

e-News Bulletin November 2005

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News from Eurochild



Eurochild AISBL Conference “The Position of Socially Excluded Children in the EU Policy process” 14 November 2005, Brussels, Belgium

On 14 November 2005 Eurochild AISBL’s second annual Conference with the title “*The Position of Socially Excluded Children in the EU Policy process*” took place in Brussels. It was attended by almost 60 participants and has been a real success.

The conference was held in the framework of the publication of the first draft of the **Communication on the Rights of the Child** by the European Commission in autumn 2005, of which a draft has already been circulated within the Commission.

After welcome and introductory remarks by Catriona Williams, President of Eurochild AISBL, the participants could view a film produced by Eurochild AISBL with the support of the UK Presidency of the EU, which has first been shown at the Round Table against Poverty and Social Exclusion, which took place in Glasgow on Catriona Williams, President of Eurochild 17-18 October 2005. It is featuring socially excluded children voicing their views about their life, education, prospects for the future and dreams.

An intervention by Mr Stéphane Ouaki, member of Cabinet of Commissioner Vladimir Špidla, responsible for Employment and Social Affairs, followed. He underlined the continued support of the European Commission for the issue of children and social cohesion. Ms Williams read a note by Mr Patrick Trousson from DG Justice, Freedom and Security, the actual author of the draft Communication, who unfortunately could not join the Conference personally.

This was followed by interventions from Mr Vladimir Tchernega from the Social Cohesion Unit of the Council of Europe, and Ms Eva Jespersen from the UNICEF *Innocenti* Research Centre.

After the lunch break, the session started with 2 representatives of national NGOs presenting examples of projects for children and young people in their countries and regions. This was followed by interventions from the public, relating the situation of children's rights in their home countries, which seem to be very different from one European member state to the other.



Vladimir Tchernega & Eva Jespersen

Those presentations were followed by comments and contributions by Ms Marie-Anne Paraskevas from DG Employment and Social Affairs of the European Commission, Mr Tchernega and Ms Jespersen. They insisted on the fact that the input by NGOs and civil society were very important in order to make the streamlining of children and social policies a success.



The conference participants

You will find a more detailed report from the Conference in Eurochild AISBL's bi-annual newsletter, whose winter edition is going to come out soon.

Eurochild Members Meeting and Policy Forum 15 November 2005, Brussels, Belgium

On the day following the Conference on socially excluded children, a meeting of Eurochild AISBL's member organisations took place, which was attended by 17 representatives of 14 member organisations. During the meeting important issues of communication and information were discussed, including recommendations about the new web site

of the organisation, as well as the two planned Communications of the European Commission (about streamlining of social inclusion policies within the European Union & on the Rights of the Child), in view of a common position of Eurochild AISBL on both topics.



During the members' meeting

News from Eurochild AISBL members

Project of the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare under the Daphne Programme

"*School Peace*" is a project to strengthen community spirit and tackle bullying and racism in schools. This is done through networking and co-operation among NGOs, schools, governments and international institutions. During the project the concept of School Peace will be piloted in partner countries.

School Peace is a model created by Finnish peer students and the **Mannerheim League for Child Welfare** (www.mll.fi). It was introduced in the beginning of 1990s and has become a cornerstone to strengthen non-formal education in the Finnish school system. At the moment there is institutional partnership through co-operation with the Finnish National Board of Education & the Police Department of the Ministry of Interior. A suggestion from the Finnish side is to introduce this kind of tri-lateral government-NGO-school co-operation model in all partner countries.

The *School Peace* activities are executed by the students themselves (with the help of teachers and NGOs). Activities could include the use of arts, music and sports in the form of campaigns, theme days, visits to other schools and co-operation with parents. The documentation of the project will serve as guidelines for future projects and it will be published and distributed among partners and the public.

SCHOOL PEACE 2005-2006

The partner countries are Finland, Estonia, Poland, Greece and Spain. The basic idea is that one NGO and one school in each project country execute a school peace –pilot during the timeframe of 7.4.2005 – 30.3.2006 (EU-Daphne II -grant). This includes a School Peace Day and other activities suited for the local and national culture. School

Peace 2005-2006 -documentation includes among others the School Peace Declaration, Event Manual and ideas for a possible continuous programme. Web-pages with a data-base for material and an intranet for the network will also be created.

