PRESS STATEMENT

14 December 2007           Brussels

EU Leaders sign first Treaty to include children’s rights

The European Children’s Network (EURONET), representing children’s rights NGOs from across Europe, welcomes the signing of the Reform “Lisbon” Treaty on 13 December by European leaders in Lisbon.

"The new Treaty is a significant step forward for the protection of the rights of the 100 million children living in the EU” said Mieke Schuurman, EURONET Secretary General on the signing of the Lisbon Treaty, which includes the protection of children’s rights in the internal and external objectives of the European Union. “The Treaty will pave the way for children’s rights and will ensure that the best interests of the child are taken into account in all EU policy-making affecting them”.

EURONET is also pleased that the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which includes children’s rights, is made binding by the new Treaty. However it is concerned that opt-outs for the UK and Poland will weaken protection for children.

"Many areas of EU policy making have an impact on children” noted Kathleen Spencer Chapman, President of EURONET. "Children’s NGOs have long been highlighting the need for all EU actions to be in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We are calling for a speedy ratification process of the Reform Treaty in all EU Member States”.

The Lisbon Treaty will come into force only after ratification by all 27 Member States. EURONET calls on EU institutions and Member States to make children’s rights a reality with clear political commitment and sufficient human and financial resources.

- ENDS -

Note to editors:
The European Children’s Network (EURONET) is a coalition of networks and organisations campaigning at European level for the interests and rights of children. Its activities include policy development research, and projects involving children and young people directly.
For further information, contact Mieke Schuurman 0031 187 481 396 or 0032 2 217 0186 e-mail: europeanchildrennetwork@skynet.be www.europeanchildrensnetwork.eu

Article 3, The Union’s objectives

3. [...] It shall combat social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child. [...] 

5. In its relations with the wider world, the Union should uphold and promote its values and interests and contribute to the protection of its citizens. It shall contribute to [...] the protection of human rights, in particular the rights of the child, as well as to the strict observance and the development of international law, including respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter.