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**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FACED BY EUROPEAN WELFARE  
STATES: THE CHANGING CONTEXT FOR CHILD WELFARE**

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## TRUTH

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### *Abstract*

The paper considers the importance of truth in family law. It distinguishes between physical truth and legal truth, then addresses the question in whose interests truth is constructed in issues of kinship. This involves a look at the history of paternity actions, including the events of the French revolutionary period. It suggests that the gradual prevalence of physical over legal truth represented a greater recognition of the interests of children, but also that in modern times physical truth has been used as a means of pursuing new forms of claims by parents (particularly fathers) to assertions of power over their children. The paper closes by considering how the interests of parents and children should be addressed over issues of truth.