



**Brussels Office
Newsletter**
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Introduction

Welcome to the September issue of the Save the Children Brussels Office Newsletter which provides information on the activities of the Brussels office as well as on the latest EU policy developments on children's rights.

This Newsletter is written by Sophie Bassi (Information and Administration Officer), and Hans Lind (Policy Officer). The Newsletter is free and can be received by E-mail or by post. Articles can be reproduced provided the source is acknowledged.

Please distribute this newsletter widely within your organisation and let Sophie Bassi know if you would like to be placed on the mailing list on tel. + 32 2 512 7851, fax + 32 2 513 4903,

E-mail: savechildbru@skynet.be or on our website at: www.savethechildren.net

New staff at Save the Children Brussels

The office has recruited **Olivia Lind Haldorsson as new Head of Office**. She is well-known for many after having worked three years as Advocacy and Policy officer for us. Olivia will start her new contract in January 2006 as she is currently on maternity leave. Hans Lind will be acting Head of Office until 31 December 2005.

Mary Bermingham is also leaving to take up a new position in the European Commission. She has been replaced from 15th of September by **Sophie Bassi**, who previously has worked three years as Information officer for Hall Aitken in Brussels. Sophie's e-mail is savechildbru@skynet.be

Commission drafts a communication on Children's Rights

For many years Save the Children has called for a Commission Communication on the promotion and implementation of Children's Rights, both in EU's internal and external policies. After the June consultation with the civil society, DG Freedom, Justice and Security is now drafting the communication text. The draft will be shared with other DG's and in December a seminar is planned to be held at INNOCENTI Research centre where different stakeholders, including the civil society, will discuss the final draft. The communication is planned to be finalised by end of December.

A core group of NGOs have prepared a joint message on issues the Communication should be based on, principally:

- Having the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** as base
- Being a **visionary document** outlining the Commission's strategy to create a coherent strategy to integrate children's rights throughout the organisation;
- Positioning the Commission as **champions** on protecting children's rights, aiming at successfully reporting on World Fit for Children + 5 (2007)
- Including mechanisms for **civil society consultation** including **children's participation** in EU policy and programming
- Developing a **Programme for Action** on EC child right's policy which includes provisions for proper implementation including clear **objectives** for each DG, delineation of **resources**, a **timetable and benchmarks**; and **monitoring and evaluation**;
- Providing resources for ensuring effective implementation :
 - dedicated **child rights focal points** in each DG and programme staff in the EC delegations implementing Community aid;
 - a **Formal Inter-Service Group**, co-chaired by JLS and RELEX to ensure internal and external policy coherence;
 - child rights included in the **job descriptions** of relevant EC officials, both in the headquarters in Brussels as well as in the EC delegations;
 - child rights as a standing point on all external **political dialogue**;
 - the requirement that **policy documents and programming tools** acknowledge children's rights;
 - **reporting annually to the European Parliament** for a comprehensive evaluation of the Commission's progress in implementation of the Communication.

For more information contact Hans Lind at hans-savechildbru@skynet.be

News on EU development and humanitarian aid

The European Parliaments Committee on Development discussed the 26th of September a draft report by MEP Anders Wijkman, responding to the Commission's Communication on a joint European development policy – "The European Consensus". Save the Children has called for **an explicit focus on child poverty and children's rights to be included in the EU development policy, as well as for resources to be put in place for achieving results when mainstreaming children's rights.**

In October the Commission will launch a **Strategic Plan for Africa**, which will focus on an *"ambitious partnership Europe – Africa to promote the necessary infrastructures, which are a pre-condition for economic and social progress for the Continent."*

A new website has been launched by the Commission, providing information on EU and its development aid: www.europe-cares.org

The European Commission is preparing a **statement on its humanitarian policy**, which it intends to submit to the Council and the Parliament in Spring 2006.

Education for Children Affected by Armed Conflict

Today, over 100 million children in the world do not attend school. Half of all children denied education live in areas experiencing or recovering from armed conflict. These children and their communities would benefit most from good, regular education.

The International Save the Children Alliance is the world's largest independent movement for children, making improvements for children in over 110 countries will address this situation in a global project aiming at, by 2010 enable:

- Three million children affected by conflict to gain access to education.
- Five million children affected by conflict to benefit from higher quality education, emphasizing relevance, learning and participation.

Save the Children also aim to ensure that:

- Education is established as a recognized means for protecting and supporting children affected by conflict.
- The international community is mobilized to increase significantly the educational resources for children in countries affected by conflict.

As a result, we achieve a significant step towards the Millennium Development Goal no 2 of all children receiving primary education.

