Upcoming Events

Why involve us? Children’s participation in the policy-making process

Eurochild event
European Parliament, 7 June 2003

Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that...

“.... the child who is capable of forming his or her own views should be given the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.”

“... the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child...”

• How does this work in practice?
• What structures are needed to facilitate their meaningful contribution?
• How can the process be made as inclusive as possible to ensure children at risk of social exclusion also have their voices heard?

Eurochild AISBL is organising a reception in the European Parliament to hear from children themselves about how they have been involved in policy-making at different levels. Twelve children are invited from six different types of participation projects, for example:

• the Children & Youth Board in the UK that are actively involved in defining the UK government’s youth policy;
• the youth migration service in Lübben, Germany, where children from migrant backgrounds are helping to promote voluntary services and active citizenship;
• the Children’s Parliament in Cyprus, elected through school councils from across the country.

The children will have the chance to ask questions to a distinguished panel of decision-makers from the EU institutions.

3rd Annual Conference of Eurochild AISBL
14-16 November 2006, Berlin

The next Annual Conference of Eurochild AISBL will take place on 14-16 November 2006 in Berlin. It is co-organised with Eurochild AISBL’s member organisation in Germany, AGJ (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Jugendhilfe). The title of the Conference will be: “Non-formal and informal Learning – Key Aspects for Social Inclusion of Children and Young People”. More information about the programme and invited speakers will soon be available in this e-News Bulletin or the Eurochild website www.eurochild.org.
Deal over EU Budget 2007-2013

The European Council reached agreement on an overall figure of 862.4 billion Euros for the EU's long-term budget in December 2005. The European Parliament threatened to vote down the summit deal and demanded an extra 12 billion Euros. However, via a series of tri-legue meetings between Parliament, Council and the Commission a deal was reached on 4 April 2006. This secured an extra 4 billion Euros and an additional 2.5 billion Euros in the European Investment Bank funds for reaching the Lisbon objectives.

The €4 billion net gain for MEPs will be channelled into common foreign and security policy spending, the Erasmus student exchange scheme, research, small businesses and the Trans-European Networks infrastructure programme. The Austrian Presidency also made a declaration that member states should take more responsibility on how they spend EU funds.

But MEPs lost the battle to increase the size of the flexibility instrument, a €200 million a year disaster relief fund, or to soften the decision-making procedure on flexibility instrument payouts.

The deal means cheques for 2007 EU projects will be sent on time. It also puts a full stop on a budget story which began with a punch up between Member States at the Luxembourg Presidency's June 2005 summit.

Commission Communication on Services of General Interest

On 26 April 2006, the European Commission has issued a Communication on Services of General Interest. As social services modernise in many EU Member States, often in partnership with the private sector and non-profit organisations, all involved need clarification on how European law affects this evolving situation. This issue and the rapid changes in these services are mainly addressed in this document. The Communication presents for the first time a list of these services' specific characteristics and reviews the support which they receive from various existing community instruments. It also opens up a process of wide consultation, open to all actors of the sectors, Member States, Social Partners, NGOs and operators of social services, through which the Commission will better take into account the specificities of those services when implementing EU legislation. These services differ from country to country, but can include sectors such as social housing, childcare or services towards families and persons in need. However, it does not deal with health services, which will fall under a separate initiative from the Commission.

The Social Platform has reacted positively, but in the press release it issued it stated that the intention of the Commission to keep reflecting on the issue just to produce a report describing the latest modernising trends, case law and developments by the end of 2007 was not enough and would just accumulate delays in finding a sustainable solution to ensure that social services are taken into account when laws and policies are developed.


Amended proposal for Service Directive

The European Commission has adopted an amended proposal for a Directive on services in the EU single market on 4 April 2006. This is the next stage in the legislative process after the European Parliament's vote at first reading on 16 February 2006, in which deputies scrapped the most disputed elements of the legislation. The amended proposal builds on the Parliament's work, and on discussions in the Council to date.

