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The Chair
Standing Committee on Family and Human Services
Inquiry into Adoption of Children from Overseas

SUBMISSION NO. 137
AUTHORISED: 25.09.05 *Adopt*

Dear Ms Bishop

Please find below the submission of **EurAdopt Australia** to your Inquiry.

EurAdopt Australia was formed in 2003 to bring together the families of children adopted from Europe. We are still a new organisation in the process of becoming incorporated but we already have about 45 member families on our mailing list.

Most of our children have come from Romania, but as newer European country programs are established, such as Lithuania, the children are coming from a more diverse range of countries. We have a number of members with children from Russia, although as Australia has no intercountry adoption program with Russia, these children have all been adopted either by New Zealand ex-patriots who now live in Australia but who were forced to return to NZ to adopt their child, or by Australian ex-patriots living overseas.

Some of our members have also made individual submissions to this Inquiry addressing the long list of inconsistencies between states and ways in which the Australian Government could assist Australians adopting or who have adopted. While we support all the applicants having problems with all these issues, as an organisation set up to support those adopting from Europe, we will confine most of our submission to our immediate sphere of interest.

Clarification

No doubt this Inquiry will receive submissions either against adoption or from adult adoptees who have had a bad adoption experience. EurAdopt acknowledges that not all adoptive parents, adopted children or relinquishing parents will have had a positive experience. The adoption system operating 20 or 30 or more years ago was totally unlike the system in place in 2005. Most adoptions in the past were closed adoptions and many adoptees were purposely kept in ignorance of their status. Australia 30 or more years ago was far less multi-cultural than it is today. Asian features or dark skin were much less common and even many adoptive parents were unaware of the cultural divide or the feelings of their children who may have grown up as the only Asian face in their school or town. In today's society these children are usually only one of many in their school and most children seem to take no notice of their friends' appearances.

Most parents of adopted children these days make great efforts to maintain their child's culture through activities with their birth country's community living in Australia. Many children are taught their birth country's language, folk dancing and attend cooking and cultural classes and celebrations with their birth country's community. EurAdopt Australia has been organising a national reunion of European adopted children in Australia for 3 years now and many members have also attended the celebration of the Romanian National Day at the Embassy in Canberra.

Sadly, there are some in society today who have been deeply hurt by adoption, especially those young mothers who, prior to the 1970's, had babies taken from them or were persuaded to give babies up for adoption. Thankfully those days are gone. The legal procedures in place

for adoption now ensure that any children adopted from overseas are legally abandoned and that birth parents and extended families have been given every chance (usually over several years) to take responsibility for them. For these children the only choice is either growing up in an institution or being adopted into a loving, caring family - even if it is in another country.

In addition, we understand that submissions will be treated confidentially if requested. This is a very emotive issue and many adoption applicants come to adoption after a long road of trying to have children naturally, In-vitro Fertilisation and dealing with the emotional disappointment of both these failures.

It is the impression gained from members of EurAdopt that relatively few families presently applying to adopt will make submissions to this inquiry compared to those who already have their children and submissions by representative organisations. This is because there is a real atmosphere of fear among applicants that their files will be "lost" or will progress more slowly if they complain or express dissatisfaction in any way. This is an unfortunate situation but is indicative of the power the bureaucratic agencies hold over applicants.

Background

Europe is in a process of metamorphosis and it is fully expected the term "Eastern Europe" will disappear over time as the old soviet bloc countries are absorbed into the European Union. These recently, in historic terms, independent countries are in various stages of recovery and development and several are forced to adopt their institutionalised children overseas. While conditions for these children in some countries are relatively good, in others they are still very repressive and are noted for the deprivations suffered by the inmates.

Institutionalised children who suffer neglect, physical, mental, emotional and sometimes sexual abuse are often left with long-term and in some cases, permanent, severe psychological damage. Orphanages in some countries are like warehouses with rows of cots. The children live like prisoners in two rooms, rarely go outside and have no toys or stimulation. They have absolutely no "life experience" and little education.