SCHOOL PEACE 2006-2008 – Ideas for the Future

There is interest to spread the idea of School Peace all over Europe. Aim for the school years 2006 – 2008 is to involve all 25 EU-countries. Goal for future could be to involve all Council of Europe - countries and make School Peace a truly pan-European project.

There is a desire to spread the word of building community spirit not only in schools but in the society in general. This could be done e.g. by giving information about the School Peace -idea in the media. Tools for the future work could be the following: music, theatre & art performances; handicrafts –manufacturing (etc. friendship / school peace bracelets); articles in newspapers and magazines; radio and television appearances; peer student/leader programmes; local, regional, national and international joint projects and other partnerships; integrating School Peace with already existing programmes dealing with substance abuse (alcohol/tobacco/drugs), self-esteem, personal safety, environmental issues and racism as well as the use of the umbrella concept of sustainable development.

For further information please contact the project co-ordinator: (Mr) Sami Kontola, Tel: +358 (0)75 3245 551, e-mail: sami.kontola@mll.fi

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News from Eurochild AISBL Secretariat

As already mentioned in the previous edition of the e-News Bulletin, Eurochild AISBL is going to have a new Secretary General. Her name is **Jana Hainsworth** and she will start her work on 16 January 2006. Since she arrived in Brussels, she has been European liaison officer for the international department of the British Trust For Conservation Volunteers and Co-ordinator for the Association of Voluntary Service Organisations (AVSO). She is currently working as a project manager for Gopa-Cartermill.



Heidi De Pauw & Catriona Williams during the reception

Catriona Williams, President of Eurochild AISBL, used the occasion of a small reception after the Conference on socially excluded children, to thank the outgoing Secretary General, Heidi De Pauw for her work and dedication to the organisation since the beginning of the year.

News from the European Institutions



Update on the Transparency debate

On 9 November the European Commission has adopted a controversial "transparency initiative". The plan was postponed for several weeks, due to concerns among some of the Commissioners about its suggestions. The draft paper will be proposing better access to a wider range of documents, including letters sent to Commissioners and lists of EU fund recipients. The initiative, proposed by a group of Commissioners led by Vice-President Siim Kallas, requires the EU executive to take a number of immediate steps, such as to "improve the coverage of the existing Commission register of documents."

In view of publishing EU fund recipients, the Commission will "create a central web portal, acting as a single entry point, which will establish links to

information on end beneficiaries of funds" which are managed by Directorates-General. The Commission's portal should then be interconnected with the web sites of member states and provide information about EU beneficiaries, controlled at national level. The common database could start working within the next six months.

The paper also suggests that the Commission publishes a **Green Paper in early 2006** in which it will "launch a debate on lobbying." Among the options to be considered for improving transparency in this area is a "compulsory registration of interest groups represented in consultative bodies and/or compulsory registration for all lobbyists." This requirement should also cover public affairs practitioners, trade unions and **NGOs**. Another option suggested is to have all the consultative bodies listed in a "voluntary or compulsory register to adhere to a **common code of conduct**," proposed by either the Commission or the stakeholders themselves.

The new transparency drive announced by the European Commission has received a lukewarm reaction from stakeholders, who suggest that concrete and immediate steps - mainly on lobbying - are missing from the plan.

Brussels is facing resistance to new alcohol policy

The European Commission is facing growing opposition from beverage industries for its plans to crack down on alcohol consumption in Europe, mainly aimed at drivers and **young people**. Brussels is set to produce a new "White Book" on the EU's alcohol policy in early 2006, with a set of measures harmonising the rules on use, sales and advertising of alcohol across the continent. It will also recommend a rise in member states taxes on alcohol, including wine and beer - a move strongly opposed by producing countries.

The new regulations should include a common minimum age for buying alcoholic beverages, including wine and beer, of 18 years. The Commission also wants to push forward a common limit for allowed amounts of alcohol in the blood stream of drivers, as well as more stringent punishment for drivers under the influence of alcohol.

Other new proposals on the table include more information about the amount of alcohol and calories in drinks, especially in so called "binge drinking", popular among **young people**, as well as restrictions on their advertising. Finally, the EU executive wants to see that alcohol can only be purchased in restricted areas in shops and supermarkets.

