

Editorial « Taking international action for the rights of young children »

The first part of the school year was particularly busy for OMEP, marked by sustained engagement with several international bodies in **Geneva, Paris, and Samarkand**. This active presence reflects the Organization's ongoing commitment to influencing international policy frameworks in order to promote recognition and advancement of every child's fundamental right to free, inclusive, quality education from early childhood onwards.

In September 2025, OMEP participated in the first session of the **open-ended intergovernmental working group** organized by the **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)** in Geneva. On this occasion, it advocated for formal recognition of the right to education from early childhood as part of a future optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This major step forward would strengthen the justiciability of this right and encourage States to investing sustainably in preschool education.

The debate continued in December during an informal consultation bringing together nearly 80 states, with the participation of civil society organizations such as Human Rights Watch, confirming the growing interest in this proposal. In October 2025, in Paris, during the **222nd session of the UNESCO Executive Board**, OMEP contributed to discussions on global education priorities, recalling that early childhood must be fully integrated into educational governance frameworks.

From October 30 to November 13 in Samarkand, during the **43rd UNESCO General Conference**, OMEP France presented a policy statement and called for the inclusion of all early childhood staff in the revision

of the **1966 ILO-UNESCO Recommendation** concerning the Status of Teachers, in order to improve working conditions, the attractiveness of the profession, and the quality of educational practices.

Finally, in December 2025, the **International Symposium on the Right to Education and the work of the Technical Advisor Group** responsible for preparing the 2026 Global Report on ECCE provided an opportunity to further reflect on the modalities of public financing for early childhood education. These discussions highlighted the need for ambitious policies that guarantee equitable and progressive access to free preschool education, particularly for the most vulnerable children.

Beyond institutional advocacy, OMEP is strengthening its position within UNESCO through **its application for NGO associate status** and its cooperation with the Organization, notably through a series of six joint webinars planned for 2026. The effective improvement of young children's right to education depends on the commitment of States, advances in knowledge, and the daily involvement of professionals.

It is by combining **international advocacy, research, and high-quality implementation** in the field that we will be able to serve young children in a sustainable manner and bring their rights to life.

Gilles PÉTREAU

President of OMEP France and OMEP
Representative to UNESCO

OMEF France

- **Extraordinary General Meeting** of OMEF France, which resulted in the adoption of changes to OMEF's statutes.

J'ai des droits



- OMEF France published its booklet **"Yes, I have rights!"** on **International Children's Rights Day**.

- OMEF France published its booklet **"Educating for Peace from Early Childhood"** on the occasion of **International Peace Day**.

OMEF Europe

- **Extraordinary General Meeting** to appoint a new Vice President of OMEF Europe: **Catherine Carroll from OMEF UK**.



Publication of the newsletter in November 2025, presenting the recent activities of national committees, including OMEF France.

OMEF World

- OMEF participation in the **international symposium on the right to education** at UNESCO.



Sarah El Haïry, High Commissioner for Children, alongside Gilles, Danièle, Lisbeth, Denis, and Mbayang.

- **November 29, 2025: Extraordinary General Assembly of OMEF World** allowing the adoption of the Bologna Declaration on Culture.
- **Call for papers** for a special issue of the International Journal of Early Childhood (IJEC) on peace in early childhood.



Ingrid PRAMLING SAMUELSSON, former World President and UNESCO Chair in PE and ESD, Adrijana VISNJIC-JEVTC, new World President, alongside Gilles and Danièle.

- **Contribution to the educational** debate in Argentina through the publication of an opinion piece by OMEF Worldwide, signed by its president, entitled: **What kind of education do we want for the country we dream of?**
- **End of Mercedes MAYOL LASSALLE's** term as World President of OMEF (2020-2025)

Francophone Commission

- **Organization of a preparatory webinar** on October 17, 2025, on the guidelines, in collaboration with strategic discussions with UNESCO as part of a series of thematic webinars.



- **Contribution to the preparation of symposiums in French**, led by OMEF Canada, in anticipation of the Poznan conference in July 2026.
- **Djibouti's membership** as an individual member of the Francophone commission.

Upcoming events

- **January 26, 2026:** OMEF/UNESCO webinar organized by OMEF Morocco on the **challenges and opportunities of digital technology and artificial intelligence**.
- **February 2 to 6, 2026:** Study trip by five member countries of the **OMEF Francophone Commission**, focusing on the training of preschool teachers and early childhood educators.
- **March 25, 2026:** Webinar co-organized by UNESCO and the OMEF DRC committee **on the theme of ECCE staff: reconciling rights-based and innovation-oriented approaches**.
- **March 26, 2026:** OMEF France General Assembly.
- **July 13-17, 2026:** OMEF World Conference in Poznan on the theme of **"When a Child Speaks... korczak's Inspirations for Education and Children's Rights."**