News from Eurochild

Upcoming Events

Eurochild event with socially excluded children in the European Parliament, 7 June 2003

As in March 2005, Eurochild AISBL will organise an Event in the European Parliament with socially excluded children. 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). The 12 young people from 6 European countries will present to the MEPs and other participants their experiences with involvement in the decision-making process in their country, whether it is at the local, regional or national level. For more information, please contact the Eurochild secretariat at +32 (0)2 511 70 83 or per e-mail: info@eurochild.org.

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.

Secretariat News

Since the 27 March 2006, Eurochild AISBL has a new Finance Officer, Mrs Ariane Zeba. Ariane will be working 5 days a months to take care of the day-to-day accounting and financial work of the Secretariat. She has diplomas in translation (FR/EN/ESP) and international commerce and for the past seven years has been working for the accounting and finance departments of several international companies based in Belgium. We are all looking forward to working with her!

During the month of March, the Eurochild Secretariat has welcomed Mrs Inese Shubevica, who came to do a traineeship coordinated by the Civic Alliance of...
Latvia. Inese has a background in a children and youth organisation in Latvia and came to Brussels to discover how organisations at a European level dealing with child rights work in practice, with their national member organisations as well as the European institutions.

During the month of April Ms Nang Phan will join the Secretariat of Eurochild AISBL. Nang has finished her studies at the Institut Supérieur des Traducteurs et Interprètes (ISTI) in Brussels and will take care of the translation of Eurochild's new website into French. The French language version should be online from the end of April!

Eurochild AISBL would also like to take the opportunity to thank its volunteer Mrs Françoise Thomas, who is coming to the office twice a week, mainly to help us creating a press-database. We are very grateful about the support of all our volunteers past and present!

News from the European Institutions

Competition on "The EU and the Rights of the Child"

"The European Union and the Rights of the Child". This is the title of a competition launched by Franco Frattini, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Justice, Freedom and Security, inviting European children and teenagers from 10 to 18 years of age to create a poster on children's rights within the Union. The competition aims at increasing awareness among European younger citizens about EU actions in this field. After a first selection at the national level and a prize-giving ceremony organised in each EU country in early May 2006, winning teams of the first national prizes will be invited in Brussels for a European prize-giving ceremony. The best works will become part of future European campaigns for promoting children's rights. The conditions and description of the competition are available in all official languages of the EU on: www.euroyoung.com.

EU research to look into chemical exposure of babies

NewGeneris was launched on 1 February 2006 as a new European Integrated Research Project under the Community's 6th Framework Research Programme (FP6). NewGeneris will look specifically into "maternal exposure during pregnancy to carcinogenic and immunotoxic chemicals" and their effect on young children after they are born. Diseases, researchers think might be triggered by the presence of chemicals in humans, include cancer, asthma, rhinitis and eczema/dermatitis. To assess chemical exposure, the researchers will analyse blood and urine samples from mothers and children taken across several 'biobanks' in Norway, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Spain and Greece. In total, around 300,000 mother and baby pairs will be studied, indicated the project coordinators. Ultimately, the project's aim is "to contribute to the protection of child health through the formulation of improved health policies, more effective food regulations specially targeted at children and better food quality".

Political participation starts at school

School plays a key role in getting European youth involved in politics according to a project on political participation of young Europeans funded by the EU's Research Framework Programme. Political behaviour and attitudes are also linked to family, the circle of friends and the type of media young people use. The EUYPART project collected data from 8030 young people (15-25) from 8 European countries (Austria, Italy, Slovakia, Germany, Estonia, Finland, France and the UK) on the factors that motivate young people to become active in politics. The project provides a useful insight into how young Europeans understand politics and how they choose to participate. Its findings show the importance of initiatives such as the European Spring Day, which engage young Europeans in debate about their aspirations for the EU and allow them to gain awareness of European issues. For more information on the EUYPART project, see: http://www.sora.at/euypart.

Focus on children in fight against obesity

The Commission's Green Paper on the promotion of a healthy diet and physical activity launched a public consultation in December 2005 on how to reduce and to prevent the rising levels of obesity and associated chronic diseases in the EU. The aim is to stimulate discussion about effective initiatives to promote healthy diets and physical activity and to define best practices. Obesity is one of the greatest public health challenges of the 21st century. Since the 1980s, the number of those affected in the EU has tripled and continues to increase at an alarming rate, especially among children. It is estimated that, at present, 7% of total EU healthcare costs are spent treating obesity-related illness. Given the rising obesity trend, these costs are expected to further increase.

stakeholders have already published their position and suggested several practical recommendations on the issue. Their reactions are many, but all respondents have at least one point in common. Both doctors and consumer representatives as well as sports stakeholders highlight the same issue: the fight against obesity needs to be focused on children. They all highlight the importance of starting healthy life-style education early in childhood. Mandatory daily physical activity in schools, serving healthy food in schools’ canteens and teaching healthy nutritional habits, even cooking, are among suggestions put forward by the respondents.

