INTRODUCTION

Welcome to issue Four of the Euronet European Children's Network newsletter. Its purpose is to keep you informed of Euronet’s actions and membership and to brief you on relevant developments in the European Union and member states’ policy with regard to children. The newsletter also aims to be a means of communication between NGOs at national level. Therefore, you are invited to report any initiative which is relevant to Euronet’s area of work, either by phone, fax or e-mail “savechildbru@skynet.be”. This issue contains some important and interesting features from activities from member organisations in Greece, France and Italy. For information on the contents and the distribution of the newsletter please contact Mieke Schuurman on the address above.

On Monday 11 January Mieke will return from her maternity leave.

27 and 28 JANUARY EURONET SYMPOSIUM

On 27 and 28 January the Euronet symposium will be held. This is the conclusion of the project ‘Children are European citizens too’. More than 70 people, including MEP’s, Commission representatives, NGOs, and other organisations specialised in children’s rights from in and outside the EU have registered.

The first day of the symposium will take place in European Parliament and will present the report ‘A children’s policy for 21st century Europe: first steps’. The morning includes several speeches by MEPs, Commissioner Flynn and specialists in children’s policy.

In the afternoon a question time panel, will answer questions on the report.

The second day will take place in a conference room in the Swissotel and will discuss the future role of Euronet in taking a children’s agenda forward, including three workshops: “Child
The workshops will run simultaneously which means participants can follow two workshops.
The afternoon program will focus on actions of Euronet member organisations at national level for instance the item “Elections and campaigning on children’, by Radda Barnen, and “National Platform in Spain” by Save the Children Spain.
Both days there will have interpretation in French and English.

It is still possible to register for the symposium. Please contact the Mieke Schuurman of Euronet as soon as possible by fax, telephone or E-mail.

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EURONET SYMPOSIUM
27 and 28 January 1999, Brussels

Symposium programme:

Wednesday 27 January 1999:
(Location: European Parliament, Rue Wiertz, room L 3 E2, Brussels)
Chair: Mr Bartho Pronk (Dutch MEP) and Mr. J.M. Mendiluce Pereiro (Spanish MEP).

11.00-11.10: Opening by Vice president of European Parliament*.
11.10-11.45: Presentation of the European Agenda for Action by Mrs. Purificacion Llaquet Balledou and a young person (Save the Children, Spain).
11.45-12.00: Speech by German presidency *
12.00-12.15: Speech by Commissioner Mr. Flynn*
12.30-13.00: Press conference
12.30-14.00: Lunch (in hall in front of the room)
14.00-16.00: Question time:
Responses to the European Children’s Agenda.
(5 minutes response on the agenda per person, followed by response to questions).
Chair: Mrs. Mary Banotti (MEP), Panel: Mrs. Soledad Blanco (European Commission DGV), Mrs. M.T. Hermange (MEP), representative German Presidency *, young person, Dr. Helen Agathonos (Euronet national contact person Greece), Mrs. Bilge Ogün Bassani (Unicef) and Mr. Helmut Wintersberger(Austrian Institute for Family Studies).
16.00: Closing speech by Vice President of European Parliament *
Thursday 28 January 1999:
(Location: Conference room in Swissotel, Rue de Parnasse 19, Brussels)

There will be 3 workshops:
1. Child protection (DAPHNE etc.) - (workshop leaders: Helen Agathonos (Euronet contact person Greece), Anthony Simpson (European Commission).
2. Citizenship, participation and rights - (workshop leaders: Luisa Maria Aguillar (BISE, Belgium), Purificacion Llaquet Balledou (Save the Children, Spain).
3. Campaigning and political work on the agenda for action - (workshop leaders: Diana Sutton (the international Save the Children Alliance) Sean Lawless (Focus on Children) and Simone Ek (Radda Barnen).

Morning: Plenary and workshops:
(Locations: Ballroom I (plenary) and conference 6 and 7 (workshops)

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>9.00-9.15</td>
<td>Opening and introduction on Euronet by Bill Bell (the international Save the Children Alliance, UK.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.30-9.45</td>
<td>Explaining the report by Sandy Ruxton.</td>
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<td>9.45-10.15</td>
<td>Coffee break (break out room).</td>
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<td>10.15-11.30</td>
<td>Workshop 1</td>
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<td>11.30-12.45</td>
<td>Workshop 2</td>
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<td>12.45-13.45</td>
<td>Lunch in restaurant.</td>
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Afternoon: Plenary session
(Location: Ballroom I)

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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>14.00-14.15</td>
<td>Presentation by national contact people:</td>
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<td>14.30-14.45: Presentation by COFRADE*</td>
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<td>14.45-15.30</td>
<td>Tea break</td>
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<td>15.30-16.00</td>
<td>Conclusions of the workshops and next steps by Bill Bell and Luisa Maria Aguillar.</td>
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<td>16.00</td>
<td>End of the day.</td>
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(*Speakers to be confirmed)

Report “A children’s policy for 21st Europe. First steps”
On the Euronet symposium of 27 and 28 January the report “A children’s policy for 21st century Europe. First steps” will be presented. This report is written by the independent researcher Sandy Ruxton and was commissioned by Euronet.
The report, which is also available in French, will be distributed by Euronet to all national contact people for distribution amongst decision-makers, MEP’s, experts and other specialist on child rights within their country.
A resume of the report will be available in the 11 European languages. This leaflet will be distributed by Euronet to all national contact people for further distribution.