For more information, see

http://www.savethechildren.net/alliance/what_we_do/education/key_challenge.html or contact Hans Lind hans-savechildbru@skynet.be

UN Study on Violence

The United Nations Secretary General has appointed an Independent Expert, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, to lead a global study on Violence against Children. The Study, rooted in children's human rights to protection from all forms of violence, aims to promote action to prevent and eliminate violence against children at international, regional, national and local levels.

The Study is a UN-led collaboration, mandated by the General Assembly, to draw together existing research and relevant information about the forms, causes and impact of violence which affects children and young people (up to the age of 18 years). A major report will be published in 2006 and recommendations presented to the UN General Assembly.

During Prof. Pinheiro's recent visit in Brussels, he especially highlighted the importance and the lessons learned of children's and adolescent's participation, during the consultation process that has been held in 9 regions. The participation has been meaningful and free from tokenism.

-"States can not offer excuses for not involving children" – Prof. Pinheiro

Save the Children has been involved throughout the studies phases, primarily on ensuring a meaningful participation of children, but also on providing material on 3 topics to the study:

- Children in conflict with the law
- Physical and humiliating punishment
- Sexual abuse of girls and boys

For more information, see

<http://www.rb.se/eng/Programme/TheUNStudyonViolenceagainstChildren.htm> or contact Hans Lind hans-savechildbru@skynet.be

46 million in 2005 to help refugees and asylum-seekers

The EU will give euro 46 million in 2005 to help refugees and asylum-seekers on its territory. The United Kingdom and Germany will be the biggest beneficiaries of European Refugee Fund (ERF) as they host the largest numbers. Funding priorities include boosting reception capacity and streamlining asylum procedures. For 2005, the goal should be to improve the quality of asylum procedures. This should be done by handling claims through a single procedure, getting better information on countries of origin, building reception capacities and helping those who wish to return home to do so.

Particular attention should be given to the interests of children. Money will also be directed at 'resettlement schemes' in various member states, under which refugees are taken from countries struggling to cope with big influxes and resettled in the EU.

For Commission Decision (in French only), click on the following link:

http://www.eu.int/comm/justice_home/funding/refugee/doc/decision_c_2005_3506_fr.pdf

EC Proposal for a return directive

Save the Children is pleased to note the references to the **best interests of the child** in the new EC proposal for a return directive, but remain concerned that specific guidance should be developed by the Commission to assist Member States in interpreting this key principle, and mechanisms should be established for monitoring and evaluating implementation.

The EC proposal provides for common rules concerning return, removal, use of coercive measures, temporary custody and re-entry, claiming to take fully into account the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms of the persons concerned. Only if the third-country national concerned does not return voluntarily, Member States shall enforce the obligation to return by means of a removal order. The Proposal establishes a re-entry ban valid throughout the EU.

The proposal was presented as part of a package that includes non binding proposals on integrating EU immigrants and helping developing nations manage migration better. The package consists of:

- a draft directive on expulsion procedures
- a draft regulation to make migration statistics more reliable and comparable
- a communication on “regional protection”
- a communication on how integrate non EU nationals residing in the EU
- a communication to ensure coherence between migration and development policies

For further information see

<http://www.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/1079&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Comments from Save the Children on this proposal are available on:

https://www.savethechildren.net/alliance/where_we_work/europegrp_pubs.html

Call for proposals: RETURN programme

RETURN is the European Union funding program for preparatory actions in the area of return management. It aims at improving the management of return of illegal migrants by supporting and further developing the co-operation among the Member States, as well as by encouraging the co-operation with the countries of return. The Community funding allocated to the RETURN programme amounts to EUR 15.000.000 for the 25 Member States.

Projects must be presented by national, regional or local authorities of a Member State or by Non Governmental Organisations registered in one of the Member States, or International Organisations and Community Agencies.

The 2005 call for proposals is open; the post mark deadline for submission of the proposals is the **31st October 2005**.

For further information, please consult:

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/funding/return/funding_return_en.htm

Resolution on R&D for neglected diseases of the developing world

A resolution calling on the EU to give neglected diseases in developing countries a higher priority in its research programme was passed on the 8 September by the European Parliament.

The resolution calls for the pharmaceutical industry to be obliged, or offered incentives, to reinvest a percentage of its profits into neglected disease R&D. It recommends establishing a new global medical R&D treaty and incorporating technology transfer into development policies.