Mini-company Programmes for Secondary School Students

The final report of a best procedure project entitled 'Mini-companies in secondary education' praises the growing success of introducing student mini-companies into schools. Among other things, it puts this down to the strong connection with businesses and with the local community plus the enthusiasm and motivation generated in students (even those who lack motivation in more traditional subjects). However, at the moment, there are still certain obstacles standing in the way of a more widespread use of the methodology.

The final report says that schools and teachers are reluctant to become involved when programmes are not backed up, recognised or recommended by the educational authorities. It adds that including student company programmes as an option in framework curricula established at national or regional level has a positive effect on their dissemination and their success, for instance by raising the motivation of teachers. For more information, see: http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/entrepreneurship/support_measures/training_education/doc/mini_companies_en.pdf.

News from the Erasmus Programme

University exchanges expand rapidly among the new Member States

The European Commission’s flagship action in the field of education, the university exchange programme Erasmus, continued to expand in the academic year 2004/05. The overall number of students taking part on Erasmus exchanges rose by over 6% on the previous year, while the number of university teachers exchanged under the scheme grew by almost 13%. The biggest impact of the scheme has been felt in the Central and Eastern European countries. Student exchanges rose on average by an impressive 36% in the new Member States, while growth in teacher mobility was even more dramatic, rising on average by almost 77%.

Spain remained the most popular destination for students, with 25,551 students going to the country during the last academic year. France and Germany were also popular taking on 20,519 and 17,273 students respectively. Germany was the preferred destination for teachers participating in the Erasmus exchanges hosting some 2,623 teachers. For the first time last year, Turkish students were able to participate in the programme with 1,142 students taking advantage of the opportunity. In total, 144,037 students participated in an Erasmus exchange.

For more information, see: http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/319&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN.

Fears over future funding of Erasmus

Despite the increase in the use of the European student exchange programme during the last academic year, it is unclear whether there will be enough funds available to cater for the programme in the coming years. The present budget for the Erasmus programme is €165 million per year. As the number of students participating in Erasmus is expected to rise to 3 million between the years 2007-2013, both the Commission and the European Parliament are lobbying for more funds. The European Commission has asked for €250 million annually to be put towards the programme from 2007.

However, member states in December, as part of overall negotiations on the EU budget, suggested a decrease of 40% in the funding of the Life Long Learning programme, which also includes Erasmus. Negotiations are still underway with Commission officials hoping that the positive results may persuade member states not to cut the money for education.

The treatment of child and teenage asylum-seekers in the EU

The European Commission is examining how a 2003 EU directive on minimum standards for the reception of asylum-seekers is being implemented by member state governments. The directive requires national authorities to maintain family unity “as far as possible” when dealing with asylum-seekers and to have the best interest of children as their “primary consideration”. The Commission is said to have received reports of children being left behind to fend for themselves after their parents and siblings have been deported. Other problems pinpointed include the detention of child asylum-seekers and the practice of dawn raids prior to deportations. In dawn raids, parents are handcuffed and their children removed, often by large numbers of police officers. The deadline for placing the 2003 directive on national statute books was February 2005.

A 2005 EU directive on minimum standards for granting and withdrawing refugee status says that nobody should be detained for the sole reason that he or she is seeking asylum. This directive has to be transposed in member states by December 2007. The Commission also recommended last year that harmonised EU rules should be set for procedures used during deportations, including the permissible
Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2006

The Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2006 by the European Commission is now available. This second Joint Report draws on the National Action Plans (NAPs) and policy statements produced by the Member States during 2005 under the three policy strands of social inclusion, pensions, and health and long-term care. It is guided by the views on the value of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) expressed by Member States and stakeholders, and anticipates the structure of OMC exchanges under the future streamlined process.

As far as social inclusion is concerned, the Report suggests a more strategic approach to the formulation of NAPs for inclusion, in order to bring about “more precise, systematic and transparent setting out of policies”. It also recommends that the OMC develop a strong focus on poverty among children and their families, and on the multiple exclusion faced by young people from ethnic minorities in poor neighbourhoods. “In this context, the fundamental role of education and training to break the intergenerational transmission of poverty should be highlighted,” stresses the draft document.

To download the report and annexes with country specific reports and statistical information, see: http://europa.eu.int/commission/employment_social/social_inclusion/reps_en.htm.

