

## Greeting note

from the German *Board of Survivors* to the SNAP annual conference in Chicago,  
24 of June 2016

The German *Board of Survivors* of sexual abuse in childhood and youth is sending kind regards, full of esteem for the world's largest self-organization of survivors and its guest here in Chicago. Thank you for receiving one of our members in your conference.

We believe that mutual exchange of experience is very important to confront what is a global phenomenon: sexual violence and abuse of power against boys, girls and trans\*children", in families and institutional environments, including ritual abuse and organized crime.

In visiting your conference, we hope to learn from your ongoing fight for institutional accountability and responsiveness; and we are willing to share what is Germany's answer to these urgent questions. The *Council of Europe*, an organization of 47 European nations, estimates that up to one in five children have to suffer sexual violence up to completing the age of 18 years. So in our country alone there are probably 7 to 8 million survivors, from those at present 1 million is underage.

The council of survivors consists of 15 members, victimized in so diverse environments as in families, within church institutions, West German residential care homes and East German State Juvenile Workhouses. The age ranges from young adults to seniors, it includes women, men and members of the LGBT community.

The council members are chosen by a group of experts on behalf of the German parliament, the Bundestag and appointed by the Independent High Commissioner on questions of child abuse for a period of three years.

Its main responsibility is to advise the German government, especially the Independent High Commissioner. It defines itself as an experts' panel to influence policies and political processes in regard of the interests of survivors of child abuse. Its members take part in different committees and initiatives working for help and support of victims, inquiry of abuse in the past and prevention programs.

On November 18 and 19 this year, the *Board of Survivors* held a conference of survivors in Berlin and invites partners not only from Europe to join and share their expertise.