

## e-News Bulletin February 2007

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## News from Eurochild

### Upcoming events

#### Membership Exchange Seminar on Positive Parenting 26-27 April 2007, Belfast, Northern Ireland

Eurochild<sup>AISBL</sup> and Children in Northern Ireland are organising a Members' Exchange Seminar focusing on parenting support in Belfast on 26-27 April 2007.

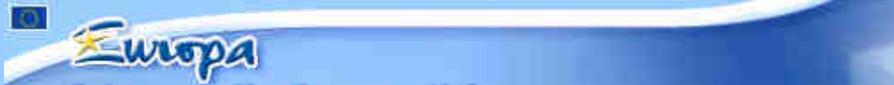
Members' Exchange Seminars aim to give members greater insight into each others' way of working and deepen their knowledge and exchange of ideas on specific aspect of tackling child poverty and social exclusion. They also provide an important opportunity for them to engage with policy-makers and opinion-formers in the host country to support national agendas for children and young people. It is anticipated that Members' Exchange Seminars will

become a regular feature of Eurochild's work programme.

The theme of parenting support was selected following a call to members to give feedback on their areas of specific interest. Several members expressed an interest to explore ways in which policies to promote positive parenting can contribute towards the fight against child poverty and social exclusion - a core element of Eurochild's work.

Registration for this seminar is now closed and Eurochild is very happy about the interest which has been shown into this event, with about 35 registered participants! If you are interested in other events organised by Eurochild, please visit our website at: <http://www.eurochild.org/index.php?id=78>. For past events: <http://www.eurochild.org/index.php?id=28>.

## News from the European Institutions



### Joint report on social protection and social inclusion 2007

At the end of February, the European Commission released the 2007 'Joint Report on Social Protection and Inclusion' which highlights priorities and progress made in the areas of social inclusion, pensions, healthcare and long-term care – but also underlines that big challenges remain.

EU member states are stepping up efforts to tackle child poverty, promote 'active inclusion' of the most disadvantaged in society, ensure adequate and sustainable pensions as well as equal access to health and long-term care. But as the [European Anti Poverty Network](#) (EAPN) noticed in its letter to the [Employment and Social Affairs Council](#) taking place this week, "6 years after the introduction of the Lisbon Strategy, EAPN members are highlighting a reality of increasing levels and intensity of poverty and inequality, erosion of right-based approaches and declining confidence in the ability of our political institutions to safeguard social cohesion".

The EU's system of common objectives, assessment and reporting for social protection and inclusion – the 'open method of coordination' – operates in parallel with the strategy for growth and jobs. Once adopted by the Council, the report will be presented to EU leaders together with the Joint Report on Employment and will feed into the conclusions of the Spring Summit on 8-9 March as the social contribution to the jobs and growth package.

For more information:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/07/66&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN>

Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion (Commission proposal):

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/social\\_inclusion/news\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_inclusion/news_en.htm)

Joint Commission/Council Report:

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/social\\_inclusion/jrep\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_inclusion/jrep_en.htm)

For EAPN's letter to the Council:

[http://www.eapn.org/code/en/news\\_detail.asp?pk\\_id\\_content=2398](http://www.eapn.org/code/en/news_detail.asp?pk_id_content=2398)

**For Eurochild's analysis of the National Action Plans Against Poverty and Social Exclusion:**

[http://www.eurochild.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/files/NAPs\\_report\\_2006\\_final.pdf](http://www.eurochild.org/fileadmin/user_upload/files/NAPs_report_2006_final.pdf)

### Addressing demographic change

In her opening speech of the conference "Regions for Economic Change: Regional policy responses to demographic challenges" in Brussels on 25 January, regional policy Commissioner, Danuta Hübner, noted that the new cohesion policy of the European Union has a central role to play in supporting the efforts of European regions to adapt to demographic change. She emphasized that the EU's cohesion policy is well adapted to many of the challenges of demographic change because it allows regions to respond to population change through policies which are tailored to their specific needs.

Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Commissioner Vladimír Špidla, speaking on the second day of the conference, backed these comments, underlining the importance of the European Social Fund in helping to overcome the effects of a shrinking workforce.

With structural funds' increasing focus on the Lisbon "growth and jobs" objectives (and the requirement upon member states to earmark at least 60% of funds according to these priorities), the risk is high for cohesion policy to be narrowed down to a competitiveness strategy. While these acknowledgments are welcome, social NGOs will monitor closely how poverty and social exclusion are effectively tackled in the 2007-2013 structural funds framework.

More information on regional policy:

[http://ec.europa.eu/comm/regional\\_policy/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/regional_policy/index_en.htm)

More information about the conference:

[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/conferences/demographicchallenge\\_jan07/home\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/demographicchallenge_jan07/home_en.cfm)

More information about the initiative "Regions for economic change":

[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/cooperation/international/ecochange/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/international/ecochange/index_en.cfm)

### Social Realities Stocktaking in the EU

The European Commission has initiated a public consultation to take stock of present social realities and trends in European societies. The aim of this "social stocktaking exercise" is to reach out to different constituencies to discuss what forms Europe's social reality. This exercise will be based on a consultation paper, a Eurobarometer poll and a special website. The Commission is in "listening mode", not testing policy. Insofar as appropriate, results of this exercise may be fed into forthcoming policy initiatives, e.g. the review of the Commission's Social Agenda later this year.

As a starting point for the consultations, the Commission presented an interim report to the European Council on 8 and 9 March 2007, backed up by a consultation paper prepared by the Bureau of European Policy Advisers (BEPA) of the Commission. The BEPA analysis, "Europe's Social Reality" whose authors are Roger Liddle and Frederic Lerais, does raise a broad range of issues in an interesting way which the College trust will be helpful in stimulating the kind of thoughtful wide-ranging debate that they would now like to ensue.

For more information on the stocktaking exercise:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/citizens\\_agenda/social\\_reality\\_stocktaking/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/citizens_agenda/social_reality_stocktaking/index_en.htm)

For the Eurobarometer poll:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm)

### Initiatives to protect children in the EU

An international meeting, attended by European Commission officials, several First Ladies and other VIPs, on the issue of missing, abducted and sexually exploited children, took place on 15 January 2007 in Paris. As protecting children's rights is one of the priorities of the European Commission, this meeting was hoped to help keep the topic at the forefront of the European agenda and move forward the implementation of the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, adopted by the Commission on 4 July 2006.

### A free phone number for missing children

On this occasion, **116 000** was launched as a single **telephone number for reporting missing children in the EU**. Calling 116 000 will be free of charge, and the number should be operational throughout Europe by the summer of 2007. Citizens will know that they can dial a single number anywhere in the Union to report a missing child. It will be up to the individual member state government to select an association or authority to manage this service.

Other common Europe-wide telephone services of social value starting with 116 may soon be reserved following this [decision](#). These freephone numbers and the services they provide will benefit citizens by helping those in difficulty, or by contributing to their well-being or safety. A public consultation will be launched in March to identify social services that may benefit from 116 numbers.

During the Paris meeting, Justice and Security Commissioner Franco Frattini also urged credit card companies to follow the example of Visa Europe which has introduced digital protection measures that make it "virtually impossible" for customers to buy paedophile material on the internet. He also said that EU states should adopt a **French system for finding missing children**. The French scheme (pioneered in the US) sees police send e-mails and SMS to ordinary people within a 15 km radius of a missing child alert, containing a description and

urging vigilance, with the zone widened to 30km and further as time goes on.

### Safer Internet Day

**Safer Internet Day (SID)** celebrated for the fourth time on 6 February 2007, brought together a network of 100 organisations in over 40 countries around the globe. Across the 27 EU member states conferences and campaigns showcased already existing safer internet activities of the private and public sector, from filtering technologies to media literacy programmes. The purpose of SID is to raise awareness of safety and security issues on the internet, such as child safety and mobile phones, in particular at schools, among parents and teachers.