Internet discussion on future of the EU

After the launch by the European Commission of the White Paper on Communication Policy on 1 February 2006, it has launched on 27 March an internet discussion on the future of Europe. The discussion, which all European citizens are encouraged to join, is part of the commission’s “Plan D for Dialogue, Debate and Democracy.” Plan D was launched last year and is a direct response to French and Dutch voters’ rejection of the EU Constitution in referendums in the early summer. Feedback from the discussion will be part of the Commission’s report on the period of reflection on the constitution. The first comments have already begun appearing on the online forum, with comments on the future of the bloc, the role of the EU and the size of its budget. For the on-line consultation: http://europa.eu.int/debateeurope/.

EP to tackle public image problem

European Parliament President Josep Borrell has launched a Discussion Paper to improve his institution's public image and to tackle MEPs’ poor attendance at many debates. Leaders of the political groups in the Parliament are set to discuss the paper at a meeting next Thursday 9 March. According to the Brussels weekly European Voice, Mr Borrell is “really embarrassed” by the MEPs’ poor attendance at many debates. He also complains that parliament’s plenary sessions are out of step with events in Europe. In January, he received a direct complaint from commission president Jose Manuel Barroso that more commissioners and officials than MEPs were present in the parliament’s chamber during his presentation of the 2006 work programme. Mr Borrell’s discussion paper suggests devoting each Wednesday of the monthly four-day sessions in Strasbourg to a main debate. MEPs’ activities outside the EU, such as observer missions to elections or delegations to major international events, are also up for discussion, as they are not always in relation to current political priorities of the Parliament. A “balance of resources” between the EU’s most strategic relationships and ties with other countries should be taken into account, his discussion paper suggests. [source: EU Observer.com]

More on demographic change in the EU

A new report financed through the EU’s 6th framework research programme indicates that worries about the future and the costs of raising children are the main reason behind the declining birth rates in European countries. Most families would like to have two children but the average number of births in 2003 was only between 1.2 and 1.4. The Commission presented the results of the Population Policy Acceptance Study (PPAS) on 17 February. In its press release, it draws attention to the attitude differences between individual countries measured by the study and says it shows that “a ‘one size fits all’ approach to family policy will not work.” The study also looked at issues such as gender roles, attitudes towards women at work, and the place of the elderly. According to the results of the study, the elderly are viewed as having a value to society and younger generations express their willingness to help the elderly when needed. The Commission is expected to present a Communication on demography in May 2006 (see Green Paper on demographic changes).
advantage for further work for their rights and wellbeing!

- **Point 38:** “It is urgent to improve the situation of young people in the labour market and to reduce significantly youth unemployment. To that end, the European Council stresses that in line with the agreed target for 2010, efforts should be intensified to reduce early school leaving to 10% and to ensure that at least 85% of 22 year olds should have completed upper secondary education. By the end of 2007 every young person who has left school and is unemployed should be offered a job, apprenticeship, additional training or other employability measure within 6 months, and within no more than 4 months by 2010.”

- **Point 72:** “The European Council reaffirms the objective of the Partnership for growth and jobs that steps have to be taken to make a decisive impact on the reduction of poverty and social exclusion by 2010. Social inclusion policies should be pursued by the Union and the Member States, with its multifaceted approach, focusing on target groups such as children in poverty. The European Council asks the Member States to take necessary measures to rapidly and significantly reduce child poverty, giving all children equal opportunities, regardless of their social background.”

- **Point 73:** “The European Council stresses that in view of the demographic change in the European Union employment rates have to be increased and the reconciliation of work and family life has to be promoted. To tackle these demographic challenges, it will be necessary to support policies that make it possible to combine working life with children and family life, equal opportunities, to promote the solidarity between the generations, promote health, improve affordable care for children and other people in need of care, life-long learning and an increased employment rate of young people, older workers and disadvantaged groups.”

**General European News**

**Study on the EU’s education system**

Europe is falling further behind the US and Asia in education, with Germany and France no longer among world leaders in developing knowledge, Andreas Schleicher from the Paris-based economic institute, the OECD, has stated. According to the author of a report written for the Lisbon Council for Economic Competitiveness (asbl), Europe’s educational systems should “be made more flexible, more effective and more easily accessible to a wider range of people”, to stand up to global competition.

Mr Schleicher said both Germany and France are falling behind in terms of a number of people with high-skill qualifications, which he views as a sign that both countries “which make up 35% of the EU’s €11.6 trillion economy, are no longer among the world’s leaders in developing knowledge and skills”.

One of the main reasons behind the gloomy trends is lower investment in education in Europe at every level. “The US outspends Europe on tertiary level education by more than 50% per student, and much of that difference is due to larger US contributions from tuition-paying students and the private sector,” noted the OECD paper.