The Commission has replaced the controversial "country of origin" principle - stating that companies can do business across borders according to rules in their home country - with a line suggesting that host countries can maintain some special requirements for foreign firms to protect public policy, security, health or environment. The scope of the directive has also been narrowed, with temporary work agencies, the healthcare and audiovisual sectors, gambling, social services relating to social housing, childcare and support to families, as well as security and taxation services exempt from the list, in line with the parliament's vote.

The Council has debated and voted on the amended proposal on 22 April, which will now go back to the European Parliament for a second reading.

European Parliament

Improving EU legislation to prevent sex offences against children

The Committee on Civil Liberties of the European Parliament adopted on 10 April 2006 a report endorsing a proposal to improve existing legislation protecting children from sex offenders in Europe. The aim is to ensure that any court prohibition on working with children, arising from sex offences against minors or from child pornography, will be enforceable not only by the Member State which issues it, but also by any other EU country to which the person concerned moves.

An important aspect of the new EU law will be to oblige national authorities to include information on penalties for sex offences against children in that part of criminal records which can be consulted by any other Member State on request. In its report, drawn up by Boguslaw SONIK (EPP-ED, PL), the Committee generally supports the proposal, although it recommends amendments to improve the wording and tighten up some definitions in the legislative text. One of the key changes approved by MEPs in the committee would oblige Member States also to include in their criminal records any related prohibition imposed by non-EU countries.

For more information, see:

Renewed call for greater EU transparency

The European Parliament has called on the Council of Ministers, the Union's main law-making body, to open its doors to the public and show how national governments negotiate at the European level. MEPs voted overwhelmingly in favour of two reports criticising the Council for being too secretive and calling for more public access to EU documents.

EU leaders announced in December they would begin having more discussions on EU legislation in public, as well as being open about votes falling under the so-called co-decision procedure where the European Parliament has a say. The Council said it might broadcast its meetings online when gathering for legislative decisions. But the European Ombudsman, the EU citizens’ watchdog against Brussels maladministration, said the Council has “only partially” responded to his demand for full transparency on law-making work.

The Parliament supported the Ombudsman's stance when they endorsed Mr Hammerstein Mintz’s report on transparency. Mr Cashman's report on access to documents called on the European Commission to revise existing rules and to table new legislation by the end of 2006 on “the right to access” to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents. EU legislation on public access to texts was adopted in 2001 after lengthy discussions between the Council and the Parliament. But MEPs feel that the final text of the legislation was too vague. Mr Cashman indicated that action should be taken on 9 May, which is Europe Day.

Presidency of the EU

Finnish Presidency to shed light on Council workings

The upcoming Finnish Presidency, during the second half of 2006, is set to promote access to documents, ensure efficient communications and enhance the transparency of decision-making and proceedings of the Council, according to a Finnish Ministry of Justice press release of 31 March. To increase the number of public sessions of the Council, the Finns propose that Council sessions on all matters of interest to citizens must be made public. The Presidency also aims to broadcast all public Council sessions on the Internet. A non-binding report calling for the Council to meet openly in public when it decides on EU legislation was adopted by the Parliament's Petition Committee in February 2006 and debated in the Parliament Plenary on 3 April 2006.


General European News

NGO offers online tour of EU lobbying

The Commission has proposed to launch a European Transparency Initiative to strengthen ethics rules for EU policy-makers and the estimated 15,000 lobbyists, NGOs and other pressure groups in Brussels who seek to influence them. Now Lobby watchdog Corporate Europe Observatory proposes an online ‘virtual tour’ of the EU quarter in Brussels. The 3-D virtual tour starts with EU institutions buildings at the Rond-point Schuman and continues with industry associations, public affairs consultancies, law firms, and what the Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO) describes as "industry-funded think-tanks" and other "dubious fora for industry and parliamentarians to meet". However, it deliberately misses out on other major lobbying organisations such as NGOs and trade unions.
The website www.eulobbytours.org is being launched just weeks before the Commission is planning to publish a Green Paper in early May, which will officially kick-start a public debate on transparency in EU policy-making. Among other proposals, the paper will include suggestions to make more information available to the public on who lobbies who and with what budget.