### Protection of minors using mobile phones

Leading European mobile operators signed an agreement in Brussels on 6 February on how to **protect minors using mobile phones**. This agreement, brokered by the European Commission, responds to the findings of the Commission's recent public consultation on child safety and mobile phones. In the agreement, mobile operators undertake to develop self-regulatory codes by February 2008. Following Mrs Reding's initiative, leading mobile operators will safeguard children by joining a European Framework on Safer Mobile Use by Younger Teenagers and Children.

For more information on the Safer Internet Day and the framework agreement on "Safer Mobile Use by Younger Teenagers and Children":  
<http://europa.eu.int/saferinternet>  
or: [www.saferinternet.org](http://www.saferinternet.org)

### Parents' cross-border abduction of children

The European Commission and the German EU Presidency have been urged to tackle the growing problem of **cross-border abduction of children by parents from different member states**. A report, initiated by UK conservative member of the European Parliament Edward McMillan-Scott and published on 6 February 2007, calls for "*action to deal with the rising number of mums and dads abducting their children, denying...young people across Europe access to both parents*".

Indeed MEPs are stating that high numbers of children are taken to another EU country by one of their parents following a separation every year. A report by international law firm Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer and the [European Citizen Action Service](#) found that a parent who abducted a child to certain EU member states appeared to obtain an advantageous legal position, due to the fact that there was no automatic and immediate decision by courts to return a child to his or her home state.

### Sale of violent video games to children

Commissioner Franco Frattini told journalists in January, that the European Commission would file

new and stricter rules governing the **sale of video games to children under 16** before this year's summer break. He urged European ministers meeting in Dresden to agree "to share best practices" on curbing the sale of such games to children. The plan is to introduce a list of common sanctions against retailers selling violent video games to children while leaving it to member states to identify such games.

The industry currently operates a self-regulated ratings system for video and computer games, based on the 2003 Pan European Game Information. But retailers in most EU countries are not legally obliged to restrict the sale of adult classified products. Moreover, there are huge differences among the member states on how they judge unacceptable material.

### **A healthy diet for children**

In the framework of its proposed **reform of the EU fruit and vegetable market**, the European Commission would like to increase the EU co-financing rate of fruit and vegetable promotion to 60% when the activities target school-age children and adolescents. It also recommends that farmers' 100% EU co-financed market withdrawals of the perishable foods that are not selling in sufficient quantities, should be distributed free to charitable organisations, schools, other public-education institutions and children's holiday camps.

### **European Forum for the Rights of the Child**

The **European Forum for the Rights of the Child**, to be launched during the first half of 2007, will serve as a lasting instrument for joint effort and discussion on these and other issues concerning children. Its task will be to broaden and fine-tune the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child. The Forum will bring together representatives from the member states and NGOs, national mediators for children's rights and children themselves, making it the ideal arena for such discussions.

Child rights NGOs\* have taken action on the planned European Forum, to be hosted by the German Presidency on 4 June 2007. They have sent a joint letter to Commissioner Frattini on 16 February, on the follow up and implementation of the Commission Communication "Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child" of July 2006. In the letter they urge the Commission to "*consult widely in advance with all stakeholders, including Member States, EU institutions, UN agencies, and civil society and children, on all aspects of the Forum*". They emphasise the need to take a holistic approach to children's rights and to mainstream children's rights, based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, in all areas of the EC's activities, as is outlined in the Communication.

[sources: [EurActiv](#), [EU Observer](#), [European Commission Press Releases](#)]

\*The **NGO Action Group on the EU's Child Rights Strategy** represents several hundred NGOs promoting children's rights inside and outside the EU. It currently includes: Euronet, Eurochild, Save the Children, European Foundation for Street Children Worldwide, SOS Kinderdorf International, Terre des Hommes, World Vision and Plan International, but is open to all other child rights NGOs willing to contribute to its work.

For more information:

<http://www.eurochild.org/index.php?id=113>

### **European school partnerships increasing**

An increasing number of European schools are taking part in [the Commission's eTwinning initiative](#), which promotes the creation of international 'virtual' school partnerships over the internet. These partnerships aim to encourage greater use of computers for communicating between schools and thus promote intercultural dialogue.

Launched in 2005, the scheme does not provide any financing for the participating schools, but offers free access to the eTwinning portal, which helps schools to find partners across the continent. The initiative saw the number of participating schools double in 2006, from 4% to more than 8%.

The eTwinning action is part of the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013 and leaves schools free to decide on the type, subject and length of their co-operation. Annually, the Commission awards prizes to the best examples of partnerships and projects.

For more information: [www.etwinning.net](http://www.etwinning.net)

### **Youth demands for Tomorrow's Europe: Education, Employment & Environment**

Addressing the increased insecurity and lack of social justice and democracy, especially concerning jobs and education, and climate change will be the main youth demands when presenting their expectations to the next European Council.

These have been the main conclusions of the Youth Summit kick-off meeting organised by the European Commission in partnership with the European Youth Forum on 18-20 January. This three-day event has been organised as a first step to the Youth Summit "Your Europe – Your Future", which will take place in Rome on 24-25 March, in the framework of the celebrations of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome and which results will be presented to the European summit in Berlin taking place in parallel.

This kick-off meeting has set a basis for national debates to be organised in the different EU member states prior to the Youth Summit in Rome. While celebrating the European integration, the Youth Summit will be a moment to look ahead at the

challenges for the next 50 years, which will define the larger parts of the lives of the young people of today.

These are the six axis of these demands, as concluded at the kick-off meeting:

- Future of the European Treaty
- Social and economic model
- Sustainable Development
- EU in a globalising world
- Democracy and civil society
- Youth and Education

For more information on the youth summit: [http://europa.eu/50/across\\_europe/070324\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/50/across_europe/070324_en.htm) or: <http://www.youthforum.org/youthsummit.htm>

For information on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaty of Rome: [http://europa.eu/50/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/50/index_en.htm)

### Commission staff visit their old schools

On 22 January, German members of staff at the European Commission have visited their old schools and had discussions with the pupils about Europe. The aim of the "EU Project Day", initiated by the federal government, is to spark pupils' interest in the European Union and raise their awareness of European politics. The European Commission is taking part for the first time in this kind of initiative involving its own staff and hopes that this will also be done in other member states.

More than 450 German members of staff of the European Commission, together with members of the federal government, the German Bundestag and the European Parliament, will visit German schools and have discussions with the pupils about Europe. The German Chancellor Angela Merkel herself will visit a school and talk to the pupils about European integration.

The EU Project Day is one of a large number of activities instigated by the federal government during Germany's Presidency of the EU in the first half of 2007. The younger generation is one of the main target groups for such awareness raising events.

For more information: [http://www.bpb.de/themen/7WGKPC,0,0,EUProjekt\\_ag.html](http://www.bpb.de/themen/7WGKPC,0,0,EUProjekt_ag.html) or: [http://ec.europa.eu/deutschland/information/citizens\\_services/index\\_de.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/deutschland/information/citizens_services/index_de.htm)

### Higher education in Europe

#### Erasmus students striving for recognition

After the European Commission officially celebrated '20 years of Erasmus' in December 2006, the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) launched the Erasmus days around Europe on 18 January 2007.

On this occasion, the students urged the Commission to do more to improve the recognition of studies abroad, pointing to the fact that in 2006 only half of the Erasmus students received full recognition for their studies in their home countries. They also called on the Commission to provide better financial support for students, in particular for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and those from eastern and central Europe.

For more information: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/education/erasmus-students-striving-recognition/article-161104>

#### Discrimination against foreign students?

The European Commission has launched legal action against Austria and Belgium to clarify whether their national higher-education legislation treats foreign and national students equally and is compatible with the EU's legislation on free movement of students.

The Belgian case concerns the foreign student quota, introduced by the Parliament of the French-speaking community of Belgium, limiting the number of foreign students, mainly French, to 30% in a number of subjects.

The Austrian case is somewhat different. The country's legislation requires that the holders of secondary-education diplomas from other member states prove that they have met conditions governing access to higher education in their home country, before being able to enter an Austrian university. The conditions of access are therefore not the same for an Austrian and a foreign student.