NEWS FROM THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS
**Daphne Program discussed**
The Daphne report was discussed in the Women’s Rights Committee of European Parliament. The Daphne programme will be discussed by the Social Affairs Council under the German Presidency. And will use the legal basis of Article 235 of the Maastricht Treaty. Now is the time for Euronet members and other to write to their Social Affairs ministries to urge them to support adoption of the Daphne programme.

**Youth Resolution**
On the 26 November the Youth Resolution proposal from the Austrian EU Presidency was discussed at the Council of Ministers of Youth in the European Union. Euronet asked its member organisations to write a letter to their national governments requesting them to support this resolution. Fifteen Member States declared their support for this new Youth Resolution.

The resolution recommends that the European Commission and Parliament to give more consideration to the interests of young people and that they actively involve young people in their work. It also proposes that encouragement should be given to “participative youth projects”, to the exchange of experience and to the documentation of activities in this field. It must be one of the central tasks to increase participation of young people in the process of shaping European society in political, social and economic terms. Decisions taken at European and national levels have a long term impact on the future prospects and opportunities for the young generation, according the Resolution. Young people should therefore be granted a wider scope for active participation in European and national political affairs, the objective being to enable young people, on a step-by-step basis, to assume their share of both opportunities and responsibilities and to encourage them to become active citizens of the European Union.

The resolution main recommendations are:
* greater involvement of young people in decision-making processes at national, regional and local levels through democratically appointed representatives
* making the instruments of direct democracy accessible to young people at the local level
* strengthening the involvement of young people at local level to help overcome young people’s initial reluctance to participate
* adequate resources for this work

Copies from the Youth Resolution can be obtained from Mieke Schuurman.

**NEWS FROM THE EURONET MEMBERS**
**New initiatives in Greece**
In Greece two major initiatives at policy level were taken which target the strengthening of the position of children and youth at national level. The first is the launching of a National Observatory for Children and Youth in which one of Euronets Greek member organisations has been appointed as one of the members of the Executive Board.

What are the actual missions of this National Observatory?
* research into the situation of children and young people and into the problems needing immediate social and political intervention
* evaluation of existing laws on children
* evaluation of the implementation of these laws and the identification of needs and proposals for meeting them
* a data bank on statistical, legal and bibliographical information
* formation of an information bank on all public, NGO and private services and organisations for children and youth
* co operation with public bodies, Ministries and organisations for the drafting of the early Action Program for Youth, which will be discussed in Parliament

At present the National Observatory operates the General Secretariat for Youth of the Ministry of Education. Its official identity, as a “legal entity under private law” will soon be established. An Executive Board of nine members was appointed, one of which is Dr. Helen Agathanos.

The second Greek initiative was the launching of an Interministerial Committee on Youth. It was appointed by the Prime Minister. The participating ministries are: Education, Health and Welfare, Development, Agriculture, Labour and Social Security, Culture, General Secretariat for Youth.

The official launching of this committee was on 30 November in Athens.

The Initiative for Children and Youth Rights - a platform of five organisations in Greece within which EURONET operates - which has already been collaborating with the General Secretariat for Youth since 1996, will be working closely with both the National Observatory and the Initiative for Children and Youth Rights.

**COFRADE: New Euronet partner in France**

On 25 September a EURONET delegation, Luisa Maria Aguiller, Diana Sutton and Christine Benaim, met in Paris the important French network COFRADE. Following this meeting COFRADE agreed to become EURONET's partner in France. Since 1990, COFRADE (Conseil Francais des Associations pour les Droits de l'Enfant) consists of almost 120 associations and organisation members who all fight for the promotion and defence of the rights of the child.

COFRADE’s main target in France is to monitor the application of the International Convention of the Rights of the Child. This is done by raising the public awareness, working in committees and also by lobbying the public authorities. COFRADE is officially well known. COFRADE can assist Euronet by raising awareness within national NGOs in France on questions of Children’s Policy at European level. COFRADE can use its network within France and national MPs for introducing European items on children at Parliamentary level in France. COFRADE’s President, Henry Delaunay-Belleville, will be the representative in the Coordination Committee of EURONET. Together with BICE, the French member organisation of Euronet, he will inform the Conseil d’administration of COFRADE and its associated members about EURONET’s activities.