A major sticking point in the debate over lobbying transparency is whether these disclosure rules should be made mandatory and what types of interest groups it should cover. Another difficulty will be to determine what exactly constitutes lobbying as formal and informal interactions between officials and stakeholders are an essential element of Brussels politics.

News from EU Member States

UK

Government Misses Poverty Target

UK Prime Minister Tony Blair pledged in 1999 to eradicate child poverty by 2020 - and to have cut it from 4.1 million to 3.1 million by April 2005. Department for Work and Pension figures show the number of children in poverty has fallen by 700,000 since 1999, missing the target by 300,000. Ministers say the government remains committed to wiping out poverty within a generation, but opposition members of parliament called it “disappointing” and “disturbing”.

A family is considered to be officially poor if they are living on less than 60% of Britain's average household income, once housing costs are taken into account.

Poverty campaigners say good progress has been made but they want further investment in benefits schemes to help lift more families above the headline. Under the government's welfare-to-work policies, more than 300,000 extra lone mothers have found employment. But campaigners believe these strategies have left behind large families or those with disabled children.

[Source: BBC News]

The demographics of children living and/or working on farms in Great Britain

Child Safety on farms is a priority for the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and its social partners, including, Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) & the National Farmers Unions (NFUs). A stakeholder seminar had identified the need to set up a 'child safety working group' under the auspices of the Agricultural Industry Advisory Board (AIAC). This study aimed to ascertain the extent and type of involvement that children (under 18 years old) have in agriculture within Great Britain. A postal questionnaire was designed and administered to 10,000 farms and horticultural units and a 12% response rate was secured.

Structural information collected allowed comparisons between farm type, size and total numbers working on farm. The study was able to broadly identify potential location of children on farm in regional areas and also in terms of farm type and size of farm.

Results shows that there are many more children working on the family farm than there are child casual employees or helpers. Children visiting farms are thought to be in significant numbers, the range of tasks they carry out is very limited as opposed to family farm children or casual child employees/helpers.

From the findings more in-depth research is recommended. The study generated significant interest within the agricultural community. Significant numbers of farmers said that they were willing to participate in further research.

To view the report, see: http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/rpdf/rr420.pdf

“Stop Detaining Children Now”

“Stop Detaining Children Now” is an online campaign organised by the “No Place for a Child” coalition. The UK government currently detains more than 2,000 children, including babies, in immigration detention centres every year. The UK government's use of detention for children and families is in contravention of international human rights standards. The “No Place for a Child” coalition demands that the UK government ends the detention of these vulnerable children and babies and trials more viable alternatives to detention, examples of which can be found in other countries.

For more information, see: http://www.ncadc.org.uk/

FRANCE

Controversies over youth labour reforms

French President Jacques Chirac has withdrawn a controversial youth employment law in the face of weeks of protests by students and unions. Mr Chirac's retreat comes after some eight weeks of protest against the law which was designed to boost employers' incentives to hire young people by making labour market rules more flexible. Opponents of the law had objected to it allowing under 26-year-olds to be fired for no stated reason within two years, fearing a loss of job security.

The scrapping of the law is a blow for French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin who is hoping to be a candidate for French president in the 2007 elections.
there is no domestic law that justifies this routine detained upon arrival along with adults, though unaccompanied. In many cases, they have been including infants, and some of them hundreds of children, generally very young, seaworthy boats. Among them have been sea after a hazardous journey, often onboard small, migrants and asylum-seekers have reached Italy by During the past five years, approximately 80,000 appear to fall short of human rights standards. The Italian authorities should stop their practice of routinely detaining minors, especially those seeking asylum and unaccompanied by a family member, Amnesty International said in a recent report entitled: Invisible children - The human rights of migrant and asylum-seeking minors detained upon arrival at the maritime border in Italy. In the report, the organisation calls on the authorities to reconsider the measures it is now applying, which appear to fall short of human rights standards. During the past five years, approximately 80,000 migrants and asylum-seekers have reached Italy by sea after a hazardous journey, often onboard small, unseaworthy boats. Among them have been hundreds of children, generally very young, including infants, and some of them unaccompanied. In many cases, they have been detained upon arrival along with adults, though there is no domestic law that justifies this routine practice. The right of detained minors to be kept separate from adults who are not members of the same family has in many cases not been respected. They, along with children, some less than five years old, have had to endure intense heat in summer and cold and humidity in winter living in mobile houses in detention centres.

Amnesty International has received more than 890 allegations and other information regarding the presence of minors in most detention centres in Italy in recent years. The organisation has a detailed knowledge of 28 unaccompanied minors who have been detained at some point between January 2002 and August 2005. Almost all were asylum-seekers from sub-Saharan African countries in which the human rights situation is very precarious.

For more information, see: http://www.amnesty.org.

BELGIUM

Petition against the detention of children in closed centres

Pedo-psychiatrists, specialised organisations and over 100 Belgium personalities (researchers, physicians, lawyers, artists etc.) have launched a petition against the detention of children and unaccompanied minors in closed centres. In Belgium 3 such centres exist, including one at Zaventem - Brussels' international airport. The number of children being detained there has been constantly increasing and the length of their detention is sometimes of several months. The appeal underlines that detention constitutes psychological abuse. To read and sign the petition, see: www.cire.irisnet.be/enfantsenfermes (FR) or http://www.cire.irisnet.be/opgeslotenkinderen (NL).

Council of Europe News

Juncker proposes Council of Europe membership for EU

Jean-Claude Juncker, the Prime Minister of Luxembourg, has proposed that the EU become a member of the Council of Europe, in a bid to strengthen ties between the two organisations. The Luxembourg leader on 11 April proposed a series of concrete ideas to revamp ties between the two organisations, which are sometimes seen as competing in the area of fundamental rights.

The Council of Europe was established in 1949 as the first political form of European co-operation after World War II, but later developed into a loose network of what are now 46 states focusing on human rights. The current EU has developed from the economic European Coal and Steel Community in 1951 into a political organisation, which now has its own plans to set up a European Fundamental Rights Agency. Observers have pointed to the risk of overlap and competition if the EU keeps expanding its interest into fundamental rights.

Mr Juncker states in his report that the Council of Europe should still have clear primacy over the EU in human rights. The EU's planned human rights agency should deal with respect for fundamental rights solely in connection with the implementation of European Community law.

But the most far-reaching proposal in Mr Juncker’s report is that the EU becomes a member of the Council of Europe, next to the individual EU member states which are already members of the human rights watchdog. The EU according to its present treaties has no “legal personality” which is needed to enter international organisations. The EU Constitution, rejected by French and Dutch voters in referendums last year, proposes to change this, for the first time providing the Union with a legal personality.
The Juncker report states that Council of Europe membership for the EU could be achieved by 2010, as by then “the debate on changes in the EU treaties will have moved ahead”.

To see Juncker’s report: http://www.gouvernement.lu/salle_presse/actualite/2006/04/11conseil_europe/english_mod.pdf

United Nations News

Commissioner Louis Michel puts forward ideas on restructuring the United Nations

Louis Michel, the European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid took part in the first meetings, held in New York on 4 and 5 April, of the High Level Panel appointed to put forward proposals for UN reforms in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment. He made the case for strengthening the UN’s role, since ‘it is the only institution to embody global governance.

At the Panel meetings called by the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, Mr Michel outlined the following ideas:

“The organisation’s legitimacy must be reinforced through the introduction of more transparent forms of political accountability. The UN’s many agencies tend to give it a disjointed and bureaucratic image. Failing moves to streamline or consolidate them, a first step should at least be the organisation of the agencies around thematic pillars. These pillars could operate under the auspices of Deputy Secretaries-General, who would be directly accountable to the Secretary General, the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, ECOSOC”.

ECOSOC should be granted more extensive powers, said Mr Michel. “As long as ECOSOC’s powers are as limited as they are today, we will always lack a political instrument to bring globalisation under control and humanise it”, he stated. In the same vein, he proposed “closer links between the World Trade Organisation and the United Nations, or even a merger”. On the subject of development and humanitarian assistance, he recommended the creation of a “world atlas of donors” as a vital resource for more effective and coordinated aid. He also emphasised the need for partner countries’ ownership of development and the need for a more regional approach.

For more information on child rights around the world, you can also visit the Resources website of the Child Rights Information Network (CRIN).

Further Reading

Publication on children without parental care

The Bernard van Leer Foundation, has recently published a new issue of its Early Childhood Matters journal series on Children Without Parental Care: Qualitative Alternatives. A growing number of children around the world are currently orphaned or otherwise growing up without parents, through violence, HIV/AIDS, poverty, and natural or man-made disasters. This publication points to the lack of clear guidelines for providing adequate care, and gives suggestions on how to improve existing mechanisms. Early Childhood Matters is a journal about early childhood. It looks at specific issues regarding the development of young children, in particular from a psychosocial perspective. It is published twice per year by the Bernard van Leer Foundation. For more information, see: http://www.bernardvanleer.org

Report on the Implementation of the Dublin II Regulation

The European Commission has proposed a review of the Dublin II Regulation. The Dublin II Regulation, which was adopted in February 2003, sets out the criteria for allocating responsibility for examining asylum applications to the Member State where the applicant first entered European territory. Save the Children and the Separated Children in Europe Programme have drawn up specific recommendations that Member States should fulfil when implementing the Dublin II Convention to improve protection of the rights of asylum seeking children and responses to their specific needs. More information: Dublin II Regulation, Separated Children in Europe Programme and EU Asylum and Immigration Policy.

EESC Opinion on Juvenile Justice Systems

During the meeting of The Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship of The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), on Wednesday 22nd February 2006, Mr. José María Zubíaar Narváez, EESC Adviser, has submitted an Opinion document on The prevention of juvenile delinquency. Ways of dealing with juvenile delinquency and the role of the juvenile justice system in the European Union’ to the EESC. The final voting took place during the EESC plenary session on the 15th March 2006 and The Opinion was approved with 98 votes in its favour.
Report on Desegregation in Roma education in Bulgaria

A report by the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee evaluates NGO run desegregation projects in eight cities. The publication also presents the main results of the official government policy regarding the desegregation of Roma education in Bulgaria between 2002 and 2005. The research finds the Roma children in integrated schools score better on tests than Roma children in segregated schools. In addition, a national household survey finds that the Bulgarians, who have had contact with Roma, are less likely to have negative ethnic prejudice. Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (2006), "Five Years Later: The Non-Govermenntal Projects for Desegregation of Roma Education in Bulgaria". http://www.bghelsinki.org/index.php?module=resources&qs=bg&id=327.

New report on risk of poverty in the EU

The European Centre for Social Welfare and Research is one of four partners in the Network on Social Inclusion and Income Distribution of the European Observatory on the Social Situation, which is a project financed and monitored by the European Commission (DG EMPL). The general aim of the network is to monitor and report on trends in income distribution and social inclusion, i.e. the overall inclusiveness of European society, which incorporates the situation in terms of income and wealth, the impact of tax/benefit systems, the access to services, questions related to poverty and population groups facing a higher risk of exclusion. The final annual report for 2005 of the Network on Social Inclusion and Income Distribution examines differences and trends in poverty rates across countries of the European Union. For more information, see: http://www.euro.centre.org/ and http://www.euro.centre.org/detail.php?xml_id=508.

Surfing the Web

Eurostat now on-line

Since 1 October 2004, Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities, has made all its data and publications available free of charge on the Internet. This significant change enabled Eurostat to fully play its role as a public service institution, by giving free access to economic and social information on the euro-zone, the EU and the 25 Member States. More than 300 million data, from many different domains, are available online, varying from consumer prices, through poverty and environmental indicators, to detailed external trade data by product.

The implementation of the free dissemination policy has produced very successful results in 2005, both in terms of number of users and products downloaded. The number of user sessions reached nearly one million per month. There was a six-fold increase in data downloaded: a four-fold increase in access to the pre-defined tables; and a four-fold increase in the number of publications downloaded to 300 000 per month. Work is continuing to further improve functionality & user-friendliness of the site.

On 30 March 2006, the European Information Association, presented Eurostat with the 2005 Award for European Information Sources for its website2, in recognition of the steps that Eurostat has taken to make statistical data widely and freely available through the site. See http://www.eia.org.uk/.

How to get the information?

Depending on the needs of the user, there are two ways to access the data through the Eurostat site, http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat. From the homepage, the "Tables" link takes general users to sets of predefined tables of key data, which include "Structural indicators", "Sustainable development indicators", "Euro-indicators" and "Long-term indicators". For specialist users, "Data" leads to more detailed data, which can be extracted online. There are links to the methodology, which follows the IMF's common Special Data Dissemination Standard. Electronic versions of all Eurostat publications are also available free of charge online, and can be downloaded in PDF format. To provide help and guidance to Internet users of Eurostat statistical data, there is a central support function in Eurostat and 22 national support centres based in National Statistical Institutes. Contact details of all national and central support centres can be found through the "Contact" link on every page of the Eurostat site.

New developments on the ‘For Diversity, Against Discrimination’ campaign web site

The “For Diversity - Against Discrimination” campaign has launched a new service to provide journalists with easy access to discrimination-related research. Each ‘press dossier’ will feature information, news, surveys and statistics about a particular ground protected by anti-discrimination legislation. Social Platform member ILGA-Europe has provided some of the information for the dossier, which highlights the attitudes and problems currently facing homosexuals in various Member States. The next press topic will cover discrimination on the grounds of race and ethnic origin.

For more information, see: http://web20.s112.typo3server.com/s720.0.html.
Peer Reviews in social inclusion in 2006

The Peer Review Programme is a voluntary mutual learning process involving the scrutiny of specific policies, programmes or institutional arrangements presented as good practice in the various National Action Plans on social protection and social inclusion. The programme consists of a series of peer review sessions, in which the experience of the host country is confronted with the comments and critical analysis of peer countries and other stakeholders, including NGOs. Eurochild has been invited to participate in the first Peer Review Seminar, which will take place on 4-5 May 2006 in London, UK, analysing the Sure Start Project.

The following Peer Review sessions will be:
- 20 June: Belgium: Minimum pensions and women's poverty
- 29-30 June: France: Social inclusion cross cutting policy tools – "Document de politique transversale (DPT)"
- 7-8 September: Norway: National strategy to prevent and tackle homelessness
- 23-24 October: Spain: Social integration of Roma people. Municipal programme of shanty towns eradication in Avilés (Asturias)
- 6-7 or 13-14 November: Netherlands: Amnesty of debts: a legal solution to over indebtedness
- 4-5 December 2006: Sweden: Financial coordination within the field of rehabilitation

42nd Session of the UN CRC
15 May – 2 June, Geneva, Switzerland

The next session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child will be held from 15 May to 2 June 2006 at the Palais Wilson in Geneva. Alternative reports submitted by NGOs for the forty-second session are now available on the CRIN website. Further reports for consideration are reports from Colombia, Latvia, Lebanon, the Marshall Islands, Mexico, Turkmenistan, Tanzania and Uzbekistan. Under the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, the reports of Turkey, Qatar, Iceland and Italy are scheduled for consideration. Under the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the reports of Belgium, El Salvador, Canada, Czech Republic, Iceland and Italy are scheduled for consideration. For more information: General news on the work of the Committee, Information about the 42nd session.

Improving Programmes in Eastern Europe
4-7 June 2006, Bratislava, Slovakia

The International Foster Care Organisation (IFCO), is organising an event to bring together people from across Eastern Europe involved in the development and improvement of foster care programmes in the region. The seminar, Developing Foster Care in the CEE, CIS and Baltics - Learning Together, will consist of a series of plenary and workshop sessions that address the topic of family-based care. IFCO's "East-East Network" seeks to link together all those involved in the development of family based care in the countries of Eastern Europe (CEE/CIS/Baltics). Since 1989 considerable progress has been made in deinstitutionalisation and the development of family support services and foster care in many countries in the region, but progress is patchy and overall the proportion of children in public care continues to rise.

Call for papers: IFCO is inviting interested individuals to submit papers for the seminar. The submission deadline for papers is 14 April 2006. For more information, see: http://bratislava.ifco.info.

Eurochild event with socially excluded children
7 June, European Parliament, Brussels

As in March 2005, Eurochild AISBL will organise a reception in the European Parliament to hear from children themselves about how they have been involved in policy-making at different levels. This year it will take place on 7 June 2006 from 14h to 16h and will be hosted by Lissy Gröner, MEP (PSE, Member of the Committees on Culture & Education and on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality). Twelve children are invited from six different types of participation projects, for example:
- the Children & Youth Board in the UK that are actively involved in defining the UK government’s youth policy;
- the youth migration service in Lübben, Germany, where children from migrant backgrounds are helping to promote voluntary services and active citizenship;
- the Children’s Parliament in Cyprus, elected through school councils from across the country.
International Conference about Diversity and Inclusion in the Early Years
14 – 16 June 2006, Belfast, Northern Ireland

Organised by: NIPPA – The Early Years Organisation (Member organisation of Eurochild) and the School of Education, Queen’s University Belfast. Keynote speakers: Professor Glenda MacNaughton, University of Melbourne; Professor Paul Connolly and Professor Peter Clough, Queen’s University Belfast and Dr Cathy Nutbrown, University of Sheffield. These will also be a range of seminars led by lots of other international and home grown speakers. Programme includes: Master Classes targeted at organisations such as NIPPA that support the development of practice (14th June); site visits to NIPPA member groups. the NIPPA AGM and Gala Dinner (15th June); keynote addresses outlining current research and leading thinking as well as seminars that offer practical advise, tips, techniques that early childhood professionals can be implement fairly quickly in their own settings (16th June). For further details: www.qub.ac.uk/edu/conference.

Online Registration:
http://www.qub.ac.uk/edu/conference/register_online.htm.

Conference on Childhood and youth: Choice and Participation
4th - 6th July 2006, Sheffield, UK

Children’s rights to participation are now on the agendas of governments, policy makers, schools and community organisations. They are also increasingly central to research with children. The aim of this conference is to explore and question the nature and extent of that participation. For more information, see: http://www.eastchance.com/anunt.asp?q=50,sfe,int or:

5 July 2006, Derby, UK

This national conference will bring together leading practitioners, academics and researchers to explore the inter-professional imperatives for child protection. With a focus on the new Children Act (2004), themes for the day will include: inter-professional and interagency working, Competencies and Skills, Social inclusion and Children’s rights. The workshops organised will be facilitated by academics and practitioners. The cost of participating in the conference is of £75. For more information: c.foster@derby.ac.uk.

---

Conference on Child Abuse
3-6 September 2006, York, UK

The XVIth ISPCAN International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect will take place from 3 to 6 September 2006 in the City of York in England. This Congress is being organised by the International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) in collaboration with the British Association for the Study and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect. The title of the Congress “Children in a Changing World: Getting It Right” reflects the need to ensure that research, knowledge, policies, the shape of services and practice skills address the challenges faced by those working to protect children and safeguard their welfare. This academic programme will provide an opportunity for those from all disciplines working at every stage of professional development to participate in sharing knowledge and experience and to learn from sources of expertise with highly regarded international reputations.

Day of General Discussion
Child’s Right to be Heard
15 September, Geneva, Switzerland

The Committee on the Rights of the Child has decided to devote its next day of general discussion to the theme: “To Speak, Participate and Decide - The Child’s Right to be Heard”. The meeting will take place at the Palais Wilson in Geneva, Switzerland, on Friday, 15 September 2006 from 10am-6pm. The meeting is open to representatives of non-governmental organisations, children and their organisations/networks, UN programmes and agencies, governments and other interested individuals, experts and organisations.

NGOs and children are invited to submit written contributions on the themes mentioned above to the Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) as soon as possible. The Committee requests that written contributions be limited to a maximum of seven pages. Although documents may be submitted in English, French or Spanish, they will not be translated into the other languages. Oral contributions from NGOs are also welcome during the day itself but should be limited to interventions in the debate rather than formal statements.

Written contributions should be sent electronically to CRCgeneraldiscussion@ohchr.org. Guidelines and additional information are available on the OHCHR website. Submission deadline: 00 June 2006. For more information, see: http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/discussion.htm.

Seminar on Children with Disabilities – What about their Rights?
10-14 October, Sion, Switzerland

The Institut International des Droits de l’Enfant (IDÉ) is organising its next international Sion seminar on the rights of children with disabilities. The aim of the seminar is to better understand the life of children...
with disabilities, to find out the protection potential of the future Convention, and to promote handicap as a real richness. Issues tackled in the seminar include: the WHO definition of disability, the national and international protection tools, as well as specific issues like education and training, family, institutionalisation, participation, environment, positive & negative discrimination. IDE is launching a call for papers to any individual, NGO, State, private or public agency, and/or university, working in the field of children with disabilities. Contributions will be presented during the seminar and given out to all the participants.

**World Conference on Children without Parental Care**
23 October, The Hague, NL

The 3rd annual World Conference on Children without Parental Care is going to take place on 23-26 October in The Hague, The Netherlands. It is organised by International Advocates for Children (IAC), a non-profit organisation whose mission is to vigorously advocate for human rights of orphaned and abandoned children worldwide. The objective of the conference is to create an active forum of discussion and debate amongst participants from all over the world. This “Symposium for Enforcing the Human Rights of Orphaned and Abandoned Children” will host up to 100 countries, represented by officials, NGO’s and scientists. That is why participation is limited per country. Pre-registration forms must be received by 30 April 2006. For more information: info@iachildren.nl.

**Conference on Juvenile Justice in Europe**
24 - 25 October 2006, Brussels, Belgium

The 2nd International Conference of the International Juvenile Justice Observatory, which belongs to Foundation Diagrama, entitled ‘Juvenile Justice in Europe: A Framework for Integration’, will take place in Brussels (Belgium) on 24 - 25 October 2006. The subject matter of this conference is based on the challenge of promoting a reflection about a major harmonisation of legislation and common ways of action in prevention, treatment and integration policies, regarding juveniles and young people in conflict with the law. The First International Conference took place in Salamanca (Spain) in October, 2004, under the title “Juvenile Justice and the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency in a Globalised World”. This meeting opened the debate and the analysis concerning the different strategies of juvenile crime prevention, as well as the recent evolution of juvenile justice systems in the world.

**Conference: non-formal & informal learning**
14-16 November, Berlin, Germany

The next Annual Conference of Eurochild AISBL will take place on 14-16 November 2006 in Berlin. It is co-organised with Eurochild AISBL’s member organisation in Germany, AGJ (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Jugendhilfe). The title of the Conference will be: “Non-formal and informal Learning – Key Aspects for Social Inclusion of Children and Young People”. More information about the programme and invited speakers will soon be available in this Bulletin or on www.eurochild.org.

---

**Sharing Information**

Do you wish to share information, announce something or make a contribution to the e-News Bulletin? Please send it to: info@eurochild.org.

---

**Eurochild**

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

If you would like to become a member of Eurochild AISBL, please visit our website www.eurochild.org.

**Editor:** Jana Hainsworth - **Responsible for publication:** Anja Härtwig

---

This newsletter has been produced with the financial support of the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. The views expressed herein can by no means be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Commission.