For more information: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/education/austria-belgium-discriminate-foreign-students/article-161162>

### European Parliament

#### MEPs highlight fight against obesity

A huge majority of MEPs supported, in January 2007, a non-binding [own-initiative report](#) in response to the Commission's [Green Paper on Promoting healthy diets and physical activity](#). They backed the Commission's commitment to healthy eating and physical activity and call for obesity to be regarded as a political priority for the EU. For them, member states should ensure sufficient sports and physical activity facilities at school and local authorities should consider "*the promotion of a healthy & active lifestyle when planning the location of schools*".

The report recommends the conclusion of a 'gentlemen's agreement' between the Commission and the European media industries. This would lead to children's products in different media to carry information making them aware of the importance of practicing sport and of eating fruit and vegetables in order to remain healthy. The Commission is urged to launch 'sport at school' programmes in test

establishments and distribute children EU-branded sports bags with footwear, shorts and tee-shirts. The Commission is also urged to promote best practice in schools with regard to initiatives educating children about healthy eating and providing food based on high nutritional standards.

For the EP's report:

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sidesSearch/sipadeMapUrl.do?PROG=REPORT&SORT\\_ORDER=D&REF\\_A=A6-2006-0450&L=EN](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sidesSearch/sipadeMapUrl.do?PROG=REPORT&SORT_ORDER=D&REF_A=A6-2006-0450&L=EN)

Another report entitled "***Current situation and prospects for physical education in the EU***", by Professor Ken Hardman of the UK's University of Worcester, written for the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education, was presented in a public hearing on the role of sport in education in February 2007. The study addresses the European school curriculum physical education (PE) time-allocation, the status of PE, curriculum thematic aims and content, resources (material and human) and gender, disability and ethnic-minority issues.

According to Hardman, current national practices vary widely across the EU, with some member states paying more attention to sports than others. He also referred to large differences in the number and quality of sports facilities between schools in eastern and western European countries.

Presenting the Commission's upcoming White Paper on Sport and its approach to sport in education, Commissioner Jan Figel said that it would address the time allocated to PE in school curricula, the quality of education and ways to exchange best practice at EU level.

### Reforming the European Parliament

The European Parliament's Conference of Presidents (leaders of each of the political groups) unanimously agreed on 15 February 2007 to set up a working group to reform the Parliament. The working group will focus on making the work of the Parliament more efficient, increasing MEP attendance and making plenary sessions more lively and media-friendly. The group also intends to introduce an annual debate on Parliament's priorities and dispense with the practice of renewing senior positions in Parliament halfway through the legislature. For more information:

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress\\_page/008-3202-050-02-08-901-20070215IPR03201-19-02-2007-2007-false/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/008-3202-050-02-08-901-20070215IPR03201-19-02-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm)

### EP elections 2009 in the air

The next European elections will be held over several days from 11 to 13 June 2009. The European Parliament and public service broadcasters from across the EU are already preparing for coverage of the 2009 European elections, in an attempt to increase citizens' interest through a real televised election night.

European public broadcasters said the June 2004 elections lacked an EU touch and seemed more like a series of national elections. The national broadcasters are planning to make the election night on the 13<sup>th</sup> June an exciting televised event.

## European Council

### EU Fundamental Rights Agency - a step forward for Children's Rights?

The EU [Agency for Fundamental Rights](#) (FRA) was officially established in Vienna on 1 March 2007. Its objective is to provide the relevant institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the Union as well as the member states - when implementing Union law - with assistance and expertise relating to fundamental rights. The Agency will work in synergy with NGOs as well as with the Council of Europe.

Social NGOs have welcomed the creation of the new agency. The [European Children's Network](#) (EURONET) stated in its press release, that it is a sign the EU is taking seriously its role in protecting and promoting fundamental rights, including children's rights. They urge the new Agency to put particular emphasis on children's rights in its work programme including by collecting information on children's rights in Europe.

The [Platform of Social NGOs](#) still has some concerns regarding the Agency's future work and potential benefits for European citizens. It states that political leaders have adopted a weak mandate for the Agency, limiting its work in the fields of police and judicial cooperation to voluntary consultation. It is widely recognised that these are the areas where most human rights abuses happen in Europe. This is why social NGOs hope the Agency will be given the means to fulfil its watchdog role.

Social NGOs also welcomed the commitment to close cooperation of the Agency with the [Council of Europe](#) and civil society organisations. The mandate of the agency, which is clearly limited to the EU's distinct legal order, respects the pre-eminent role of the Council of Europe and its European Court of Human Rights in defending human rights in Europe. The regulations of the Agency recognise the work done by the Council of Europe, and there are detailed provisions which are intended to promote synergy and ensure complementarity. The Council of Europe has been invited to participate in the administration of the new agency. Negotiations on a cooperation agreement between the two organisations have already begun and should be completed before the summer. (see Info-Flash N° of 16/02/2007)

For more information about the FRA:

[http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/fsj/rights/fsj\\_rights\\_agency\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/fsj/rights/fsj_rights_agency_en.htm) or  
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/07/89&type=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

For the Press Release by Euronet:  
<http://www.europeanchildrensnetwork.org/euronet/esources/infodetail.asp?id=12661>

For the Press Release of the Social Platform:  
[http://www.socialplatform.org/code/en/pres\\_list.asp](http://www.socialplatform.org/code/en/pres_list.asp)

For the Press Release of the European Commission:  
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/266&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

For the Press Release of the Council of Europe:  
[http://www.coe.int/t/dc/press/NoteRedac2007/20070301\\_vienne\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dc/press/NoteRedac2007/20070301_vienne_en.asp)

### Education Council's "key messages"

EU Education Ministers, meeting in Brussels on 22 February, came to a consensus on the "key messages" in education and training to be sent to the European Council of 8-9 March. They also had a first exchange of views to identify the issues that required the attention of the Council after 2010.

Pointing out that education and training were prerequisites for a properly-functioning knowledge triangle (education - research - innovation), the Council stressed that they played a key role in boosting growth and jobs, and ensuring equal opportunities and social cohesion for all citizens. National reform programmes indicated that "*promising developments are either under way or being prepared in many member states*", ministers noted. They considered, however, that a greater effort must be made to pursue reform and to fully implement the Education and Training 2010 programme of work, mainly by strengthening the exchange of good practice between member states. They also noted that general education and lifelong learning strategies based on effectiveness and equity must be set in place by most member states.

For more information:  
[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3\\_applications/applications/newsRoom/loadBook.asp?BID=92&LANG=1&cmsid=357](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_applications/applications/newsRoom/loadBook.asp?BID=92&LANG=1&cmsid=357)

### The challenge of an ageing Europe

During its last meeting, the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council held an exchange of view on demographic change in Europe. Ministers looked mainly at the priorities, objectives, targets and working methods for monitoring and exchanging information between EU member states regarding demographic change.

The Council concluded that the EU can respond politically to the impacts of demographic change by means of the Lisbon agenda and the Open Method of Coordination in the field of social inclusion and social protection.

Ministers invited the Commission to continue to analyse demographic change and to make

suggestions for the exchange of good practices. Member States were invited to develop further the potential of an ageing population and to initiate broad discussions on national demographic developments.

Further information:  
[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/lsa/92911.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/lsa/92911.pdf)

## Presidency of the EU



### The German Presidency's youth agenda

2007 is the European Year of equal opportunities for all. This was reason for the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) to set focus on equal opportunities, social inclusion and participation of young people in European youth policy during the first half year 2007. Special emphasis lies on socially disadvantaged young people, especially young people with a migrational background.

During the German Presidency, the EU youth ministers will meet twice, in February and in May. They will deal with the implementation of the European Youth Pact and reflect on the youth policies in Europe over the next 10 years. Furthermore, the Presidency plans a **resolution on "Equal opportunities and social integration for all young people"** the Council of youth ministers is supposed to adopt at the meeting in May.

Since 1999 every EU presidency has organised a youth event and Germany is no exception. The **Youth Event of the German Presidency** will take place 13-16 April 2007 in Cologne. Invited are young people from 33 countries. The topic of the Youth Event is "**Equal opportunities and participation for all young people**". Participants will discuss different aspects of this topic and develop an action plan that will be handed over and discussed with the 27 EU general directors for youth and the European Commission on the last day of the event.