The Commission has found itself in the middle of pressure from public health NGOs on the one side and alcohol producers on the other: There is a growing consensus among the member states about the need for more effective policy, as even in the usual 'wine countries' in the South the number of **youngsters** getting intoxicated - as is common in the north of Europe - is rising. On the other hand, alcohol producers suggest the "Scandinavian case" proves that bans and high taxes on alcohol do not solve the problem of abuse...

World AIDS Day on 1 December 2005

Young people across the European Union and neighbouring countries are among the main victims of a resurgence of the deadly HIV/AIDS epidemic. In the run-up to World AIDS Day on 1 December, freshly released data from the EU-funded "Euro-HIV" network indicates that the number of people newly diagnosed with HIV is increasing steadily.

In the 20 EU countries for which data was available for the last 4 years, the total number of reported new HIV diagnoses increased by 23%. The escalation has been largest in the United Kingdom, with a 69% rise. In 2004 just under 72 000 cases

were reported in the whole WHO European Region. According to new UNAIDS estimates 2.3 million people are living with HIV and AIDS within the European region.

To help combat the rise of the epidemic in Europe and neighbouring countries, the Commission will shortly adopt a Communication detailing concrete steps for 2006-2009. These will address aspects such as the involvement of civil society, partnerships with industry, surveillance, prevention of new infections, drug dependence, education, counselling and testing, research, and initiatives for neighbouring countries. The European Commission is continuing to invest in research projects focussing on new drugs as well as micro-bicides and vaccines to prevent the spread of the virus.

European Parliament

News from the Services Directive

After almost a year of debates raging across Europe, a number of delays on the agenda and finally over four hours of voting, MEPs have made a significant step forward to adopting the hotly disputed services directive. The European Parliament's Internal Market Committee on Tuesday 22 November passed the law aimed at liberalising the services sector, called the "Bolkestein directive" after its author, Dutch ex-Commissioner Frits Bolkestein.

Opposition against the directive was cited by the French citizens as one of the top reasons for their rejection of the European constitution in a referendum last May. And the issue is likely to spark further controversy in the coming weeks, as MEPs have voted in favour of a pro free-market version of the law - proposed by the centre-right group, while rejecting a more protective approach by the German socialist rapporteur Evelyn Gebhardt.

The adopted draft - to be voted on by the whole plenary in February - is based on the principle that companies established in one EU member state have the right to provide their services within the whole block. While businesses will have to respect the basic rules about wages, safety and environment of the host country, member states will not be allowed to introduce extra restrictions to foreign companies.

Presidency of the European Union



Meeting of the
Permanent inter-
governmental group
"L'Europe de l'enfance"
29 November 2005
London, UK

On Tuesday 29 November the meeting of the permanent inter-governmental group "L'Europe de l'Enfance" took place in London. This group was established in November 2000 as an informal meeting held during each Presidency (twice a year), which is attended by senior civil servants and officials involved in developing children's policies. The meetings enable the exchange of strategies, viewpoints and best practices on children's issues in the context of EU policies and the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The broad theme of the meeting which was held during the UK's Presidency of the EU was "**Securing better outcomes for children and young people through integrated service**". It included workshop sessions focusing on different outcome areas where the UK is working to improve the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19. The workshops not only looked at

different projects relevant to the outcome areas but at how the organisations involved in providing services to children and young people are working together to achieve the desired outcomes.

Eurochild was represented by Catriona Williams, President, and Anja Härtwig, Information and Policy Development Officer, at the meeting. EURONET presented a new report "*What about us? Children's rights in the EU*". It was followed by a discussion on the planned Commission **Communication on the Rights of the Child**. There was an agreement that the next meeting, taking place in May 2006 in Austria should have this item on the agenda. One of the delegates requested that the UK Presidency should write to the Commission to ask for the use of this inter-governmental group for communication on the views of governments and information on the Communication.

★★ General European News ★★

Lifelong learning

A Communication on "*Modernising education and training: a vital contribution to prosperity and social cohesion in Europe*" approved by the Commission on 10 November 2005, concludes that Member States must accelerate the pace of reform in their education and training systems, or large proportions of the next generation will face **social exclusion**. The matter is urgent: despite the important efforts made by all Member States, there is too little progress against the European "benchmarks" fixed for improving **young people's** qualifications and competences. This has serious consequences for all citizens, especially for disadvantaged groups.

In the Communication the Commission presents its contribution to the 2006 Joint Progress Report on the implementation of the "Education and Training 2010" work programme to be jointly agreed with the Council in February 2006. This Work Programme is the education and training strand of the Lisbon strategy and aims to **modernise Europe's education and training systems**.

EU Education Ministers agreed on 15 November to the content of the Commission's proposed lifelong learning programme 2007-13. As part of the education and training work programme 2010, they called for the Commission to set up a cluster of those member states wishing to develop peer-learning activities on sectoral skills. Erasmus is a key success story for the EU, providing students with some financial support to carry out studies in other countries.

Ministers also agreed to the content of the Commission's Youth in Action Programme. They suggested a 'Youthpass' as one way to encourage the recognition of non-formal and informal learning for **young people** and those active in youth work and youth organisations. They say the Commission

and member states should consider including it in the Europass.

e-Twinning

The e-Twinning action was launched in January 2005 and has quickly established itself as a major instrument for **school collaboration** in Europe, with 10,000 schools registering their interest. It encourages the formation of school partnerships over the internet, adding a European dimension to the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in school life. E-Twinning is the main initiative of the European e-Learning programme.

e-Twinning (www.etwinning.net) is supposed to bring innovation into teaching and motivate pupils to learn. Pupils, teachers, headmasters, librarians and other school staff should use e-Twinning to add a European dimension to school life. Using the Internet, they will work together in many varied ways with peers in other countries: chat, send emails and exchange ideas and learning materials.

Prizes for the best e-Twinning projects will be awarded for the first time in January 2006. Schools wanting to compete for a prize are invited to submit their project results before 27 November via the e-Twinning portal. The prize-giving ceremony will then take place at the e-Twinning conference on 13 January 2006 in Linz, Austria.

News from the Comenius Programme

On 4 November 2005 the Commission approved the use of €100 million to support over 50 new European Projects and Networks that are designed to improve quality and strengthen co-operation in the field of **school education**. In all, nearly 500 organisations across the 31 countries now participating in Socrates will implement the new

initiatives. COMENIUS is the part of the 'Socrates' European education action programme that targets schools. Through its support for school partnerships, teacher training, and school education networks, it will reach more than three-quarters of a million pupils and over 100,000 teachers this year, involving over 11,000 schools across Europe.

Since the year 2000, a total of over 500 European projects have so far been supported under this part of Comenius, and major Comenius networks are operating in over 20 different thematic areas of school education. Taken together, the new projects and networks will be an important source of innovation and good practice, the results of which will feed into the EU's "Education and Training 2010" initiative – a key component of the Lisbon strategy for making Europe the world's most dynamic, knowledge-based and socially inclusive economy.

The core of the Comenius programme, accounting for three-quarters of its budget, is the creation of partnerships between **local schools** across the 31 countries involved. These are managed on the Commission's behalf by a Europe-wide network of National Agencies. In addition, a budget of €19million is available for individual grants this year to enable some 7,000 **teachers** and other school staff to undertake in-service training in another European country, and around 1,100 language assistants to work in host schools abroad.

Multilingualism in the EU

Under the watchword: "The more languages you know, the more of a person you are," the European Commission reaffirmed its commitment to

multilingualism in adopting on 22 November 2005 its first ever Communication on this issue. The document explores the various facets of the Commission's policies in this field and sets out a new framework strategy for multilingualism with proposals for specific actions. The Commission calls on the Member States to play their part in furthering the teaching, learning and use of languages.

The Commission proposes the adoption of national action plans to promote multilingualism, further improvements in language teacher training, adequate provision for **early language learning**, and more teaching of school subjects through a foreign language. The Commission recalls that at the 2002 Barcelona European Council, the Heads of State and Government called for at least two foreign languages to be taught from a very early age. It also asks Member States to review training programmes at universities to ensure that they equip students in the language professions with the right skills.

To mark the occasion, the Commission also launched a new Web portal on languages (<http://europa.eu.int/languages>) on the EU's inter-institutional Website EUROPA, with access in all the 20 official languages. It will be an easy point of entry for the general public, the media or students to information about languages from the European Union. The subjects covered range from the Union's policies to encourage language learning and linguistic diversity, by way of a review of language skills in the Union today, to the rules for the use of the EU's own official languages and a round-up of employment opportunities for professional linguists with the Union's institutions.