On the other hand, it stressed that most continental European countries do not allow their universities to charge tuition fees but at the same time do not support them with the required public investment. “European countries tend to argue that charging fees for university education would be unfair or inequitable, but many of the very same countries charge fees for childhood and other primary education, where equity really is at stake,” writes Mr Schleicher. Despite European ideals like equality and equity, several OECD’s studies reveal that "social background plays a larger role in determining a student’s performance in countries such as Germany, France and Italy than in the US". "Europeans from difficult socio-economic backgrounds don’t receive the same educational opportunities as children from rich and middle-class families," notes the paper.

A separate OECD study, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), is an international assessment and comparison of students’ performances in OECD countries. France refuses even to publish PISA’s evidence on social inequality between schools, whereas Finland, the top performer in the PISA studies for the two last consecutive years, has less than 5% variation in student performance between schools.
European Youth Forum against paying more for EU entry visas

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) has launched a 'Get VISable' campaign for the removal of visa obstacles and the fostering of youth mobility in Europe. The campaign demands a visa system where the fees reflect only the costs of issuing the visas, based on clear and transparent regulations and Europe-wide common criteria for visas for young people involved in youth work. The increase in visa prices and hence, in their exclusivity represents a hindrance to those organisations that are implementing youth exchanges and cross-border youth projects.

At the 21 February JHA Council meeting, Ministers discussed the option of increasing the cost of visas to the EU because of the costs of introducing biometric data, and considered a special category for some young people (only researchers and students). Renaldas Vaisbrodas, President of YFJ, called for a visa system that helped build good relations between the EU and its neighbours.

The question of increasing the cost of visas is of concern to several Member States, which see such a policy as contracting the EU's Neighbourhood Policy. Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, for example, have commented that increasing the cost of visas flew in the face of the EU's desire to integrate Belarus in its Neighbourhood Policy if the conditions are met. Taking account of the concerns of various Member States, the Austrian Presidency has explained that negotiations will continue at SCIFA (the Strategic Committee on Immigration, Frontiers and Asylum) and the Visa Group. The 27 and 28 April Justice and Home Affairs Council is expected to decide and agree on exemptions.

For more information, see: www.getvisable.org

European youths trust NGOs more than political institutions

European Youths trust NGOs like Greenpeace or Amnesty International much more than they trust political institutions, according to a new survey. According to a project on political participation of young Europeans, young people believe that working for NGOs is more effective than working for political parties. The project, which was funded by Brussels, collected data from more than 8,000 young Europeans from eight countries and was aimed at understanding more about young people's political participation in Europe. The interviewees were aged between 15 and 25 years. The results show that European institutions, such as the European Parliament and the European Commission, enjoy more trust than national institutions.

Despite the fact that young people trust civil society organisations more than they trust political parties, a majority of those interviewed responded that they feel close to a political party. Italy (71%) and Finland (68%) are the countries where most youths feel close to a political party while young Britons (23%) feel least attached. A majority also said that they are simply not interested in politics. Germany had the highest number interested in politics (51%), with Italian youths coming in second at 43 percent and Austrians at 42 percent. Young people in the UK, Estonia and Slovakia are the least interested in politics. Young Europeans reporting that they follow the news on a daily basis varied from 11.3% in the UK to 38.4% in Italy. Most of the youths follow the news on television.

The survey showed that schools are among the main factors that might motivate young people to participate in politics. Media, parents and friends may also be important in motivating young people to participate in politics. Youth from different countries also have different perceptions of the future. Estonia's youths are the most optimistic. Over 80% of Estonian youths are expecting a much better future than their parents' generation. Respondents from the UK, Finland and Slovakia were also optimistic about their future. Young French people on the other hand fear a cutback on social security although they are optimistic about their job and income perspectives. Germans and Austrians, meanwhile, generally expect to be in a worse situation than their parents are now.

[Source: http://euobserver.com/?aid=21177&rk=1]

Tackling social inequality, poverty & exclusion in Latin America, the Caribbean & the EU

A high-level conference organised by the European Commission was held in Brussels on 27 - 28 March 2006. It discussed efforts to combat social inequality, poverty and exclusion in Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union. The Commission and Ministers from both sides of the Atlantic debated social cohesion policies and exchanged their experiences on the subject. More than 200 representatives of civil society, business, trade unions, international organisations and universities also attended the conference. The results of the meeting will be given to the Heads of State or Government from those regions, who are holding their fourth summit in Vienna on 12 May and set social cohesion as a common objective and key area of their relations at their previous summit in Guadalajara, Mexico, in 2004.