See <http://www.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade3?PUBREF=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A6-2005-0215+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&L=EN&LEVEL=4&NAV=S&LSTDOC=Y>

Save the Children Sweden - Profile

Save the Children Sweden's roots date back to the UK in 1919. A trade embargo imposed by the Allies on the enemy at the end of World War I caused starvation among 3 million children. From her garret in Cambridge, Eglantyne Jebb mounted a campaign against the blockade, hosting meetings, raising petitions and distributing pamphlets to have the embargo lifted and help sent to the needy. She railed against the suffering of innocent children – on both sides of the lines. On 19 May 1919 Jebb held a mass meeting at the Royal Albert Hall, an event that marked the birth of the first Save the Children organisation. She realised that society had to change if children's lives were to improve and was one of the first to coin the term "children's rights". Only a matter of months later, on 19 November 1919, Save the Children Sweden was founded.

Save the Children Sweden is a democratic non-governmental organisation without political or religious affiliation. 83,500 are members in Sweden across 269 local associations and the youth organisation. Close to 250,000 members, sponsors and donors support the work regularly. The head office is in Stockholm and the organisation also have 11 regional offices across Sweden and eight regional offices abroad.

Save the Children Sweden's work focuses primarily on children who live in the most difficult circumstances: those subjected to violence and abuse; children separated from, or receiving inadequate support from, their families; children who do not receive the education to which they are entitled; children in armed conflicts and emergencies; and children living in poverty.

The primary objectives are: that children are not subjected to discrimination, exploitation, violence or other forms of abuse; that children can make their opinions heard and exert

influence over their lives; and that children receive a secure and healthy upbringing and education that confers knowledge and self-esteem. Save the Children Sweden works to achieve lasting improvements for children living in difficult conditions. The work is founded on a child rights approach based on the basic principles that all children have equal worth and equal rights, that children and young people have a right to participate on their own terms, and that governments and policymakers have duties and responsibilities to safeguard children's rights.

The work is based on four approaches for achieving lasting progress.

1. Gathering information, listening to children and analyse their everyday reality.
2. Dispersing the knowledge and experience to those with influence over children's conditions.
3. Conducting advocacy work and lobbying decision-makers – from municipalities to the UN – to make children's rights a reality.
4. Building the capacity of partner organisations to make them better equipped to promote child rights and thereby produces lasting improvements in children's lives.

For more information on the work of Save the Children Sweden, contact info@rb.se or visit their web-site at <http://www.rb.se/eng/>

Publications

“Eliminating corporal punishment – the way forward to constructive child discipline” – a new publication from UNESCO (ISBN 92-3-103991-1). In more than 60 countries, beating children within the school system is permitted, even if research shows that this is contra productive and harmful. The publication proves the damage that corporal punishment leads to, and shows practical steps for more constructive and child friendly discipline practices.

New resources

New resource for child rights-based programming CRIN (The Child rights information network) has just launched a website on "Children and Rights-Based Approaches to Development Programming" containing key resources designed to support the work of child rights professionals, i.e., CRIN members, students and NGO staff looking for recent thinking and best practice in this area. The website contains selected resources relating to children and Rights-Based Programming. This includes basic texts, legal instruments, best practice documents, policy and advocacy documents, monitoring and reporting tools, training material and websites.

<http://www.crin.org/hrbap/>

Forthcoming Events

Early childhood development: linking new advances in research, theory and practice: seminar session

From 5 October to 12 October 2005, Salzburg, Austria

For further details, please visit the website: www.salzburgseminar.org

Email: cvanenburg@salzburgseminar.org

Healthy sexual attitudes: creating an environment to enable informed choices

19 October 2005, Dundee, Scotland

A children in Scotland one day conference in association with Cosla

Book online at www.childreninscotland.org.uk/hsa or ask a form to:

Radha Singh, Children in Scotland, Princes House, 5 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh EH2 4RG

Tel: +44 131 222 2438

e-mail: rsingh@childreninscotland.org.uk

Europe's role in Making Poverty History

25 October 2005, Leeds, UK

BOND is organising an international conference on this subject

Further details are available from Marco Serena, mserena@bond.org.uk,

Tel +44 20 7837 8344

www.bond.org.uk

The importance of infant mental health

23 November 2005, Edinburgh, Scotland

This conference is an opportunity to explore the importance of infant mental and well being and exchange practice.

Further details are available at www.childreninscotland.org.uk/

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International Interdisciplinary Conference on Children's Rights

18-19 May 2006 Ghent, Belgium,

The Belgian IAP research network on children's rights organises an international conference on children's rights.

The conference aims at evaluating the progress and achievements of the Convention on the Rights.

If you wish to attend the conference, please visit the conference website

http://www.law.ugent.be/pub/iuap/c_welcome.html

For any information, contact: Marie Delplace, Human Rights Centre University of Ghent
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XVII World Congress of the International Association of Youth and Family Judges and Magistrates

27 August – 1 September 2006, Belfast, Northern Ireland,

More detail - including full programme and registration details – are available on the website:

<http://www.youthandfamily2006.com/welcome.htm>