Council of Europe News



The European flag celebrates its 50th birthday

The European flag turned 50 this month, with its circle of twelve golden stars on a blue background representing "perfection and entirety" in various traditions, like the twelve months of the year, the twelve apostles or the signs of the zodiac. The image was first taken up by the human rights organisation, the Council of Europe in Strasbourg in 1955. The then 14-strong council now has 46 European member countries and still uses the flag along with the EU, which adopted the official symbol in 1985.

Its original design comes from Salvador de Madariaga, the founder of the Bruges-based College of Europe, with de Madariaga's stars

representing the peoples of Europe and the circle, unity. Arsene Heitz modified the idea in the 1950s proposing 15 stars, with one of the stars referring to the French-occupied German region of Saarland. The Germans rejected 15 and the French rejected 14 in a bid to curb German assertiveness before settling on 12.

But the EU flag might have looked entirely different than it does today, with the 12 star design beating off several other ideas such as quasi-Olympic circles, a variation of the US' stars and stripes and a design using national flags with a tiger motif.

At the official anniversary ceremony, which took place in Strasbourg on 16 November, the leaders of the European institutions recalled that this flag, the emblem of the values shared by the Council of Europe and the European Union, is the symbol of the European continent's 'unity beyond our frontiers'. **Twelve children closed the ceremony** by placing twelve stars on a giant flag spread out on the lawn of the Palace of Europe.

United Nations News



Universal Children's Day 20 November

As every year since 1954, Universal Children's Day was celebrated on 20 November. Children's Day is observed to promote international togetherness and awareness among children all over the world and to actively improve their welfare.

Universal Children's Day has its origins back in 1925. This was the year when the Geneva Convention for the protection of children was adopted. The General Assembly of the United Nations recommended on 14 December 1954 that all countries institute a Universal Children's Day, to be observed as a day of worldwide fraternity and understanding between children. It recommended that the Day was to be observed also as a day of activity devoted to promoting the ideals and objectives of the UN Charter and the welfare of the children of the world.

The Assembly suggested to governments that the Day be observed on the date and in the way which each considers appropriate. **The date of 20th November marks the day on which the Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, in 1959, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in 1989.**

The Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by 192 member states of the United Nations. It is the most universally accepted international human rights treaty. The only member states that have yet to ratify are the United States and Somalia. The Convention addresses the rights of children and youth under the age of 18. It recognises their basic human rights and gives them additional rights to protect them from harm. The Convention's 54 articles cover everything from a child's right to be free from exploitation, to the right to his or her own opinion and the right to education, health care, and economic opportunity.



The adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the creation of Universal Children's Day reflects the growing recognition that children are important and valued members of society, now and in the future. Universal Children's Day celebrates children just for being themselves. It reminds us that children need love and respect to grow to their full potential. It is a day to listen to children, to marvel at their uniqueness and all they have to offer.

A key objective of Universal Children's Day is to increase awareness of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Since its adoption by the United Nations, the Convention has been signed or ratified by more countries than any other international treaty. Over the past decade, the Convention has proven to be a valuable tool for promoting the rights of children everywhere around the world.



15 years since the *Innocenti* Declaration on Breastfeeding

Between 1990 and 2000, exclusive breastfeeding levels for children under six months in the developing world have increased by as much as three or fourfold in some countries. UNICEF, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and other child survival partners hailed this progress as they commemorated the adoption of the landmark *Innocenti* Declaration fifteen years ago on 22 November 2005, at a meeting in Florence, Italy.

At least 30 governments signed onto the Declaration in 1990, a document which set ambitious new standards for national support to breastfeeding. Through their efforts, nearly 20,000 hospitals in 150 countries have become "baby-friendly", more than 60 countries have laws or regulations implementing the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes.

But the *Innocenti* partners warned that the original goals of the Declaration are still far from met. For instance, only 39% of infants in developing countries are exclusively breastfed.

Breast milk gives a baby ideal nourishment during the critical first months of life, as well as vital immunity against killer diseases like pneumonia. Babies should be exclusively breastfed from birth to six months, and then breastfed alongside age-appropriate, complementary feeding for two years and beyond. Achieving this target would give an extraordinary boost to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is estimated that almost one-fifth of all child deaths could be prevented if this target is achieved, saving over two million children per year.

The new *Innocenti* report published by UNICEF, WHO and other infant-feeding specialists, calls for greater government action and investment to protect exclusive breastfeeding. It also warns that mothers and children are facing new dangers, including a growing number of emergencies and the continued rise of HIV/AIDS. Women need to be supported in providing the best nourishment for their children and governments urgently need to mainstream the latest strategies for HIV positive mothers and infant-feeding into national policies.

 **Further Reading** 

Article on Campaigns targeting disaffected young people

In this article from 'Politik und Kommunikation', Antje Hoppe reports on how German parties and politicians tried to communicate with young people during the last elections. German parties were all anxious to woo young people during general elections on the 18 September 2005. Antje Hoppe believes however that there was no real dialogue with the young people. Young people are still often regarded as unknown quantities. Political communicators don't know how to approach them. Pseudo-teenager communication style, overly aggressive communication and childish language fall flat in the eyes of young people. But an open-minded image, event sponsoring, modern technologies, facts and information can achieve a great deal. Another expert, Bernhard Heinzlmaier, gives advice on what to focus on in campaigns targeting young people and explains the do's and don'ts.

http://www.euractiv.com/29/images/jugendkommunikation_tcm29-147118.pdf (in German)

European Health report 2005 by WHO

The World Health Organisation's European Health report 2005 displays a widening East-West gap in children's health and identifies poverty and socio-economic inequality as the greatest threats to children's health in Europe. The report points out that health in childhood determines health throughout life. Ill health and harmful lifestyle choices in childhood lead not only to ill health throughout life but also to health, financial and social burdens for society, states the WHO.

According to the report, European children's health status reflects the widening East-West gap seen in adults. Poverty is stated as the greatest threat to children's health, regardless of a country's level of development. Risks to health are closely linked to socio-economic factors, which are related to poor neonatal health, poor access to health care, unhealthy living environments and several behavioural factors (poor diet, physical inactivity, early smoking or drinking). Social inequalities are said to have increased in all European countries, in particular in the East, and the inequalities in children's health are "unacceptably large", states the report. To download the report, please go to: <http://www.euro.who.int/ehr2005>.

Study on Discrimination in Europe

The Roma have emerged as the group facing the highest levels of discrimination across Europe, according to an annual study by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) in Vienna, published on Wednesday 23 November. According to the report, evaluating all 25 EU member states, the critical situation of the Roma communities has been registered mainly in the countries of central and Eastern Europe, like the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia. The Roma - sometimes referred to as gypsies - face discrimination in employment, housing and education as well as being regular victims of racial violence.

Muslim minorities and migrant workers from Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America are also subject to discrimination and live in "particularly challenging conditions" in many west European member states, according to the study. Inequalities range from "poor housing being provided to migrants and minorities, and segregation of certain groups in 'special education' schools, to employment agencies which were willing to accept employers' instructions not to send immigrant applicants for jobs."

Book on Housing Rights

Housing Rights and Human Rights sets out in one publication the range of international instruments which States have accepted guaranteeing housing rights to their citizens and others. It provides a valuable guide to understanding the origins and extent of contemporary human rights and housing rights instruments. The book examines the development and current status of housing rights as they are defined, monitored and implemented (or not) in line with various obligations of States, derived from the legal instruments of the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the European Union.

Housing Rights and Human Rights (ISBN 9075529449) by Dr. Padraic Kenna is published in 2005 by FEANTSA – the European Federation of National Associations Working with the Homeless in Brussels. It is available from FEANTSA from mary.fay@feantsa.org for 10 Euro including postage.

@ @ Surfing the Web @ @

The digital divide in Europe

According to a report recently released by Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities,

in the EU25, 85% of **students** (aged 16 or more in school or university) used the internet during the first quarter of 2004, as did 60% of employees, 40% of the unemployed and 13% of the retired,

compared to an EU25 average of 47% for individuals aged from 16 to 74. This divide by employment status is also found by educational level: only 25% of those with at most lower secondary education used the internet during the first quarter of 2004, while the proportion rose to 52% for those who had completed secondary education, and 77% for those with a tertiary education.