For further information on the Conference, see: http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/lac-vienna/events/social_cohesion.htm

For further information on the Vienna Summit, see: http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/lac-vienna/index.htm
UK

Poverty and social exclusion in Britain: The millennium survey

A quarter of British adults live in poverty and one third of children are forced to go without at least one of the things they need, such as three meals a day, toys, out of school activities or adequate clothing. These are some of the findings of a recent book that reports on the most comprehensive survey of poverty and social exclusion, ever to be undertaken in Britain: The Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey. This data set records levels of poverty not just in terms of income and wealth but by including information about the goods and services which the British public say are necessary to avoid poverty. The relationship between poverty and factors such as age, gender and paid work are explored, as well as other social issues such as crime and neighbourhood disadvantage. See Publication details from the Policy Press website: https://www.policypress.org.uk/catalog/product_info.php?cPath=10043&products_id=422.

Treatment of Children in Penal Custody

A UK inquiry, commissioned by the Howard League for Penal Reform, and carried out by Lord Carlile, looked into the use of restraint techniques and strip searching used on children in custody. The independent investigation found that pain was inflicted to enforce compliance. The study started following the death of a 15-year-old boy in a privately-run secure unit while he was being restrained by three adult staff. Lord Carlile’s Inquiry into the treatment of children in penal custody recommends severely restricting physical intervention, stopping the strip searching of children and ending prison segregation. The report also says that the Children's Minister should assume overall responsibility for children in custody and that the Children’s Minister should assume overall responsibility for children in custody and that the Children’s Minister should assume overall responsibility for children in custody and that the Children’s Minister should assume overall responsibility for children in custody and that the Children’s Minister should assume overall responsibility for children in custody and that the Children’s Minister should assume overall responsibility for children in custody and that the Children’s Minister should assume overall responsibility for children in custody and that the Children’s Minister should assume overall responsibility for children in custody and that the Children’s Minister should assume overall responsibility for children in custody and that the Children’s Minister should assume overall responsibility for children in custody. The report gives positive recommendations for improving relationships, regimes and management systems. It stresses the importance of consistency throughout the penal estate and inside establishments.

For more information: http://www.howardleague.org. The report can be purchased on the Howard League for Penal Reform website.

To read the press release including all 45 recommendations of the report, go to: http://www.crin.org/resources/InfoDetail.asp?ID=7289&flag=report

PKistan and Britain sign protocol to save children

The UK-Pakistan Judicial Forum on Children in February 2006 signed an understanding on the ‘UK-Pakistan Protocol on Children Matter’ following negotiations between the delegations from the two countries. Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Ifthikhar Mohamed Chaudhry and his delegation held a meeting with Lord Justice Thorpe, the head of International Family Law, and other senior members of the UK judiciary and discussed different aspects to make the protocol effective. The participants emphasised that there was a need for appropriate measures by the governments of the UK and Pakistan to formalise the protocol and incorporate it into domestic legislation, where necessary. It was agreed that a register of NGOs in Pakistan would be drawn up to facilitate the work of UK-based organisations working on child abduction cases. A reciprocal list would also be compiled for the UK. [source: www.gulf-times.com]

France

Child Protection System Reform Project

The French Government has announced a Child Protection System Reform Project, for the spring term 2006. This decision follows a Call by 100 professionals and personalities for Child Protection Reform of 5 September 2005. The need of a reform comes from the numerous proposals of professionals involved in Child Protection and from different official reports, which have opened new ways of work and have defined possible improvements. Public Authorities agreed on 19 November 2005 on the organisation of a decentralised debate in the French regions before starting the legislative work.

Links:
• 10 propositions pour la protection de l’enfance: http://www.10propositions-enfance.net/
• Loiret.com: Réforme de la protection de l'enfance: http://enfance.loiret.com/cgloiret/

Malta

Children can’t wait

The Maltese Commissioner for Children Sonia Camilleri presented her second annual report in mid-February, specifically pointing out that “Children can’t wait” is the new policy that is to be adopted by the Maltese government to place child issues in the forefront. She was however quick to add that not
eighty

enough is being done by the authorities to safeguard children’s rights, and that better legislation is needed to protect children. She called for improved services to protect children from harm, saying that the help provided is not enough and is not arriving on time.

But her strongest statement was made on what should be known as the Children’s Act, a promise that was made by the government in 2000 and now, six years down the line, is still in the making. In 2000, Malta had promised that it would draft a Children’s Act, she said, but this has yet to materialise.


United Nations News

Official establishment of UN Human Rights Council

On 15 March 2006, the General Assembly of the United Nations voted for the creation of a 47-member Human Rights Council. The last meeting of its predecessor body, the UN Human Rights Commission, took place on 27 March, during which it adopted a resolution on the transfer of all its work to the newly established Council. It should hold its first meeting on 19 June in Geneva, Switzerland, after the UN General Assembly votes on its members in May.