Besides, the BMFSFJ is going to organise an **expert conference on "Children and young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods - New strategies for cohesion!"** that will take place 26-28 June 2007 in Leipzig. The conference is supposed to contribute to a Europe-wide exchange of experience on the work with young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Different strategies for the integration of children and young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods will be discussed from a European perspective. The main objective of the conference is to develop common, Europe-wide action plans aiming at the improvement of integration.

For more information:  
<http://www.bmfsfj.de/ratspraesidentschaft/root.html>

### Plans for an EU history book

EU education ministers have debated the possibility of launching a common European history book as a model for textbooks used across the bloc's 27 member states. The German initiative is expected to be unveiled at the informal meeting of education ministers in Heidelberg on 1-2 March by German education minister Annette Schavan.

Before seeing the light of day, however, the idea has already sparked concerns about how dark and controversial historic events would be tackled.

The idea resembles a similar project already existing between France and Germany, involving a book called "Histoire Geschichte" written by ten historians, five from each country. The book for a large part focuses its modern history analysis on the development of the European Union.

However, already this version - bringing together only two countries - had exposed national differences, with room made for separate paragraphs in the French and German versions on communism and the US role in Europe.

EU education commissioner Jan Figel stated that he is in favour of the idea, adding that the tragedy of communism has only in recent months received the appropriate attention in the EU. Mr Figel indicated that European history should provide guidance for the debate on the EU's future.

[source: EU Observer]

### Committee of the Regions

#### CoR on Children's rights

The Committee of the Regions has voiced concerns that the proposed new EU strategy on children's

rights overlooks the crucial role played by local and regional authorities as frontline providers of children's services. The authorities should be "essential partners" in the initiative, said Irish member Maria Corrigan in a report which was unanimously approved by the EU consultative assembly at its plenary meeting in Brussels.

Ms Corrigan underlined that a wealth of crucial services for children, such as education, housing, healthcare and social welfare, are provided at the local and regional level. According to her, if the strategy is to be a success, it must lay a firm basis for an effective partnership with local and regional authorities and NGOs.

The report welcomes the European Commission's proposals in general, but underlines that the strategy should be backed by proper financial and human resources, as well as political commitment, to ensure that it transforms words into deeds. It must "commit to a set of minimum standards and include ambitious actions with clear targets and objectives," said Ms Corrigan.

The report, or opinion as it is known, backs the Commission's call for full implementation of the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, but voices disappointment about a lack of emphasis on the need for member states to urgently implement existing European and international commitments on children's rights.

For more information:

[http://www.cor.europa.eu/en/press/press\\_releases.htm](http://www.cor.europa.eu/en/press/press_releases.htm)

For more information on the European Commission's strategy on the rights of the child: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/06/266&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

## General European News

### Consultation on Commission Communication on Child Rights

The [Europe Group of the International Save the Children Alliance](#) has launched a consultation for children and young people about the European Commission Communication "[Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child](#)". They would like to support children and young people to say what they think about the Commission's plans and the paper, how they think it should be put into action and how they would like to participate in activities to make the European Commission's plan and ideas a reality. Save the Children has prepared a questionnaire. To help answering this questionnaire, [Save the Children](#) and [Plan International](#) have prepared a summary paper, which is written for children aged 13-17 years.

Save the Children will collect all the replies it receives to the questionnaire [by 26 March](#). They will be used to make a report based on children and young people's opinions that will be presented to the European Parliament. We hope that this report will then be used by the European Parliament when it prepares its opinion on "Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child" in April/May 2007.

For more information:

[http://www.savethechildren.net/alliance/where\\_we\\_work/europegrp\\_haveyoursay.html](http://www.savethechildren.net/alliance/where_we_work/europegrp_haveyoursay.html)

### Childcare on the increase in Europe, say European Socialists

Socialist, Social Democratic and Labour Parties across Europe are pledging to improve pre-school childcare following the launch of the Party of

European Socialists campaign for universal pre-school childcare.

In Paris on 11 February, Ségolène Royal unveiled her 100 point Presidential program – including obligatory education for children aged three, and the setting up of a National Childcare Service which would give children and parents easier access to the full range of specialist and other services for children and families. In Ireland on 9 February the Leader of the Irish Labour Party Pat Rabbitte announced his five commitments for change – for the Irish elections due in May – including pre-school education for all children. In Austria, the program of the new coalition Government led by Social Democrat Alfred Gusenbauer includes clear proposals for the improvement of early childcare facilities with a nationwide educational plan for kindergartens. The plan includes early language learning to facilitate the integration of all children. It is also proposed to focus the last year of kindergarten on preparation for primary school. In the Netherlands, childcare is a key issue for the Dutch Labour Party (PvdA) who say that “Living together starts with playing together”. In the new government agreement the PvdA and its two coalition partners agreed to invest more money in improving the quality of childcare and making it cheaper for parents.

At the PES Congress in December 2006 Europe's Socialist, Social Democratic and Labour Parties unanimously adopted 10 principles for a New Social Europe – including universal childcare. The resolution stated “European countries should move towards childcare for all who want it.”

For more information:

<http://www.socialistgroup.eu/gpes/searchdisplay.do?id=24717&lg=en&targetsite=main&type=1>

### European project on young people

*Nocturnes* is a project which has the aim to produce a interdisciplinary documentary (photography, music, writing and sound). The project raises awareness on social and economic inequalities touching young people. The documentary will be created at night, due the name, using musical themes. The project will be conducted in partnership with music schools, cultural associations and musical European organisations.

For more information:

<http://www.socialplatform.org/module/FileLib/nocturne300120072.doc> or contact Carl Cordonnier at [photo.dailylife@wanadoo.fr](mailto:photo.dailylife@wanadoo.fr)

### Demand for more EU action in family law

An increasing number of EU citizens is establishing their residence in an EU member state different from that of their country of origin. It is therefore natural that, at an EU level, family law and inheritance law are gaining importance. EU citizens,

as showed by a recent [Eurobarometer](#) survey, are asking enhanced EU wide attention to ensure clarity and legal certainty about the nature of family law regulations such as divorce settlements, child custody dealings and inheritance.

According to the survey, 76% percent of the overall EU population expect the EU facilitate legislation for recognising civil status certificates (birth certificate, marriage certificate) in another member state. The same percentage expects the EU to take action with regard to adopting children from different member states. Two-thirds (67%) of the citizens of the European Union expect the EU to facilitate legislation in child custody dealings in another member state and another 63% expect the EU to facilitate inheritance in another member state.

52% of the EU25 population believe that people should be able to choose which country's divorce law should apply (the law of the country they currently live, or where they used to live, or that of their country of origin) and to choose in which country the divorce proceeding will take place. The majority support this in the new member states (55%) and in the EU15 (51%).

The overall plurality of respondents (38%) in the European Union believe that ensuring recognition of family law legal documents in any other member states should be the EU's priority.

38% of the overall EU population believe that the priority for EU action should be to establish standard formats for specific documents.

One in five (20%) people in the European Union think that enhancing mechanisms for translation of documents should be the priority.

For the full report:

[http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm)

### Social NGO's plan for social Europe

On the eve of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the EU and ahead of the Berlin declaration aimed at solving the Constitutional deadlock, social NGOs support the growing consensus amongst member states that the EU needs to put social concerns at the heart of the political agenda. To build on this momentum, the Platform of Social NGOs has addressed an open letter to all EU political leaders, meeting at the Spring Summit in March, to propose three very practical actions to reinforce social Europe.

First, the EU needs to **establish a “social policy scoreboard”**. That would help in assessing how Member States are implementing EU social legislation and how far they have delivered on key agreed targets. “Politicians have to take more seriously the political commitments they make at EU level and a scoreboard would help us to monitor this” stated Parent.

The second action proposed is to **mainstream social policy objectives throughout the EU's**

**policy-making** - and to give precedence to social objectives when they are in conflict with competition or internal market objectives. "The EU Treaties clearly put social and economic objectives on an equal footing, but the practice so far has been to subordinate social policies to the internal market" said Parent. 'We need to redress this balance.'