During the past decade, Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) have become widely available to the general public, in both accessibility and cost. However, gaps remain in the use of ICT amongst the EU population depending on factors such as their **age**, employment status and educational level, and the degree of urbanisation of the area where they live. This so-called digital divide has several origins: missing infrastructure or access; missing incentives to use ICTs; lack of the computer literacy or skills necessary to take part in the information society.

In all Member States for which data are available, there is a higher level of internet use among the higher educated than among the lower. The largest gaps were recorded in Portugal (70 percentage points), Slovenia (68 pp), Spain (61 pp), the United Kingdom (59 pp) and Italy (58 pp), while the smallest divides were observed in Lithuania (11 pp), Sweden (24 pp), Germany (25 pp), Denmark and Estonia (both 27 pp). Only in Sweden (70%), Denmark (64%), Finland (54%) and Germany (51%) did more than half of the lower educated use the

internet during the first quarter of 2004, while the proportion of the higher educated who used the internet fell below 50% only in Lithuania (38%) and Greece (48%).

In all Member States for which data are available, the highest proportion of internet use during the first quarter of 2004 was recorded for **students**. The highest ratios were registered in Finland (97%), Sweden and Denmark (both 96%), and the lowest in Greece (55%), Ireland (57%) and Italy (74%). Across the EU, employees generally registered the second highest proportion of internet use. The highest levels were observed in Sweden (86%), Denmark (83%), the Netherlands and Finland (both 82%), and the lowest in Greece (28%), Lithuania and Hungary (both 33%).

In nearly all Member States a lower proportion of the unemployed than employees used the internet in the first quarter of 2004. Internet use amongst the unemployed ranged from 8% in Lithuania and 10% in Latvia to 86% in Sweden and 76% in the Netherlands. In all Member States the lowest proportion of internet use was observed for the retired. In thirteen Member States less than 10% of the retired had used the internet, while only in the Netherlands (54%), Sweden (45%), Denmark (34%), and Luxembourg (32%) was the proportion more than a quarter. These gaps are consistent with those found by **age**, where the proportion of internet users among those aged 16 to 24 was three times higher than for those aged 55 to 74.

Miscellaneous Information

Child Help line International

Child Help line International is a global network of child help lines with 81 members in 71 countries. Child Protection is at the core of all telephone help lines for children and young people- covering a wide range of behaviours that from a child's perspective harms them in some way.

Telephone outreach services can link children to immediate rescue and safety; can provide solutions at the end of a phone and where necessary back up the voice of young people with direct interventions and advocacy.

CHI aims to respond to children in need of care and protection, throughout the world and to make their needs and feelings known to policy and decision makers nationally and internationally. CHI works actively at the international level with funding agencies, children's based networks, child protection agencies, corporate federations and telecommunication organisations to support national help lines as a mean for child protection.

CHI facilitates the sharing of information, experience and resources amongst child help lines. The guiding principle of CHI is to ensure that regional level

expertise is utilised and that each country develops its own unique help line model.

Child help lines around the world have been coming together both regionally and internationally since 1996, when they met for the first time in Venice, Italy. At the international consultation in 2001 in Pune, India, the need for a help line 'helpdesk' was discussed. This helpdesk was to provide support for existing help lines, but also to provide support to countries, especially economically developing countries, interested in initiating help lines in order to reach out to children with few or non existent child care services.

CHILDLINE India, led by Jeroo Billimoria agreed to take on the strategic planning and consensus building amongst the help lines. This led to the 2003 consultation held in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, attended by representatives from 49 help lines, where Child Help line International (CHI) was launched. The CHI secretariat is based in Amsterdam and is headed by Ms Jeroo Billimoria, who was made Executive Director in May 2004.

For more information, please go to: www.childhelplineinternational.org.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Conference on Children in Custody 2 December, London, UK

This is the second part of a series of practice conferences in London, UK, looking at children and the criminal justice. It will be composed of plenary sessions with keynote speakers, questions and debates. Breakout sessions to explore good practice and to discuss legal and human rights of children in custody will also take place. For more information:

<http://www.howardleague.org/events/Children%20in%20custody.htm>.

UNICEF 'Youth Voice' Road Show 3 December, United Kingdom

The 'Youth Voice' Road Shows are free local events intended to engage young people between the ages of 11 and 18 in international issues that affect children's rights. UNICEF thus hopes to inspire and empower them to act as young campaigners and fundraisers through a series of information and training workshops. For more information: www.unicef.org.uk/youthvoice.