Staff levels in these orphanages are low with one carer expected to look after up to 30 children. Many children end up with behavioural disorders such as Reactive Attachment Disorder and Oppositional Defiance Disorder. Staff are sometimes untrained and take repressive measures in order to control those under their care. The future for these children, with little education, any idea of how the world works or how to survive is bleak once these children are ejected from the orphanage at age 18 onto the streets of some of Europe's poorest countries. Many of them have short lives, ended through drugs or suicide. Some take to crime and prostitution. Those that do 'make it' struggle against multiple disadvantages including poverty, lack of training and the absence of a family network that could act as a safety net.

As already stated above conditions within institutions vary according to the country concerned and such repressive conditions are not common to all European donor countries. In our view all children have the right to a family although we admit it takes a committed family to undo the damage caused by institutionalisation within poorer systems. While everybody wants a healthy, psychologically well-balanced child, we know through our EurAdopt experience that some of our families have taken on children who sit outside this category. This does not detract at all from adoption and the intercountry adoption experience. These children are loved and moving successfully through their rehabilitation. The question is what would have happened to them if they had not been adopted?

Eastern European countries have faced huge challenges since the crumbling of the Soviet Union. The struggle is not just with independence and democracy but the legacy of decades of communist rule. A period of transition is tough and the numbers of institutionalised children are indicative of both the rate of recovery and the internal turmoil. Intercountry

adoption is recognised by some of these countries as a chance for children that they cannot provide for to be united with a family of their own. As we regularly receive queries about adopting from European countries, we believe Australia has many willing families who would step forward in order these children have that chance. We stand as an organisation committed to this goal.

Furthermore, EurAdopt believes that Inter-country adoption should take place within the context of the following:

1. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 which states that *“the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding”*. We believe this should be the overriding principle of adoption policy.
2. The Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in respect of Inter-country Adoption 29 May 1993 states that:
 - *intercountry adoption may offer the advantage of a permanent family to a child for whom a suitable family cannot be found in his or her State of origin; and*
 - *intercountry adoptions are made in the best interests of the child and with respect for his or her fundamental rights, and to prevent the abduction, the sale of, or traffic in children.*
3. UNICEF's position on Inter-country adoption
 - *The Convention on the Rights of the Child, which guides UNICEF's work, clearly states that every child has the right to know and be cared for by his or her own parents, whenever possible. Recognising this, and the value and importance of families in children's lives, UNICEF believes that families needing support to care for their children should receive it, and that alternative means of caring for a child should only be considered when, despite this assistance, a child's family is unavailable, unable or unwilling to care for him or her.*
 - *For children who cannot be raised by their own families, an appropriate alternative family environment should be sought in preference to institutional care, which should be used only as a last resort and as a temporary measure. Inter-country adoption is one of a range of care options which may be open to children, and for individual children who cannot be placed in a permanent family setting in their countries of origin, it may indeed be the best solution. In each case, the best interests of the individual child must be the guiding principle in making a decision regarding adoption.*

It should be noted that in the eyes of the law adopted children are exactly the same as birth children. They are given a new birth certificate in the adoptive parents' names, they have exactly the same rights and responsibilities under law and have equal inheritance rights.

If adopted into loving, caring **permanent** families in Australia they become part of that family forever.

Issues for the Inquiry:

A. Inconsistencies between states/territories

To summarise, the inconsistencies, as we understand them; the various state and territory jurisdictions in Australia impose different rules, regulations and processes for adoption applicants including:

- Bodymass – some applicants have been judged too overweight in some states, other states have no policy on bodymass;

- Age – some applicants are told they are too old to adopt a child of any age when in their mid-forties. There are also differences between states in the allowable age differential between the adoptive parents and the child;
- Length of marriage;
- Marital status;
- Sexual orientation – some states allow gay couples to apply to adopt, some don't;
- Policy on allowing applicants to adopt sibling groups or older children;
- Legislated protection for parents taking paid or unpaid adoption leave;
- Number of children in the family and the ages of existing children;
- In some states, the ability to re-name your child (even if the original name will invite ridicule in Australia);
- Allowing private agencies to process adoptions. Until April 2005, SA had outsourced the administration but this has recently been resumed by the SA government;
- Different application processes and timeframes – eg one state has a “call for applications” which appears to be once a year or so, with no “expressions of interest” allowed outside that window of a few weeks. Other states have compulsory attendance by applicants at a “country information” seminar, others don't. Some states take only months to process applications, some take years.
- Application and processing fees – from \$2052 in Tasmania to \$9700 in NSW. Adoption should be about the needs of the children not the wealth of the applicants;
- Some states have different fees (or no fee) for local adoptions than for intercountry adoptions. This difference is explained by saying that it is seen as providing a service to local resident children. Why do they not “provide a service for local resident adults” who want to adopt from overseas? Is this a form of racial discrimination? ;
- Some states allow NGO's to process local adoptions but not intercountry adoptions; and
- Some states even deny that particular countries are available to adopt from even though the country is available to Australian residents in another state.