Thirdly, the EU should **adopt new strategic goals within a new Treaty that respond to the concerns of all people in Europe**. Globalisation, demographic change, increased poverty and global warming call for a shift of EU's political priorities: from "growth and jobs" to a truly social and sustainable development strategy.

In order to make these changes, it is necessary to build a dialogue between people and politicians. Civil society can act as a bridge between the citizens and the institutions. "Policy developed through genuine consultation with civil society would be more in tune with the hopes and fears of citizens," ended Parent.

To download the open letter:

<http://www.socialplatform.org/module/FileLib/07ENOpenStatement50thanniversaryEU.pdf>

The Social Platform also issued a statement on the period of reflection which provides a detailed analysis of what provisions social NGOs support in the constitutional treaty:

<http://www.socialplatform.org/module/FileLib/06-05-15ENResolutionperiodofreflection.pdf>

### Member states call for social Europe

A group of nine EU member states have issued an open declaration calling for more promotion of social Europe, asking that the issue is raised at the EU leaders' summit on 8-9 March 2007. France, Italy, Spain, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Luxembourg, Hungary, Belgium and Greece have all signed up to a two-page long declaration in which they argue that the

27-country bloc should be more than just an internal market. Calling their statement, which has been sent to all member states, "enhancing social Europe" the currently nine-strong group want to use the ongoing negotiations on the EU constitution as a springboard for their ideas.

The call for more social Europe goes to the heart of a debate in Europe about the extent to which the bloc should adapt to the force of globalisation and the extent to which it should set certain social, environmental and work standards, which detractors say could hamper growth and competitiveness.

[source: EU Observer]

### European Women's Lobby Petition "Advancing Equality between Women and Men through the Provision of Care Services in the European Union!"

The European Women's Lobby urges decision-makers at all levels to take immediate action for:

- The achievement of the childcare targets adopted during the Barcelona Council (to provide childcare by 2010 to at least 90% of children between 3 years old and the mandatory school age and at least 33% of children under 3 years of age);
- Universal and affordable provision of care services for older, disabled and other dependents, including setting European targets to achieve this goal;
- Strengthening of EU legislation on the reconciliation of work and private life for women and men including maternity, paternity and parental leave.

The petition is available for signing until International Women's Day 8<sup>th</sup> March 2007 on:

[http://www.womenlobby.org/site/form\\_3.asp](http://www.womenlobby.org/site/form_3.asp)

## News from European States

### SERBIA

#### Poor and Excluded Children in Serbia

Despite the important steps that have been taken to improve the status of children in Serbia since the late 1990s, there are still over 300,000 children today who are living in poverty or are at risk of poverty according to a UNICEF report released in February 2007. The State of Children in Serbia 2006 Report – Poor and excluded children, produced jointly by the Republic Statistical Office in Serbia, the Council for Child Rights of the Republic of Serbia and UNICEF Belgrade Office, is based on information and statistics from the unpublished Research on Family Beliefs and Care Practices and Survey on Child Poverty, and includes the most

recent indicators and data from the 2006 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS).

For more information:

<http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=12517> or: [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)

### UK

#### UK accused of failing children

The UK has been accused of failing its children, as it comes bottom of a league table for child well-being across 21 industrialised countries. UNICEF looked at 40 indicators from the years 2000-2003 including poverty, peer and family relationships, and health. One of the report's authors told the BBC that under-investment and a "dog eat dog" attitude in society were to blame for Britain's poor performance. The

government says its policies have helped to improve child welfare.

For the full article on BBC News:  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/uk\\_news/6359363.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/uk_news/6359363.stm)

For the UNICEF Innocenti Report Card on Child well being in rich countries: <http://www.unicef-icdc.org/cgi-bin/unicef/Lunga.sql?ProductID=445>

### Jailing children a 'national scandal'

Locking up teenage offenders is largely a waste of money with only a small proportion of the 3,350 currently held in the UK needing to be imprisoned to protect the public, according to a leading figure on the government's own Youth Justice Board (YJB). Jon Fayle, who until his resignation in November 2006 was officially responsible for cutting the number of children in custody, blamed the political climate for the number held in England and Wales.

Mr Fayle says not only that ministers failed to explicitly endorse the YJB's official target of reducing the number of under-18s being held by 10%, but also that some of the YJB's own officers lacked an appetite for radical action.

For the full article in The Guardian:  
[http://www.guardian.co.uk/prisons/story/0,,2012479,00.html#article\\_continue](http://www.guardian.co.uk/prisons/story/0,,2012479,00.html#article_continue)

### Campaign to protect child victims of trafficking

ECPAT UK and World Vision UK have joined forces to launch a campaign in 2007, which will focus efforts around three key actions to protect child victims of trafficking.

The campaign will call on the British Government to:

- Withdraw its Reservation to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) on immigration and nationality.

- Ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Actions Against Trafficking in Human Beings.
- Appoint an independent Child Trafficking Rapporteur for the UK.

ECPAT UK and World Vision UK hope that other organisations will join with them to support this campaign.

For more information: Chris Beddoe (ECPAT UK Director): [c.beddoe@ecpat.org.uk](mailto:c.beddoe@ecpat.org.uk) or on [www.ecpat.org.uk](http://www.ecpat.org.uk).

### Towards Greater Understanding - Meeting the needs of Muslim pupils in state schools

The Muslim Council of Britain has launched a report with guidelines for schools in attempt to bridge the cultural gap with other pupils in state schools.

[Towards Greater Understanding: Meeting the needs of Muslim pupils in state schools](#), Information and Guidance for Schools, urges schools to allow Muslim girls to wear headscarves for all lessons to promote better integration of Muslim pupils into the state sector.

The document covers topics from dress codes to halal meat and collective worship. It says schools should allow girls to wear the hijab - headscarf - and full-length skirts leaving only their hands and face uncovered. However, it stops short of endorsing the niqab, which covers the whole face - while reminding schools that Department for Education advice says no pupil should be disciplined for wearing clothes that adhere to a cultural or religious dress code. Pupils growing a beard should also be respected.

It also calls on all schools to consider lessons in Islamic civilisation's contribution to the history of Europe to help pupils feel their culture is valued.

For more information:  
<http://www.crin.org/resources/infodetail.asp?id=12594>

## United Nations News

### UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

#### 44<sup>th</sup> Session closed

The 44<sup>th</sup> session of the [Committee on the Rights of the Child](#) closed on 2 February, after a three-week meeting which started on Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> January. During this session, the Committee among others examined reports on the status of implementation of the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) from several countries (no EU members this time). The Committee also considered reports on the implementation of the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (OPSC) and the Optional Protocol on the

involvement of children in armed conflict (OPAC). The [NGO Group for the Convention of the Rights of the Child](#) has produced summaries of the Committee sessions for each country.

The [Committee's next session](#) will be held from 15 May to 2 June 2007 at the Palais Wilson in Geneva. Scheduled for consideration is among others the report of EU member Slovak Republic. Under the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the reports of Guatemala, Monaco, Norway and Sweden are scheduled for consideration.

### General Comment on Children's Rights in Juvenile Justice

The [Committee on the Rights of the Child](#) has published its General Comment number 10 on "[Children's Rights in Juvenile Justice](#)". The Committee regularly adopts "[general comments](#)" based on specific articles, provisions and themes of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to assist the States parties in fulfilling their obligations under the Convention and to stimulate international organisations and specialised agencies in achieving the full realisation of the rights recognised in the Convention.

The Committee notes with appreciation the many efforts to establish an administration of juvenile justice in compliance with the CRC. However, it is also clear that many States parties still have a long way to go in achieving full compliance with the CRC, e.g. in the areas of procedural rights, the development and implementation of measures for dealing with children in conflict with the law without resorting to judicial proceedings, and the use of deprivation of liberty only as a measure of last resort.