**Italy: second week of Communication between adults and children from 15-22 November**

“The second week of Communication between adults and children” took place all over Italy.

“If we don’t communicate, we do not educate each other”. This was the topic of the second week of communication between adults and children, an initiative of the BICE office promoted in collaboration with the 35 organisations of the Italian BICE network following the success of the first week of communication last year.

The second week of communication, which coincided with the 9th anniversary of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, took place from the 15th - 22 November. all over Italy with meetings, research and a conference on the Internet about Children’s rights. It attracted children as active participants during the week.

The second week of communication offered an important opportunity to reflect on the ways and quality of the present communication between children and their interlocutors and at the same time find out prospects and strategies aimed at implementing the UN Convention of the rights of the Child in Italy.
Contact details can be obtained from BICE, Italy, Isabelle Poli.

REGIONAL SEMINARS
As a part of the Euronet project ‘Children are European citizens too’ four regional seminars are being organised. The reports of two of these seminars are given below.

Paris seminar
On 25 September BICE (Bureau International Catholique de l'Enfance) organised the French regional seminar in Paris. The main item of this symposium was “The protection of children on a European level”.

The seminar attracted more than 30 participants, including MEP's, experts, Euronet members and NGO’s from France, Belgium and Luxemburg. In the morning there were several speeches on the different ways of protecting children in Europe. The European MEP Mrs. Marie-Therese Hermange, who vigorously defends the necessity of one common European children’s policy, pointed out that at this moment, as a result of insufficient legal bases, there are problems concerning the EU budget line for children.

In the afternoon there were two workshops, one on “Actions by European Parliament for the protection of children against exploitation and sexual abuse - Protection of children in the family” and “TV and media regulations: children as consumers. Rules on the use of Internet”. Participants discussed the importance of developing initiatives and projects which have a preventative character. This means that children have to be informed about their rights and that adults must feel responsible for children (parents, educators, professionals etc.) as are the decision-makers on child policy.

In the conclusions Luisa Maria Aguillar, EU representative of BICE, pointed out the great importance of working with a network for establishing a legal bases in the next Treaty of the European Union to clarify the situation and the place of children on European level.

Vienna seminar. Euronet seminar on participation
On 2 October the Euronet seminar in Vienna took place. The main item of discussion was youth participation in political decision-making.

In the past few years discussions about the possibility of increasing the role children and youth play in political decision-making has constantly arisen. Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states “States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views 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”. Throughout the 1990s, the consideration of the role of children and young people in society has intensified, including the acceptance of the child as independent subjects with rights.

The Federal Ministry of Environment, Youth and Family focussed on young people’s participation during the Austrian European Union Presidency. The Euronet symposium in Vienna organised by the Austrian Euronet member organisation Rettet das Kind -Oesterreich, in the framework of the European Campaign “Children are European citizens too”, focused on youth participation and especially on lowering the voting age. Thirty-five representatives from Austria, Belgium, Greece and the Netherlands took part in this seminar.

Participants, including young people themselves discussed different reasons why this should be a priority. As a young person put it ‘The average age of politicians in our country (Austria) is 67 years old. What would seniors say if they were represented by 25 year olds or younger people’. Study results were presented, which claimed that young people would not be interested in taking
part in political decision-making processes. The majority of participants agreed that comprehensive political education is needed. Lowering the voting age was seen as a possible instrument to increase young people’s political participation.

- **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**
  - **27 and 28 January, Brussels**
    Euronet Symposium in Brussels (see first page).

- **London:**
  15-18 June 1999: London. Conference on Environment and Health. This conference organised by UNED-UK will have as a main item the Environment and Child Health. For further information contact the Save the Children office in the UK.

- **LIST OF PUBLICATIONS**
  - **Euronet- A Proposal and Invitation: Building a Europe with and for children,** in English, French and Spanish (September 1997).
  - **Euronet- The Single Market - What is in it for Children?,** in English (February 1998).
  - **Euronet- Active Voices, Children’s Choices - Children as Citizens of Europe by Sandy Ruxton (researcher Euronet): a Discussion Document, in English and Spanish**
  - **Euronet- A Children’s Agenda for Europe,** outcome of Belfast conference, in English and Spanish. (May 1998)
  - **Newsletter of the International Save the Children Alliance (Brussels office):** this monthly newsletter gives more information on European issues for children as well as EU development policy related to children. It is produced once a month, in English, French and on e-mail.
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This newsletter is available in English and French and on e-mail. Euronet partners are encouraged to translate the newsletter in their own language or highlights of it. The Spanish member organisation Funcoe has done this for a number of existing Euronet publications. If you are translating the newsletter please let the Euronet coordinator know. Could you also inform her about any national initiatives which are planned. These can be included in the newsletter.