The above differences are in addition to the regulations allowed by the overseas country.

The end result of these inconsistencies between states is that in some cases applicant families have moved interstate just to be able to adopt a child.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that many thousands of phone calls are received every year from prospective adoption applicants yet only 370 children were adopted from overseas into the Australia in 2003-04 (AIHW report, “Adoptions Australia”). This suggests that hundreds of prospective applicants are being turned away for reasons of cost, inability to survive the process, inability to meet the criteria or perhaps because they are being judged by a bureaucrat as not good enough as parents. **Is this a valid outcome for these applicants?**

The numbers of applicants processed is also inconsistent between states and territories. The ACT manages to achieve a “success rate“ of one adoption per 12,461 per head of population (2003-04 adoption statistics from AIHW report, “Adoptions Australia” and Australian Bureau of Statistics population figures) compared to the least successful state, NSW at one adoption per 101,990 head of population. There must be large numbers of families going away disappointed in most states.

B. Inconsistencies between the benefits and entitlements provided to families with their own birth children and those provided to families who have adopted children from overseas

1. Maternity Payment:

The Maternity Allowance of \$3000 is available where the adopted child or children are under 26 weeks at placement. This condition would apply to only a very few adopted children. Many countries will not legally allow children under 12 months to be adopted. In other countries there are bureaucratic, political and social reasons why children are not able to be adopted under 6 months.

Government published policy says that the Maternity Payment “recognises the extra costs incurred at the time of the new birth or adoption of a baby” (Centrelink website). The costs of establishing older children in a family are often much greater than having a baby. The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) recognised the costs incurred by adoptive families were equal or higher than birth families and recommended that adoptive families be supported equally to birth families (*“A Time To Value”* report, 2002).

There have been statements from the relevant government ministers that the policy will be changed, but they are still talking of “increasing” the age limit whereas it should be totally abolished. The government should understand that these children do not go straight into school. Older adopted children usually speak no English and must learn how their family operates and be given time to bond with their new family prior to commencing school.

Adoption of a child from overseas can cost as much as \$40,000 for the child to arrive in Australia. Yet people often ask our member families how much the government pays them to adopt children! Birth families are subsidised by the government through Medicare at a cost of over a billion dollars (antenatal, obstetric and post natal care) so that it need not cost a family any money at all to have a birth child. Even IVF treatment is highly subsidised by the government.

It is inequitable then, that the attitude of the government is that adoptive parents, who usually have no choice but to adopt or remain childless, are totally “user pays”. This is especially puzzling when the government also publicly expresses concern at the falling birth rate in Australia and introduces policies to encourage birth families but penalises those not lucky enough to be able to have birth children or those who choose to build their family via adoption.

There were 370 placement adoptions into Australia from overseas in 2003-04. Paying all these families the Maternity Allowance of \$3000 would cost the government \$1.11m, a comparative drop in the ocean. However, the payment of this sum would mean a lot to adoptive families in terms of financial and moral support and removal of discrimination. Raising the age restriction (to what age? 2 years?, 5 years?) is an unacceptable option. It should be abolished.

2. Unpaid Maternity leave:

The Workplace Relations Act provides 12 months unpaid adoption leave for families adopting a child, but only where the child is under 5 years at adoption. The result is that many families are not eligible for either paid or unpaid adoption leave and are at risk of losing our jobs. Many other adoptive families do take this very real risk if they take the compulsory 6 or 12 month time off to look after their newly adopted children aged over 5 years. Many people assume that adopted children magically bond with new families. This is far from the truth as most children take years to bond and they need this initial bonding period.

The HREOC has recommended that the government abolish this age restriction. We agree that this is an unacceptable restriction and its removal would indicate a better understanding of the needs of adoptive families.