To download General Comment N°10:  
[http://www.crin.org/docs/CRC\\_GeneralComment10.pdf](http://www.crin.org/docs/CRC_GeneralComment10.pdf)

For previous General Comments:  
<http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/comments.htm>

### **Eurochild member elected to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child**

Maria Herzog from the [Family, Child, Youth Priority Non-Profit Association](#) in Hungary, Eurochild member organisation, was elected member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on 21 February 2007.

The [eleventh meeting of members of the Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) was held in New York to elect members to the Committee which monitors the implementation of the UN CRC. The new members will replace the nine current members whose terms expire on 28 February 2007. In four rounds of voting, five of the Committee's members were re-elected, and four new members were elected. Their terms will all start on 1 March 2007.

The [Committee on the Rights of the Child](#) is composed of 18 independent experts with recognised competence in the field of human rights. Members are elected for a term of four years by States parties in accordance with article 45 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Members serve in their personal capacity and may be re-elected if nominated.

For more information about the new members of the UN CRC Committee:  
<http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/SPmeeting.htm>

### **Montenegro joins Convention on the Rights of the Child**

Montenegro has become the 193<sup>rd</sup> State Party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Formerly part of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, the Republic of Montenegro held a referendum on full independence from the union on 21 May 2006. It was granted admission to the UN as the 192<sup>nd</sup> Member State by a vote of the General Assembly on 28 June 2006. The seat formerly occupied by Serbia and Montenegro passed to the Republic of Serbia.

For more information:  
<http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=12424&flag=news>

### **International Day against female genital mutilation**

The International Day of Zero Tolerance of Female Genital Mutilation is being celebrated on 6 February every year. It promotes the rights of women and children with the aim of eliminating all forms of Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). FGM/C refers to a number of practices which involve cutting away part or all of a girl's external genitalia. Mutilated/cut infants, girls and women face irreversible lifelong health risks, among other consequences. Estimates of the total number of women living today who have been subjected to FGM/C in Africa range between 100 and 130 million. Most of the girls and women who have undergone FGM/C live in 28 African countries. However, they are also increasingly being carried out in Europe, especially within immigrant communities.

A [study](#) released last June found that pregnant mothers are far more likely to experience serious complications, such as the need to have caesarean section to dangerously heavy bleeding after the birth. The death rates among babies at birth and immediately after is also much higher - in some cases by as much as 55%. For the study:  
<http://www.who.int/reproductive-health/fgm/>

For more information:  
[http://www.unicef.org/protection/index\\_genitalmutilation.html](http://www.unicef.org/protection/index_genitalmutilation.html)  
or: <http://www.hrea.org/feature-events/international-day-against-fgm.php>

Calling for stepped-up efforts against the traditional yet gruesome practice of female genital mutilation (FGM), the [United Nations Population Fund](#) has sounded the alarm against a new trend - parents using healthcare workers to perform cutting in the belief that any medical problems can be minimised.

In an appeal for the International Day Against FGM, UNFPA Executive Director Thoraya Ahmed Obaid voiced concerns about what she dubbed the "*medicalisation*" of the practice.

For more information:  
<http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=12467>

## Commission on the Status of Women

The Commission on the Status of Women is a functional commission of the [United Nations Economic and Social Council](#) (ECOSOC), dedicated exclusively to gender equality and advancement of women. Every year, representatives of member states gather to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and advancement of women worldwide.

The 51<sup>st</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women is taking place from 26<sup>th</sup> February to 9<sup>th</sup> March 2007. The theme for this year's session is "**The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child**". This is an important event as there is still too little progress and too little attention focused on realising the rights of women and girls to make key decisions regarding their sexual and reproductive lives. Gender-based violence is one of the greatest forms of discrimination against girls and women and is a major public health concern in its own right.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/Review/english/49sess.htm>

## UNICEF selection of children for Junior G8 2007

Every year, the "Group of Eight Nations" (G8) – including the UK, USA, Germany, France, Italy, Japan, Canada and Russia – meets to discuss key global issues and decide on common goals. In 2005 UNICEF decided to hold the first ever Children's Forum alongside the G8 meeting to give young people a chance to debate the issues being discussed by the G8 and come up with recommendations for the G8 leaders.

As part of preparations for the upcoming Junior 8 summit in Germany in June 2007, UNICEF committees in G8 countries are working with Morgan Stanley International Foundation and Partners to support the Junior 8 competition which will 8 young people from each country meet in Germany.

The competition will run from 15<sup>th</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> March. Teams work together to come up with their own ideas on how to tackle the key issues being discussed by the G8. They submit these ideas online through the J8 website. Competition deadline: 29<sup>th</sup> March 2007.

For more information: <http://www.j8summit.com/> or: [http://www.unicef.org/voy/takeaction/takeaction\\_367\\_5.html](http://www.unicef.org/voy/takeaction/takeaction_367_5.html)

## Further Reading

### UN CRC: New guide for NGOs

The [NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) announces the release of the Third Edition of the Guide for Non-Governmental Organisations Reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Guide provides up-to-date information on the procedures for the examination of reports submitted under the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) and its two Optional Protocols. Information is also provided on the submission of reports from NGOs to the Committee and their participation in the pre-session working group meeting. Suggestions for follow-up action by NGOs are also included. The Guide has been produced in English, French and Spanish. To download the guide: <http://www.crin.org/docs/Reporting%20Guide%2006%20English.pdf>

### An Overview of Child Well-Being in Rich Countries

The UNICEF *Innocenti* Research Centre in February released its Report Card No. 7: [Child Poverty in Perspective - An overview of child well-being in rich countries](#) which focuses on the well-being of children and young people in the world's advanced economies and provides the first comprehensive assessment. The report shows that among all of the 21 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries there

are improvements to be made and that no single OECD country leads in all six of the areas.

To download the report: [http://www.unicef-irc.org/presscentre/presskit/reportcard7/rc7\\_eng.pdf](http://www.unicef-irc.org/presscentre/presskit/reportcard7/rc7_eng.pdf)

### The rights of child victims and witnesses

The UNICEF *Innocenti* Research Centre has also published two other documents: the Background and Outcome document on a recent Expert Meeting on Transitional Justice and Children. The reports summarise research currently underway on transitional justice and children, documenting and analysing policies and emerging good practices and lessons learned on the protection of the rights of child victims and witnesses in Truth Commissions, the Ad Hoc Tribunals, the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the International Criminal Court, as well as in traditional justice mechanisms. For more information: <http://www.unicef-irc.org>

### Rights of children at risk and in care

The harmful effects of institutions on child development having been demonstrated, the aims are to prevent the institutionalisation of children and to reduce the number of children subject to such measures through the development of alternatives. This publication, while showing the importance of the issue and the necessity of dealing with it in a sensible and cautious way, also opens perspectives

for the future. Council of Europe Publishing, Author: Bragi Gudbrandson, Price: 12 € + 10% postage. To place an order directly: [http://book.coe.int/sysmodules/RBS\\_page/admin/re\\_direct.php?id=36&lang=EN&produit\\_aliasid=2154](http://book.coe.int/sysmodules/RBS_page/admin/re_direct.php?id=36&lang=EN&produit_aliasid=2154)

### Report on school violence in Spain

The Ombudsman of the Spanish People, in collaboration with UNICEF, has published the report: "School Violence: The Ill-Treatment between Fellows within Secondary Compulsory Education 1999-2006 ". This report examines, in a precise way and on a national scale, the coexistence in education schools, the repercussions which various types of violent conducts can have, as well as the main variables influencing the phenomenon of school violence. To read the report (in Spanish): [http://www.defensordelpueblo.es/documentacion/inf\\_ormesmonograficos/ViolenciaEscolar2006.pdf](http://www.defensordelpueblo.es/documentacion/inf_ormesmonograficos/ViolenciaEscolar2006.pdf)

### Report on men and changing families' roles

COFACE ([Confederation of Family Organisations in the EU](http://www.coface.eu)) has published a brochure presenting results of a European project and recommendations regarding the changing roles of men in families in Europe. According to the report, engineering real equality between men's and women's rights cannot stop short at the workplace and public sphere, however essential that may be. It must also extend to the private sphere where the family holds pride of place, failing which the existing gender inequalities will be perpetuated indefinitely. The brochure can be requested in Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Italian and Portuguese at COFACE: [coface@brutele.be](mailto:coface@brutele.be). For more information: <http://www.coface-eu.org/public/english/html/coface.html>