Despite successes such as the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the General Assembly on 10 December 1948, the Commission – which meets just yearly in Geneva – has come in for increasing criticism over the years as being ineffective and not accountable, and so the idea of the Council was put forward by Secretary-General Kofi Annan a year ago.

The Council has several elements making it a stronger body than the Commission, including its higher status as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, its increased number of meetings throughout the year, equitable geographical representation and also the voting rights associated with membership.

For more information, see: http://www.un.org/ga/60/elect/hrc/

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

Journal of Children’s Services

The ‘Journal of Children’s Services’ is a new quarterly title designed to encourage the development of outcome-focused services to better safeguard and promote the well-being of vulnerable children and their families. It seeks to improve understanding of the way that child development and applied social research can contribute to the evidence base and increasing integration of children’s services (which includes activity organised by health, education, social care, police, youth justice and voluntary/independent agencies). High standards of evidence are encouraged and all articles are peer reviewed. The journal is essential reading for all those responsible for planning, delivering, researching and evaluating children’s services in a variety of settings both in the UK and internationally. For more information, see: Pavilion Publishing: www.pavpub.com.

Report on Children’s Rights in the EU

The European Children’s Network (EURONET), a coalition of networks and organisations campaigning at EU level for the interests and rights of children, launched the report “What about us? Children’s Rights in the EU” on 7 March 2006 at the European Parliament in Brussels. The report reveals that while the EU’s open borders have many advantages for European citizens, but they also pose risks for children. Child sex offenders are not adequately tracked when they travel between Member States and children are being trafficked into and across the EU with more ease. In Member States children also continue to suffer abuse and neglect. Every week two children die from abuse and neglect in the UK and Germany and three in France (2003 UNICEF report). For more information, see: http://www.europeanchildrensnetwork.org.

Reporting Guide for NGOs on the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children

The NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Focal Point on Sexual Exploitation, Violence and Abuse has recently published a “Guide for NGOs Reporting to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the Implementation of the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography”. This Guide aims at supporting reporting and monitoring processes under the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Since several mechanisms and benchmarks already exist in this area, it is essential that the Protocol be used as strategically and efficiently as possible to complement other global efforts in the fight against sexual exploitation of children. In
addition, the Guide provides background information on the drafting of the Protocol, a commentary on some of the first State parties’ reports, and information on the initial reporting processes observed during the 39th & 40th sessions of the Committee. For more information, see: http://www.againstsexualexploitation.org. To read the publication, see:
http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=733

Two new EAPN publications

EAPN officially launched on 15 February two new books aimed at contributing to the general debate on the future of Europe:

EAPN Book: “The EU We Want - Views from those fighting poverty and social exclusion on the future development of the EU”: This book, based on the experience of those fighting poverty and social exclusion, is a unique contribution to the current debate about the future of the European Union. It sets out to describe the present reality of the fight against poverty and social exclusion in the EU while at the same time illustrating, through personal stories, part of the experience which lies behind the shocking reality, that at least 72 million people face poverty in the EU Member States, according to Eurostat figures.


EAPN Manual on the management of the European Union Structural Funds, 2nd edition: This comprehensive manual is concerned with how NGOs may best influence the management of the Structural Funds so that they may be effectively directed toward the reduction and elimination of poverty and social exclusion in Europe. The second edition of the EAPN Manual on the management of Structural Funds, printed in English and French, has been publicised on the European Commission ‘Inferegio’ website as “a fresh look at Structural Funds management”.


These two new publications can be ordered and/or downloaded. Printed in English and French, both will be available shortly in other languages.

Publication on Children and Violence: Analysis of Alternative Reports 1990-2005

The NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child has recently published a study on how violence is reported in the different “settings” established by the UN Study on Violence Against Children (home, school, institutions, community, workplace) and according to regions. “Violence Against Children - What do NGOs know, What do NGOs say?” is an analysis of information relating to violence available in NGO reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child from 1990 to 2005. Since the NGO Group has been the facilitator of this reporting process over 15 years, it was natural for it to bring back to light this treasure of information and analyse it so as to contribute to the global findings and recommendations of the UN Study on Violence Against Children. For more information: http://www.crin.org/NGOGroupforCRC.

