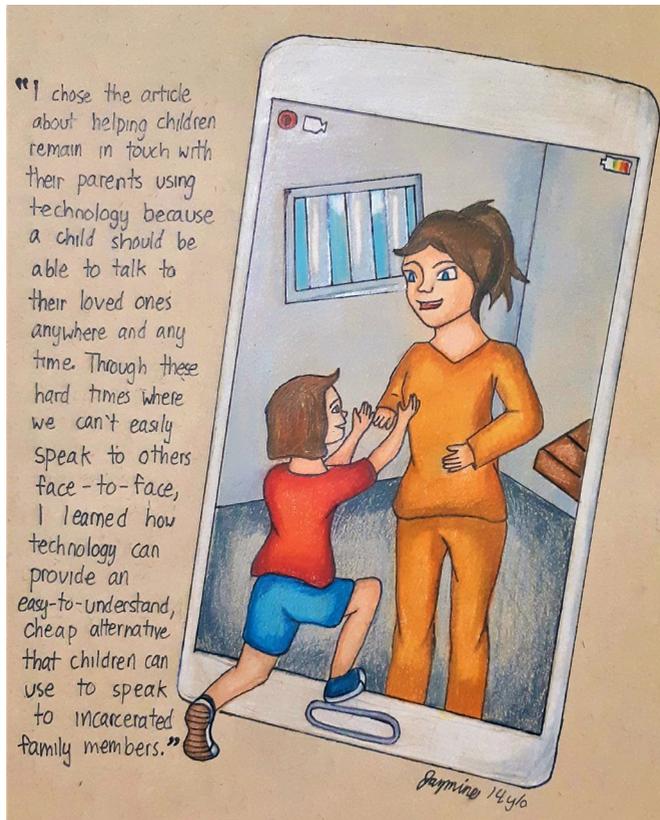
“I wish I could have visits with my mum in a playground.”



WEWE, aged 10  
Poland

ARTICLE 25 · The people in charge should make sure that everyone follows the rules about helping children stay in touch with their parent in prison using technology such as video calls, phone calls, internet, etc. These forms of contact should not cost too much and parents in prison should be helped to pay for them if needed. This type of contact should never replace face-to-face visits between children and their parent in prison.

“I chose the article about helping children remain in touch with their parents using technology because a child should be able to talk to their loved ones anywhere and any time. Through these hard times where we can’t easily speak to others face-to-face, I learned how technology can provide an easy-to-understand, cheap alternative that children can use to speak to incarcerated family members.”



JAZMINE, aged 14  
Canada

“I think Article 25 is good. It is important to me because I have bad anxiety, I get scared and I don’t like the thought of being in a prison around criminals. I feel seeing my dad or speaking with him in my own home, I’d feel safe and I’d have good thoughts. And I could imagine prison the way I want to imagine it.”



KATIE, aged 11  
Scotland

“James chose this [article] because his heart was once broken when he had no contact at all not even a phonecall. He knows how sad he felt and would like to make sure everyone helps children to stay in touch with their parent and ensure the family link is never broken!”



JAMES, aged 10  
Scotland

“I chose this one because I think children should be able to have as much contact with their parent in prison as possible, and you can’t always get to the prison easily so video calls would be amazing so you can see your parent and know they’re ok.”



SAVANNAH, aged 11  
England

ARTICLE 32 · To help protect children from the difficulties of visiting a prison, to prepare them for their parent's return and to have their parent present at special events, prisoners should be given home leave. This is especially important just before a parent leaves prison, as this will help the prisoner become an active parent again and make things more normal when they get out of prison.

“After a long time, Daddy was with us for a day. We went to the park and we also saw the aquarium.”



Girl, aged 8  
Italy

ARTICLE 47 · All prison staff should be trained to know about children's rights and what they need to do to make sure children feel safe and comfortable at all times when visiting a parent in prison. Prison staff should know how to support parents in prison and their children and how to make visits and searches child-friendly.

“I'm nervous to go to prison to visit if the guards are angry. Prison visits should be made more fun for kids”.



TINJA, aged 7  
Finland

Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE) is a pan-European network of non-profit organisations working on behalf of children separated from an imprisoned parent. The network encourages innovative perspectives and practices to ensure that children with an imprisoned parent fully enjoy their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and that action is taken to enable their well-being and development.



Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE)

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CHILDREN OF  
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