3. Paid leave:

According to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, 29% of Workplace Agreements have paid maternity leave but only 1% have paid adoption leave. According to

the ACTU the number of awards that have paid maternity or adoption leave is likely to be similar.

The Australian Government should introduce legislation to give equal status to adoptive families and birth families for the purposes of paid leave.

4. Flexible return to work:

Some awards and workplace agreements allow for flexible return to work arrangements, again for birth parents but not for adoptive parents. This is yet another issue of blatant discrimination against adoptive families and reflects a lack of understanding by governments, union officials and employers of adoption issues.

5. Waiting period for Medicare and private health funds:

When adoptive families arrive back in Australia they are sometimes forced to endure a waiting period to receive benefits from these agencies. As the children often require urgent medical and dental treatment these parents are obliged to pay for this themselves even though families with new-born babies are eligible to receive benefits straight away.

C. How can the Australian Government better assist Australians who are adopting or have adopted children from overseas countries (intercountry placement adoptions)?

The administration of adoption in some states and territories is more efficient and effective and "client friendly" than in others. This situation is reliant on the policies and opinions of Ministers and senior management but also of the staff performing the functions. Those states that are most effective at present could easily change with different management or Ministerial responsibility.

Our member families in Queensland tell us that the applicants in that state have to wait until the state government calls for "expressions of interest", via a window of a few weeks once every year or two. At all other times, it is simply not possible to apply to adopt a child while resident in Qld. The last call for expressions of interest (last half of 2004) resulted in over 800 applications. Given the Qld administrations past record of processing applications, it will take almost 10 years to clear these.

Anecdotal evidence suggests the states and territories receive thousands of enquiries about adoption annually. Yet in 2003-04 there were only 370 intercountry adoptions into Australia. How many of the enquirers are put off by the cost, the intrusiveness of the process, the attitude of the officials etc. Certainly the oft repeated line "there are more applicants than children" turns many people off, especially those without a history of infertility.

Recommendations:

EurAdopt Australia believes the Australian Government could:

- 1. Explore new intercountry adoption programs** to replace the increasing number of present programs which are closing or restricting adoptions.

In the knowledge of the continuing and tightening restrictions being placed by other countries on Australian adoptive families, EurAdopt recommends the Australian Government should:

- Assert its role as the Australian "Central Authority" under the Hague Convention and take over the role of initiating action to investigate and develop programs with other non-Hague countries;
- Not agree to a complete ban on new programs with non-Hague countries but treat countries on a case-by-case basis; and

- Investigate the feasibility of the Australian Government working with one state/territory government on establishing an intercountry adoption program with Russia and other non-Hague countries;

Children presently living in institutions in many countries could easily be adopted into loving, caring families in Australia. Many adoption applicants are surprised and disappointed that there are so few countries available for Australians to choose to adopt from (around 13 but only about 5 or 6 are really effective) especially when they discover the increasing restrictions being applied to applicants by those countries. By contrast, whilst their system is not perfect, citizens of the United States are able to adopt from practically any country which has children legally available for adoption.

Take Russia as an example of a possible new country program. There are reported to be as many as **600,000** children presently living in orphanages in Russia. We do understand that not all these children are adoptable, but many could be placed in families if the Russian authorities were aware of the places available for them in Australian families.

It is our understanding that Australia does not have an Intercountry Adoption (ICA) program with Russia because:

- Russia has signed, but not ratified, the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption; and
- The Commonwealth and the State and Territory agencies administering ICA have “agreed” that Australia will not commence any new programs with non-Hague countries.

But no-one has been able to offer us any written proof of this “agreement”. We are told it is an agreement reached at the “Central Authorities” meeting to which members of the public are not invited and the Minutes of which are not publicly available. We were originally told this was stated in the “*Commonwealth/State Agreement for the Implementation of the Hague Convention*” but having finally obtained a copy of that document in 2004, there is nothing in it to prevent new non-Hague programs. **On the contrary, the written “Agreement” outlines methodologies for establishing non-Hague programs.**

Unfortunately, possibly due to our lobbying efforts in order to establish new country programs, there is a move by some state/territory bureaucracies in Australia to change the Commonwealth/State Agreement to put in writing the effect of the “agreement” not to open new Hague countries.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that Russian adoption authorities may not presently deal with other governments but only with adoption agencies. They have to be assured that Australian adoption legislation allows adoption from Russia, presently a non-Hague country. It is difficult to even persuade the Commonwealth Attorney-General’s Department to contact the Russian Embassy to ask if they are close to ratifying the Hague Convention or if they are interested in establishing a program with Australia. Australia cannot expect the Russian government to come and ask Australians to adopt its homeless children. Australia needs to make the first moves to establish a program.