Conference Report from 4th Regional Meeting of Child Rights NGO Coalitions

On 8-10 March 2005, the Flemish Children’s Rights Coalition and the French speaking Children’s Rights Coalition of Belgium (CODE) organised the fourth regional meeting of NGO Coalitions for the Rights of the Child in Brussels. Participants from 24 countries in Europe, all NGOs working in networks to promote implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, took part in the meeting. The aims of the Meeting was to strengthen the association between child rights networks within the EU and to continue the exploration on how to work more effectively and efficiently, building on the work undertaken in the three previous forums (Berlin 1998; Stockholm 1999, Vilnius 2002). The meeting provided an opportunity to share NGO experiences across Europe and strengthen capacity and practice in promoting the rights of the child. For more information, see: http://www.lacode.be or http://www.kinderrchterencoalitie.be.

Publication on Children’s Rights in Peace building

Save the Children Norway has recently published a report of a seminar it held in 2005, on the occasion of the Children’s Rights Week. The report “Listen to Us! Children’s Rights in Peace Processes and Peace Agreements” focuses on children’s role in peace building activities. The seminar can be regarded as part of the ongoing work of Save the Children Norway to address the issue of children and young people affected by armed conflict, which includes ensuring children’s rights in peace agreements and supporting children’s initiatives for peace. Through the Oslo seminar “Building Peace out of war: Children and young people as agents of peace”, Save the Children Norway wanted to push the issue one step further, bringing together representatives from civil society at national and international level, academic institutions and NGOs and the Norwegian government. The seminar not only supported the Special Representative to the Secretary General’s call for an era of application, but also joined the proposal of an era of participation. For more information, see: http://www.reddbarna.no.

Teacher Pack on Education for Global Citizenship

Education for Global Citizenship: A Guide for Schools is a free booklet for teachers that introduces the key elements of Oxfam’s curriculum for Global Citizenship (knowledge, skills, and values), as well as providing case studies outlining best practice in the classroom, examples of appropriate teaching approaches, and resources for further reading. Developed in partnership with teachers and other educationalists, this curriculum builds on existing
good practice and recommends the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to which young people are entitled to enable them to develop as Global Citizens. For more information, see: http://www.oxfaminternational.org.

Guidebook for journalists: representing children in the media

This guidebook was written to assist media professionals and others to consider how the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child might impact upon the way children are represented in and by the media. The handbook outlines two milestones for children’s rights: the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and A World Fit for Children, the declaration adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2002. It contains International Federation of Journalists guidelines and over 60 useful international contacts for journalists seeking facts, figures, quotes and advice about children’s rights. To access the full document: http://www.eldis.org/cf/search/disp/DocDisplay.cfm?Doc=DOC20933&Resource=f1children

Self Assessment and Planning Tool for child led organisations

Save the Children has just released a set of three publications which are intended to help strengthen support to child led initiatives and organisations: "Strengthening Support to Child Led Organisations and Initiatives: the Spider Tool. Self assessment and planning tool for child led initiatives and organisations". In a colourful and reader-friendly format, these three publications provide a complete guide to using a Spider Tool which has been specially developed to help child led initiatives and organisations assess their own groups, what they are trying to achieve, what they feel they are good at and areas they would like to improve. The publications are based on a piloting of the tool by child led groups supported by Save the Children and partner organisations in seven countries and two regions during 2004-2005. For more information: http://www.savethechildren.org.np

Report on the promotion of inclusion for unaccompanied young asylum seekers

The European Social Network (ESN) has launched the project report "Promoting Inclusion for Unaccompanied Young Asylum Seekers and Immigrants – A Duty of Justice and Care". The report identifies deficiencies in the way unaccompanied young asylum seekers are currently being identified, received, and integrated. The report highlights that policies across the project partner countries are extremely varied, and are mostly reactive, fragmented and inconsistent. For more information, see: http://www.socialeurope.com/asylum.

Study of parents and children in disadvantaged communities

Groups of teenagers 'hanging out' on the streets may look intimidating, but young people often gang together with friends as a way of keeping safe and avoiding trouble, according to a study of parents and children in disadvantaged communities for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation: Parenting and children's resilience in disadvantaged communities. The research with families in four neighbourhoods of Glasgow found that young people pooled their detailed local knowledge to avoid hazards, including violence from more organised gangs and aggression from adults with drink and drug problems. They took responsibility for keeping themselves and friends safe by moving around in groups and looking out for each other, using mobile phones to stay in touch. The report calls on national and local policy makers to build on the strengths and aspirations of parents and children in disadvantaged areas, as well as tackling the heightened risks they face, such as drug misuse and antisocial behaviour. For more information, see: http://www.jrf.org.uk. For the publication, see: http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/details.asp?pubId=765.