### Child trafficking in England

The children's organisation ECPAT UK has launched a report on child trafficking in England. Called "Missing Out", the report includes a summary of research findings across the North-East, the North-West and the Midlands. The report highlights the cases of 80 children known or suspected of being trafficked into the UK for sexual exploitation, labour exploitation and forced marriage. Twenty-two were under 16 years of age. More shocking is that 48 of these children have gone missing from social services care and have never been found. For more information: <http://www.ecpat.org.uk>

### Report on the living conditions of British children

A research elaborated by the organisation 'Shelter', analysing the gap between different home categories, as well as, the living conditions of British children has been published. The report "**Against the Odds: An investigation comparing the lives of children on either side of Britain's housing divide**" describes the poverty situation of one in seven children in the UK. It also studies how many children are suffering psychological, social, health

and educational problems caused by bad housing. To download the report: [http://www.crin.org/docs/shelter\\_against\\_odds.pdf](http://www.crin.org/docs/shelter_against_odds.pdf)

### Second Annual Report of ONED

The Second Annual Report of the *Observatoire National de l'Enfance en Danger (ONED)*, has been published. The report resumes a three chapter plan. The first is devoted to overall analyses of the French system of child protection and to a trend analysis of the place of associations which ensure a significant part of the protection measures of childhood. The second chapter is dedicated to the mission entrusted to the ONED on the consistency of the statistical data and the third chapter is devoted this year to the development of practices between educational action at home and placement. To download the report: [http://www.oijj.org/documental\\_ficha.php?rel=SI&cod=1462&pag=030200&pags=0&idioma=en](http://www.oijj.org/documental_ficha.php?rel=SI&cod=1462&pag=030200&pags=0&idioma=en)

### Fundamental Rights of Undocumented Migrants in Europe in 2006

In 2006, PICUM reported on the violations of human rights of undocumented migrants in Europe its monthly newsletter. The following report is an overview of some of the main issues that PICUM has identified concerning the fundamental rights of undocumented migrants in 2006. It is based upon issues that were highlighted in PICUM's newsletters throughout the past year, including the increasing numbers of deaths at EU borders, the various barriers undocumented migrants face in accessing health care services, the erosion of the right to fair working conditions, and the lack of protection for **undocumented children**. The report gives examples of measures that have resulted in a worsening of human rights standards for undocumented migrants in Europe and points out some of the different initiatives undertaken by EU member states and/or EU institutions that seem to move in this direction. To download the report: [www.picum.org](http://www.picum.org)

### Monitoring poverty and social exclusion

The New Policy Institute's latest annual indicators of poverty and social exclusion are now available on the website of the [Joseph Rowntree Foundation \(JRF\)](http://www.jrf.org.uk): <http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/1979.asp> (covering the UK) <http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/1980.asp> (covering Scotland)

A major focus of this year's report is **child poverty**. The study shows that the fall in child poverty is mainly due to reduced poverty risks for both working and workless families. The driving forces behind these reduced risks are tax credits and increases in out-of-work benefits for families with children. Shifting families from being workless to working has contributed to the reduction but is less important.

This supports the analysis in the JRF report published in July 2006 year: **'What will it take to end child poverty? Firing on all cylinders'** by Donald Hirsch  
<http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/0366.asp>

In summary, the evidence from both reports indicates that the government needs to tackle low pay and out-of-work benefit levels, as well as helping more parents into work.

For longer-term reductions in child poverty, addressing the gap between the attainment of children from higher and lower income households will be important. The report highlights a failure to improve outcomes for the quarter of 19-year-olds who do not reach a minimum educational standard - the group who have the highest risk of poverty in adult life.

The JRF is managing work on the links between education and poverty and will be publishing a number of studies on that theme in 2007. More details are available here: <http://tinyurl.com/ygepfh>

Publication of the NPI report coincided with the National Poverty Hearing, where faith leaders and other opinion formers met to hear directly from people living in poverty: <http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/news/NationalPovertyHearing2006>

New on the JRF's child poverty website: Child poverty figures broken down by constituency: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/child-poverty/regional.asp>

### **Discussion paper on services for young children - call for contributions**

Today, across Europe, there is widespread recognition of the need for services for young children and their families. International organisations, including the EU, different levels of government, social partners, NGOs and many parents call for services. But what services? On what principles and values should they be based? Is this a matter purely for member states at national and local or rather at EU level level? If so, what

action is needed? Is there a need for a European approach to services for young children? These questions are addressed in this discussion paper produced by [Children in Europe](#).

Children in Europe is a network of 11 national magazines that have joined together to produce a magazine published in 11 European countries and 10 European languages. It writes about services for young children and their families. This discussion paper, prepared by the Editorial Board of Children in Europe, is intended to stimulate a democratic dialogue about European policy and the need for a European approach to services for young children. Children in Europe would like to hear your views about this discussion paper. If you wish to respond to these questions in English visit:

[www.childrenineurope.org/discuss](http://www.childrenineurope.org/discuss)

Complete the questionnaire online by 30 June 2007. For more information, contact: Carolyn Roulstone: [croulstone@childreninScotland.org.uk](mailto:croulstone@childreninScotland.org.uk)

### **Human rights online academic journal – call for papers**

Founded in 2004, the [Essex Human Rights Review](#) is a post-graduate, online academic journal addressing contemporary human rights issues. It aims to build on the strengths of the internationally renowned [Essex Human Rights Centre](#), from which it was established, through an international and interdisciplinary approach to human rights theory and practice which embraces social, political, philosophical and legal studies. The Essex Human Rights Review is calling for papers on a rolling basis. Papers should address human rights topics from a broad range of disciplines, including law, humanities, sociology, anthropology, economics, and business. All submissions have to follow the EHRR style sheet, available on our website at <http://projects.essex.ac.uk/EHRR/styleSheet.asp>. Submissions should be sent to the Executive Editorial Team at [ehrr@essex.ac.uk](mailto:ehrr@essex.ac.uk).

The journal may be viewed at: [www.ehrr.org.uk](http://www.ehrr.org.uk).

For more information on the EHRR:

[http://www2.essex.ac.uk/human\\_rights\\_centre/](http://www2.essex.ac.uk/human_rights_centre/)

## **@ @ Surfing the web @ @**

### **Website for European Year of Equal Opportunities for All**

A new website for the 2007 European Year of equal opportunities for all is now online. It includes information on the themes and objectives of the Year, and a wealth of practical information on how the Year will be organised. For those who want to get involved, the site provides contact details of the National Implementing Bodies. These organisations can provide official endorsement for events and activities ('moral support') and the right to use the Year's logo. 2007 European Year website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/eyeq/index.cfm?cat\\_id=SPLASH](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/eyeq/index.cfm?cat_id=SPLASH)

### **Information on social security for citizens moving around Europe**

Maintaining social security rights across European-borders is a central concern of citizens who live and (or) work in a country other than their own. The European Year of Workers' Mobility 2006 culminated in the launch of the new EUlisses Web portal offering valuable and targeted information on social security pensions.

EUlisses (pronounced "Ulysses") stands for EU Links & Information on Social Security. Being one of the earliest, most well-known historical characters, Ulysses personifies the traveller in Europe.

EUlisses is a multilingual web portal structured to reflect life events, which gives easy access to EU and national information on the social security rights and obligations of citizens on the move in Europe and consolidates national and European information sources. The portal is currently in seven languages (English, French, German, Dutch, Italian, Greek and Spanish). During 2007, the portal will be extended to all the other Community languages.

To visit the portal: <http://ec.europa.eu/eulisses>

### **Website on meeting the costs of health care abroad**

More and more people receive health care in another European country to the one where they live or are insured, be it unplanned care during a holiday or work visit, or a trip made specifically to receive medical treatment. This new site informs citizens about the conditions for meeting the financial costs of health care abroad through their national social security or health systems.