Some of our members have children who display the results of their institutionalisation - emotional, physical, academic and behavioural problems caused by the neglect and physical, emotional and sometimes sexual abuse these children are subjected to in the orphanages. Every day that governments procrastinate and these children endure this trauma, more damage is inflicted on them, thereby reducing their chances of a viable future.

Efforts by Australian authorities to establish programs with other countries have been limited to Hague Convention countries, but many of these countries have few children available for adoption. The majority of countries with large numbers of institutionalised children have neither the resources nor the incentive to perform the complex tasks associated with ratifying the Hague convention. Yet Australia concentrates its new country program establishment work on countries in which there are fewer children needing families.

EurAdopt supports having certainty that there is no malpractice in adoption, but we contend that ratification of the Hague convention does not necessarily guarantee this – several Hague countries have been accused of malpractice. Russia has demonstrated its intention to work towards full ratification of the Hague convention. New Zealand has had a viable and well regarded intercountry adoption program with Russia for many years and there are over 500 children adopted from Russia in NZ families.

Australia already has bilateral agreements covering intercountry adoption with many countries most of which were signed before Australia ratified the Hague Convention. These work perfectly well for Australia and have done so for decades. There only seems to be a bureaucratic decision combined with, in some states, a negative view of intercountry adoption, which prevents further bilateral agreements with non Hague convention countries.

It appears that social workers in some jurisdictions believe that it is in the child's best interest to leave them in an institution in their birth country to have their lives destroyed, rather than having them adopted into loving families in Australia. They argue that it is "removing a child from their birth culture". Many children in orphanages have no "birth culture". They lived in 2 rooms, rarely go outside, have no education, no toys, and cannot even speak their birth language properly.

When applying to adopt, prospective applicants are often told by adoption authorities that "there is no Australian adoption program with Russia". However, when the applicants are asked privately if they would like the opportunity of adopting from Russia, many of these applicants say "yes". They are interested not only in infants, but in older Russian children and sibling groups.

Unfortunately, the last time an Australian government attempted to establish a program with a non-Hague country it almost met disaster. As we understand it, a state government had taken on the task of establishing a program with China. After 6 years of negotiation and no results, a private citizen who was trying to set up an accredited agency, identified the problem and discussed the solution with Senator Brian Harradine's office. Senator Harradine arranged passage of Australian legislation to enable compliance with Chinese legislation which basically solved the problem. We understand that it was the international law and treaty experience of the Commonwealth Departments of Foreign Affairs and Immigration that made the most difference in sorting out the legal requirements. This demonstrates that the States are out of their depth in negotiating international legal affairs.

While this negotiation was proceeding, the Australian Government had also been proceeding with ratifying the Hague Convention and it was announced that no further programs would be signed with non-Hague countries. This put the years of negotiations with China in jeopardy and it was only the public outcry from those wishing to adopt from China and the persistence of Senator Harradine and the international law experience of DFAT and DIMIA that the China program was made an "exception" to this "rule".

2. **Take a more pro-active role as the "lead agency"** for intercountry adoption. The Australian Government Attorney-General's Department, which is designated the national "Central Authority" under the Hague Convention, could formulate a set of national laws

and regulations which would bring consistency to the adoption process. It should be possible for the state and territory governments to administer the process within consistent Commonwealth laws.

Presently, the Commonwealth appears to be subservient to the states when formulating policy or driving change. Anecdotal evidence suggests that suggestions for change or initiatives taken made by Commonwealth officials are criticised or vetoed by the states. It has been said that there are really 8 “central authorities” in Australia and the Commonwealth simply coordinates (rubber-stamps) their deliberations and decisions.

NB. We do hesitate to make this recommendation for fear that the Commonwealth, under pressure from the States, may adopt the most expensive or the most restrictive system instead of the most effective or the most efficient.

