Press Statement

1 March 2007                 Brussels

EU Fundamental Rights Agency a step forward for Children’s Rights

The European Children’s Network (EURONET), which brings together children’s rights organisations from across Europe, welcomes the establishment on 1st March of a new EU Agency for Fundamental Rights.

“The new Fundamental Rights Agency is a sign the EU is starting to take seriously its role in protecting and promoting fundamental rights, including children’s rights” said Simone Ek, President of EURONET.

“Many areas of EU activity affect children, whether it is combating child trafficking, promoting child-friendly employment policies or protecting children as consumers. Children’s organisations are optimistic the new Agency will help ensure the EU’s policies actively promote child rights as laid out in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and also the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – which all EU Member States have ratified” she continued.

The Agency comes in time to support the development of a new EU strategy on the rights of the child which was announced in 2006. “EURONET urges the Agency to play an active role in the forthcoming child rights strategy. It should put particular emphasis on children’s rights in its work programme including by collecting information on children’s rights in Europe” highlighted Mieke Schuurman, Secretary-General of the network.

EURONET also welcomes the commitment to close cooperation with the Council of Europe and civil society organisations. “The Agency must draw on the expertise of children’s NGOs by including them in the Fundamental Rights Platform. Building links with the new European Forum on the Rights of the Child will also ensure real momentum for children’s rights at EU level, to help bring tangible improvements for children across Europe and beyond” finished Ms. Schuurman.

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Note:
The European Children’s Network (EURONET) is a coalition of networks and organisations campaigning at a European level for the interests and rights of children. Its activities include policy development research, and projects involving children and young people directly.