International Conference "Making space – architecture and design for young children" 8-9 December 2005, Edinburgh, Scotland

The first day of the conference will offer delegates the chance to see buildings and spaces created for young children in Scotland. On the second day architects, academics and practitioners from all over the world will consider what makes the ideal space for young children, discuss how they have approached design and how they have involved children in the process. Delegates will also be able to view entries from 17 countries to the architecture and design for young children international award 2005. For more information: www.childrenscotland.org.uk/eur.

Final Conference - European Study on Population Mobility and Access to Services for Vulnerable Groups 9 December, Brussels, Belgium

Building Sustainable Urban Communities study is a European research project that has aimed to better understand the issues around population mobility and access to services for vulnerable groups in three large urban areas. Under the European URBACT programme, Berlin, Brussels and London have worked together on a joint reflection on the main issues around residential mobility in large

urban areas looking at how changing local needs placed new challenges to local authority services, which need to be responsive and adapt to a diversifying local population basis. The focus of the study has been on vulnerable groups and deprived neighbourhoods. The final conference of this study will take place in Brussels on 9 December 2005. For more information: www.gle.co.uk.

International Children's Day of Broadcasting 11 December

This year's theme "Sport for Development and Peace". Premised on the idea that sport is a powerful tool for development and peace, broadcasters around the world are asked to highlight sports stories on 11 December. By allowing children to take part in the production and presentation of these stories, the organisers hope to continue ICDB's mission of increasing children's involvement in news media. For more information: www.unicef.org/videoaudio/video_icdb.html.

Capacity building seminar on "EU-Information management to strengthen advocacy of NGOs working for excluded children and youth" 15-16 December, Brussels, Belgium

This seminar is organised by the European Foundation for Street Children Worldwide. Objectives of the seminar: the conveyance of application-oriented knowledge for effective use of relevant EU-information sources, systems and techniques against the background of optimal management of communications to strengthen advocacy work and targeted campaigning of social NGOs working for excluded children and youth with the aim to empower the achievement of their organisational goals. The seminar addresses participants mainly from social NGOs from Europe and beyond working for children's and youth protection with a particular interest in European information strategies. Ulrike Wisser, Board member of Eurochild, will be one of the speakers during the Seminar. For more information: <http://www.enscw.org>.

European Follow-up Conference "Integrated Children and Youth Policies in Europe – Needs for disadvantaged neighbourhoods" 30 January – 1 February 2006 Strasbourg, France

This conference is organised jointly by the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSJFJ), the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe, and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe. In the Hemicycle of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, more than 30 cities from all over Europe will present their practices and experiences. Well renowned youth researchers, foundations, NGOs and relevant European networks will also present their reflections and requirements in connection with the European initiative of the "Berlin Process". For more information: info@bmsfjservice.bund.de.

Course on Childhood
1 January – 31 October 2006, UK

What does it mean to be a child in today's world? Do popular images of innocence and dependence match the reality of children's lives? How do modern technologies alter their play and their identities? What role do children themselves play in shaping their childhood? These questions and many others are the starting point for this course, which covers the age range 0 to 18 years. For more information:

www3.open.ac.uk/courses/bin/p12.dll?C01U212.

41st session of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
9-27 January, Geneva, Switzerland

Les rapports des pays suivants seront examinés: Azerbaïdjan, Ghana, Hongrie, Lituanie, Liechtenstein, Ile Maurice, Perou, Arabie Saoudite, Thaïlande. De plus, le Comité examinera les rapports d'Andorre, de l'Italie, du Kazakhstan et du Maroc sur la mise en pratique du Protocole facultatif sur la vente d'enfants. Ainsi que les rapports d'Andorre, du Bangladesh, de l'Italie et de la Suisse sur la mise en pratique du Protocole facultatif sur les enfants et les conflits armés. For more information:

<http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/crcs41.htm>.

Please note that this list only mentions events to happen within the upcoming two months and does not pretend to be exhaustive!

Sharing Information

Do you wish to share information, announce something or make a contribution to the e-News Bulletin?

Please send it to: info@eurochild.org.

Eurochild



Eurochild AISBL is a network of organisations and individuals, who are working in and across Europe to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of children and young people. Our work is based on the principles enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. At the heart of our activities lies the Child Poverty Programme.

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