3. **Abolish fees charged by State and Territory governments** for providing adoption services. Some States do not charge for “local” adoption approvals, others states charge considerably less for local adoptions. Is this a form of racial discrimination?

As noted above, application and processing fees range from \$2052 in Tasmania to \$9700 in NSW. Adoption should be about the needs of the children not the wealth of the applicants. The government should be encouraging adoption rather than raising fees to the extent that adoption is only for the wealthy. Since the governments introduced fees to process adoptions, they then have established that it is “user pays”. From then on they have only to justify fee increases on the basis of “not being able to provide the service” if they didn’t increase fees.

The NSW government recently increased fees by around 250% despite the furore from the stakeholders and devastated parents who realised they would not be able to afford a brother or sister for their recently adopted child. At the same time as the increased fees were legislated in the NSW Parliament, the ability for the public service to raise fees in future was also agreed by Parliament. The NSW government thereby ensured it would not have to face public scrutiny when it raised fees in the future.

4. **Abolish Australian Government fees on adoption applications.** The Australian Government currently charges a fee of \$1245 to process a visa application for an adopted child. With only 370 intercountry adoptions in 2003-04 it is hardly a major revenue earner. Yet it is a significant cost to adoptive families, especially those adopting siblings.

The Department of Foreign Affairs also charges hundreds of dollars to fix an authentication stamp to all the adoption documents sent overseas, a process which takes about 15 minutes. This fee should be abolished.

5. **Assistance with adoption expenses.** As mentioned above, the adoption process can cost as much as \$40,000 by the time the child arrives in Australia. Many of these expenses are paid to the same governments which subsidise births by more than a billion dollars per year. In many countries, adoptive parents are valued and the government demonstrates their recognition by making adoption expenses tax deductible. Adoption expenses were tax deductible in Australia until 1975-76 but this was then changed to a tax rebate system. The rebate system which was in place until 1985-86, allowed a rebate for almost all adoption related expenses, which when added to a range of other personal expenses, exceeded \$2000.

In the US, a US\$10,000 **per child** tax credit is allowed for adoption expenses. In addition, many US state governments provide direct grants and loans to adoptive families. Many of the major US corporations also provide sponsorship of adoptive families. Many European governments and the Canadian government also provide substantial tax assistance to adoptive families. This is the type of recognition that Australian families

also deserve instead of having to pay governments for the privilege of being approved to adopt. The Commonwealth could greatly assist adoptive families if it were to reinstate this tax concession.

6. **Allowing regulated private agencies to administer the approvals process.** When Australia ratified the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption in 1998, after considerable consultation and enquiry, agreement was reached between all states and territories and the Commonwealth on a system of licensing NGO's to conduct the administration of the application process.

To date, only the **South Australian** government has done this, outsourcing the administration but not the approvals to a private agency. At the end of 2004 a review of this SA arrangement was announced and assurances were given to stakeholders that considerable consultation would be undertaken and no decision taken on future arrangements until proposals were fully discussed. In early 2005 a decision was announced in the press which abolished the outsourcing arrangement to "bring SA into line with others states" according to the Minister. This decision was not discussed and went against what the stakeholders and clients had recommended.

NGO's in **NSW** and **WA** have been seeking accreditation from the state governments since 1998 or earlier without success. Each time these NGO's satisfy one set of requirements, they are given others to satisfy. Other state governments have stated that no NGO will be accredited in their state. These agencies believe they can not only provide the administration of the process more efficiently and effectively than government but also establish new country programs with far less bureaucratic red tape.

Accredited NGO's work well in many jurisdictions, including New Zealand. If properly regulated there is no reason why they could not do the same in Australia. Applicants could expect a more effective and efficient service.

7. **Ensure sufficient consultation when formulating policy.** The recent formulation of policies affecting adoptive families has demonstrated the lack of consultation that has occurred with affected families. Recent changes to the Maternity Payment and legislation relating to leave for adoptions has included either an in-built discrimination, a lack of concern or a simple ignorance of issues affecting adoptive families.

There are many adoption support organisations in Australia who would be happy to consult with any government on these issues.

EurAdopt sincerely hopes that some positive change will result from this enquiry and would like to thank the Committee and the MP's who have taken the trouble to support adoptive parents and publicise this issue.

Yours sincerely

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EurAdopt Australia
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