Report on Malnutrition - Need to Target Pregnant Women and Children

A new World Bank report calls for more funding to combat malnutrition, but warns efforts should be targeted to pregnant women and children under two. It warns that trying to improve nutrition in children later in life is too late, too expensive and ineffective. The report, Repositioning Nutrition as Central to Development, says malnutrition remains the world’s most serious health problem. Poor nutrition is implicated in more than half of all child deaths worldwide - a proportion unmatched by any infectious disease since the Black Death. The report calls on the donor community to co-finance a grant fund to jumpstart action in commitment-building and action research, complementing a recent Bank US $3.5 million grant to help mainstream nutrition into maternal and child health programs. Concurrently substantive funding is needed for developing countries through existing funding channels, to scale-up actions to prevent malnutrition. For more information, see: http://www.worldbank.org.


The fourth report of the National Observatory on poverty and social exclusion (France) for 2005-2006 shows how poverty has evolved on the long term and for the recent period, as requested by the Law on the fight against exclusion of 29 July 1998, which is at the origin of the creation of the Observatory. The report presents the analyses and the views of the three ‘groups’ which make it up: representatives from economic and social administrations, high level personalities contributing or having contributed to the fight against poverty, academics and researchers. Available in French by clicking on the following link: http://lesrapports.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/BRP/064000163/0000.pdf
Surfing the Web

Special web page on EU communication policy

One of the main recommendations of the recent White Paper on Communication is the establishment of a framework which will define the rights of citizens to be fairly and fully informed on European policies. This can be done either via a non-binding Charter on Communication, which would state what citizens can expect from the institutions as regards their right to be informed, or via a voluntary Code of Conduct on Communication, which would bind various EU actors to respect good practices of communication. As part of the six months consultation on the Communication White Paper, the Commission presented on 1 March a special webpage (http://europa.eu.int/comm/communication_white_paper/charter_code/index_en.htm) where citizens can have their say as to the need for and the content of a Charter or a Code of Conduct. Until the 31 July 2006, contributions to the consultation can be sent by email or post.

Youth Voice Project

UNICEF has recently launched its new UNICEF Youth Voice site:
http://www.unicef.org.uk/youthvoice. Designed in consultation with young people, this site has now replaced UNICEF UK’s The Rights Site. Aimed at 11 to 18-year-olds, the site provides young people with news and information, as well as tips on fundraising, campaigning and spreading the word about children's rights. Young people can sign up to join UNICEF Youth Voice, a network of young people who want to help to create a world fit for children. They’ll receive a bi-monthly newsletter, featuring all the latest opportunities for young people in the UK. The UNICEF Youth Voice team welcomes any suggestion or comment. For more information, see: http://www.unicef.org.uk/youthvoice.

Finland’s EU Presidency website

A preliminary version of the official Finnish EU Presidency website is available online at: http://www.government.fi/vn/liston/base.lsp?r=90650&k=en. Material on the preparation of the Presidency is accessible, such as the provisional agenda and important meetings during the Presidency, the priorities of the Presidency and the operational programme of the Council for 2006.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Conference “Supporting young people too”
5 April 2006, Renfrewshire, UK

One day conference devoted to child development and the promotion of resilience in young people by looking at how we support those who are stressed and traumatised and by providing a holistic look at the support young people may need. Conference managed by Children in Scotland. Book online at www.childreninscotland.org.uk/syp.

Seminar on children without parental care in Eastern Europe

The International Foster Care Organisation’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). The IFCO 2006 Regional Training Seminar will be held in Bratislava in the residential conference centre established by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic. It will bring together people from across the region and beyond to share and learn together in a busy programme of plenary and workshop sessions. All those interested in the development of foster care in Eastern Europe are welcome to attend - places are limited. Those interested in submitting papers for a plenary or workshop session should refer to the IFCO web site after 1 March 2006 or send an email to Stela Grigoras. The submission deadline is: 14 April 2006.

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

As in March 2005, Eurochild AISBL will organise an Event in the European Parliament with socially excluded children. 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). The 12 young people from 6 European countries will present to the MEPs and other participants their experiences with involvement in the decision-making process in their country, whether it is at the local, regional or national level. For more information, please contact the Eurochild secretariat at +32 (0)2 511 70 83 or per e-mail: info@eurochild.org.

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); and 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: http://www.shef.ac.uk/cscy/conference2006/index.htm.

**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.

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

The **Institut International des Droits de l’Enfant (IDE)** 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 world-wide, 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 and 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 living with disabilities. Papers must focus on one or several of the issues addressed by the conference. Contributions will be presented during the seminar and given out to all the participants.

**Conference on "Non-formal and informal Learning – Key Aspects for Social Inclusion of Children and Young People" 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 (Arbeits-gemeinschaft 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.

Please note that this list does not pretend to be exhaustive!

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**Job openings with partner organisations**


**Solidar** is looking for a new Secretary General. Deadline: 12 April 2006. For more information, see: http://www.solidar.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.

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