The information provided is designed to be as concrete and complete as possible. It includes examples of reimbursement levels for health care costs abroad in different situations, with the aim of giving people a broad idea of their rights. It is nevertheless subject to confirmation and clarification by the relevant social security institution or national health system depending on the individual case. This complex situation reflects the shared responsibilities between the EU and Member

States, who have exclusive competence for defining, organising and financing their national health and social security systems.

For more information:

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/social\\_security\\_schemes/healthcare/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_security_schemes/healthcare/index_en.htm)

### **New website to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome**

On 5<sup>th</sup> January 2007 the European Commission launched a special website to mark the opening of the festivities surrounding the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome. With its interactive and multilingual interface, it highlights the benefits that European integration has brought to European citizens during the last 50 years, and aims to help re-engage them in shaping the future of the EU. The new website provides user-friendly information in 22 official EU languages. It is designed to serve as a reference point at the heart of the festivities, offering quick access to information on how, why and where Europe is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. The site will be constantly updated and will remain online for the duration of 2007. Visit: <http://europa.eu/50>

For more information on the Treaties of Rome, which laid the foundations of the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community, better known as the EEC and Euratom:

[http://europa.eu/scadplus/treaties/eec\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/scadplus/treaties/eec_en.htm)

The treaties themselves can be accessed at:

[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/treaties\\_founding.htm](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/treaties_founding.htm)

## **Upcoming Events**

### **Conference on unaccompanied minors in an enlarged EU 9-11 March, Florence, Italy**

The three-day conference will focus on reception structures, socio-legal protection measures, asylum procedures and future perspectives for unaccompanied minors in Europe. The presentation of the research outcomes of the project will serve as a starting point to discuss recommendations for the improvement of the situation of the unaccompanied minors in the EU. During the different sessions, methods to raise awareness of and to enhance the visibility of this vulnerable group of migrants will be discussed. The conference will be a venue for meeting colleagues from a variety of European countries and shall serve as a platform for discussion and exchange. It is organised by the Berlin Institute for Comparative Social Research (BIVS) (Research Centre). For more information: [www.emz-berlin.de](http://www.emz-berlin.de)

### **"Can I Play Out...?" Making residential streets fit for communities 12 March 2007, London, UK**

This London Play conference will explore the transformation of local streets into vibrant shared street spaces that are child friendly and welcoming to the community, known as "Homes Zones". It will be a celebration and evaluation of London Play's Home Zones for London three-year project, and a chance to examine how London residents and local authorities can continue to develop solutions for child-friendly schemes across the capital. There will be a Questions and Answers session with a panel of home zones experts, followed by an opportunity for networking and an exhibition showcase. Discussions will consider the development process, the importance of community participation, and the positive impact of Home Zones on community cohesion and road safety. The event will attract anyone interested in making London's streets more people-friendly, from the play sector, planning, transport, housing, community consultation,

landscape design, local and central government, and community development. For more information: Anna Gilmour +44 (0)20 7272 6759 or email [anna@londonplay.org.uk](mailto:anna@londonplay.org.uk) or [ute@londonplay.org.uk](mailto:ute@londonplay.org.uk)

**Conference on Tourism and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children  
15 March 2007, Madrid, Spain**

A one-day conference on Tourism and the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, organised by Intervida World Alliance (INWA) in collaboration with the International Organisation for Migration, the International Labour Organisation and UNICEF, will be held on 15 March to review progress and commitments since the Second World Congress against the commercial sexual exploitation of children, held in Yokohama in 2001. Objectives of the conference:

- To evaluate legal advances, prevention policies, and the international fight and impact over the past five years since the 2001 World Congress against the sexual exploitation of children in Yokohama.
- To evaluate and define the competencies of the public, private and civil sectors and their role in the eradication of this phenomenon.
- To design and draft a list of objectives which can be evaluated by the public, private and civil sectors in five years' time.
- To heighten social awareness of the seriousness of child sex tourism and raise awareness among different actors about its causes, consequences and nature.
- To create a working platform among the different parties involved who, following the conference, will coordinate efforts towards raising awareness of and eradicating child sex tourism and the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents.

For more information: [www.intervida.org](http://www.intervida.org)

**European conference: focus on children in migration from a European research and method perspective  
20-21 March 2007, Warsaw, Poland**

Save the Children Sweden, Separated Children in Europe Network and the European Network of Masters in Children's Rights are pleased to invite you to the European Conference 'Focus on Children in Migration', aiming to highlight some of the issues of concern listed above. The objectives are to create a meeting arena for researchers from Universities, NGOs and European Regional Bodies, in order to stimulate discussions on the latest research findings on various aspects of children in migration in Europe, from a child rights perspective. For more information: [www.redbarnet.dk](http://www.redbarnet.dk)

**European Safe Start Summit  
22 March, Bilbao, Spain**

The Summit will close a one-year campaign dedicated to the safety and health of young people

throughout Europe and will take place on 22nd March in Bilbao. It provides an opportunity to hear from professionals, practitioners and participants about what has been achieved during the campaign and the lessons learned to ensure that we protect the workforce of tomorrow by taking action today. It will be an unequalled opportunity to review the activities and events that took place throughout Europe during the campaign and an opportunity to present the winners of the Good Practice and Video Competitions with their awards.

For more information:

<http://ew2006.osha.europa.eu/europeansummit/>

**EU Youth Summit "Your Europe – Your Future"  
24-25 March 2007, Rome, Italy**

On 24-25 March 2007 more than 200 young people from the 27 Member States will gather in the Italian capital for the first ever EU Youth Summit to mark the anniversary of the signature of the Treaty of Rome in 1957. The Youth Summit will allow young people from across the continent to voice their views on today's Europe and to express their aspirations for the future. Their conclusions will be conveyed to the European leaders who will gather in Berlin that same week-end.

For more information: <http://50.europa.eu> or: <http://europa.eu/youth/>

**Conference on positive action  
23-24 April 2007 Rome, Italy**

The final annual conference of the Community Action Programme to combat discrimination will be held in Rome, Italy on 23-24 April 2007. Entitled "Equal opportunities for all: What role for positive action?" the conference will aim to facilitate the exchange of experience and knowledge on positive action and anti-discrimination issues. This conference will also explore the concept of positive action, place it in the context of the Racial Equality and the Employment Equality Directives and look at some of the actions that are already being undertaken to provide equal opportunities to everyone. Due to limited numbers, participation is by invitation only.

**International Conference "Happy and Healthy – emotional and physical wellbeing in children"  
7-9 June, Enniskillen, Northern Ireland**

Eurochild's member organisation NIPPA in Northern Ireland is organising an international conference on emotional and physical wellbeing of children on 7-9 June in Enniskillen. The keynote speaker will be Professor Eric Deering, Assistant Professor at the Department of Counselling, Developmental and Educational Psychology of the Lynch School of Education at Boston College. Seminars during the conference will be about: Education through Movement, Arts and Emotional Well Being, The Evolution of the Environment, Listening to Children

– Observation and Documentation that meets the needs of the child, Nutrition in Young Children, Physical and Emotional Well Being in 0-3 year olds and Providing a Movement Rich Curriculum and Environment Outdoors. For more information please contact [agm2007@nippa.org](mailto:agm2007@nippa.org) or go to [www.nippa.org](http://www.nippa.org).

### **International Conference on morning and afternoon activities of school age children 7-9 June 2007, Järvenpää, Finland**

The conference is directed towards organisers of morning and afternoon activities of school age children: counsellors, coordinators, planners, and those responsible for education and research and for others already involved with existing morning and afternoon activities. The theme of the

conference is Nature, Exercise and Cultural Education as a part of the child's comprehensive well-being.

The aims of the conference are:

- The development and advancement of young school age children with a special viewpoint towards Nature Culture and Exercise.
- The Finnish morning and afternoon activities – Presentation and observation of activities in an International frame of reference.
- To increase International dialogue and mutual cooperation.

English will be the official language of the conference. For more information [www.ensac.fi](http://www.ensac.fi)

## 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](mailto: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 CRC.

**If you would like to become a member of Eurochild AISBL, please visit our website [www.eurochild.org](http://www.eurochild.org).**

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