# NEWSLETTER

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(Introduction on page 1)
• INTRODUCTION

Welcome to issue seven of the Euronet, the 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’ policies concerning children. The newsletter also aims to be a means of communication between NGOs at national level. Therefore, you are invited to contribute on any initiative which is relevant to Euronet’s area of work, either by phone (+32 2 512 4500), fax (+32 2 512 6673) or e-mail “savechildbru@skynet.be”. This issues contains a section on the children’s unit Euronet wants to see established in the European Commission, a section on the new European Commission and the European Parliament. Some national platforms have been organising meetings to promote the Euronet report “A Children’s Policy for 21st Century Europe: First Steps”, this reported in this newsletter. Euronet has now its own website with information about the European Children’s Network, all Euronet publications and reports, and links to other interesting websites on children’s rights.

Please note that there will be a reception in the new European Parliament on 3 November 1999 at 18.30 organised by Euronet. It will be preceded by a meeting with MEPs, Commission officials and Euronet members and an exhibition. Euronet aims to introduce the network to new MEPs and to involve them in working for the rights of the child. If you have questions, ideas or remarks on the newsletter please contact Mieke Schuurman at the address above.

EURONET CALLS FOR CHILDREN’S UNIT IN THE NEW EUROPEAN COMMISSION

One of the key recommendations Euronet made in the report “A Children’s Policy for 21st Century Europe: First Steps” was the need for a Children’s Unit to provide overall leadership on children’s issues across the Commission. With the installment of a new Commission and the reform of the structure of the Commission, now is the time that a coordinating Children’s Unit should be established.

Why is a specific Children’s Unit necessary? At the moment children’s policy and issues affecting children are dealt with in a number of different Directorate Generals, reflecting the current different competencies of the different parts of the Commission. Several DGs, such as the Secretariat General (Daphne and STOP Programmes to combat sexual abuse and child trafficking), DG V (equal opportunities, civil dialogue and non discrimination), DG IB and DG VIII (children in development and human rights budgetlines), DG X (children, media and information policy), DG XXII (youth and education policy), DG XXIII (child sex tourism), DG XXIV (children as consumers), are dealing with specific policies affecting children and currently interservice groups exist between Directorates Generals working on related issues. These arrangements need strengthening to ensure effective coordination of policies for children.

A Children’s Unit could provide overall leadership on children’s issues across the Commission. Euronet believes that this Unit should be based in the Secretariat General.

Response from President new Commission Romano Prodi
Euronet has written to the new President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, to inform him about our concerns. President Prodi replied stating that policy affecting children will remain high on the European agenda. He stressed that he noted Euronet’s suggestions with interest and would bear them in mind as he was drawing up new Commissioner’s portfolios and restructuring the Commission services. Mary Banotti MEP also wrote to President Prodi about the need for greater co-ordination within the Commission. He replied to her that this is a subject, which by its nature, will always cut across the work of several departments, but that it is to be hoped that the proposed creation of a new department for Justice and Home Affairs in the new Commission may go some way towards meeting better co-ordination. Euronet warmly welcomes such a positive response from the President of the European Commission and hopes that children will be high on the new Commission’s agenda.

Euronet has also sent questions to the new MEPs to ask during the hearing with the candidate Commissioners, including one on the children’s unit.

What can you do?
You can write to your new MEPs and raise the issue of a Children’s unit with him/her and explain why it is so important. Euronet can provide a model letter.

EURONET WEBSITE:  http://europeanchildrensnetwork.gl.ac.uk

Euronet has its own website in English and French giving details of Euronet’s activities and publications.

On Euronet’s website you will find general information about Euronet and the Euronet publications and newsletters in English and French and in other languages when available. The website provides information on forthcoming events organised by Euronet’s member organisations and Euronet and it provides links to websites of Euronet’s members, documents from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Council of Europe, the Child Rights Information Network, Childwatch International, the International Labour Organisation and some websites from national Ministries. You can also leave your comments on issues concerning the rights of the child on the interactive page of the website.

If you have any events or links you would like to have included on the website please communicate this to: The Centre for Europe’s Children, which hosts the website, to Sheena Ritchie, email: S.Ritchie@socsci.gla.ac.uk.

NEWS FROM THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

The new European Commission
The new European Commission has been confirmed after hearings by the European Parliament this month. The new Commissioners which have particular relevance on children’s issues are:

**Commissioner Anna Diamantopoulou** - Greek Commissioner responsible for DGV - Employment and Social Affairs. This DG includes key debates on non-discrimination, social exclusion, civil dialogue and equal opportunities. In her written response to questions of the European Parliament, Commissioner Diamantopoulou mentions children and young people. One of the issues she stresses is the fight against child labour. She attaches particular importance to compliance with the ban on work by children and effective implementation of all the provisions of Community Directive 94/33/EC on the protection of young people at work, which prohibits work by children in even stricter terms, in all Member States of the European Union. To another question concerning the promotion of a social culture for children and young people she stresses the impact the Commission can make on the lives of those children and young people who do not presently share in the EU’s economic and social progress. She also recognizes that children and young people are the main victims of social exclusion and poverty in families. Employment is where solutions can be found according to Anna Diamontopoulou. Other aspects of social exclusion which harm the prospects of children and young people and which are not labour market related, such as housing, health, discrimination, educational opportunity are the responsibilities of the Member States. Commissioner Anna Diamontopoulou stressed that she intends to ensure that the benefits from the social dimension of European integration are used to improve the prospects of all Europe’s children and young people.

**Commissioner Antonio Vitorino** - Portuguese Commissioner responsible for Freedom, Security and Justice. His department will be the Justice and Home Affairs Directorate General. His work includes the Daphne and STOP Programme - sexual abuse of children, and asylum and immigration issues.

**Commissioner Viviane Reding** - Luxembourgish Commissioner for Education and Culture. She will be responsible for Citizens’ Europe, Transparency, Education and Culture and the Publications Office. This DG has many programmes on youth and education and has been merged with the former DG X on media and culture.

**Commissioner David Byrne**, Irish Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection. This includes legislation to protect children from dangerous goods.

Once the new Commissioners are in office Euronet will send them letters to introduce Euronet and raise our concerns relating to children.

For more information about the new European Commission you can consult the Commission’s website on “http://europa.eu.int/comm/newcomm/”.

New European Parliament
Euronet’s meeting, reception and exhibition in European Parliament
To present Euronet’s work and its member organisations to the new European Parliament Euronet is organising a presentation followed by a reception on 3 November 1999 in the European Parliament. The meeting will start at 17.00 in room 5H1, followed by the reception in the Bar Forum on the third floor of the Spinelli building near the bridge. Euronet hopes to establish relationships with MEPs interested in the promotion of children’s rights and to start cooperating with them on EU legislation and policies which affect children. Euronet will also present an exhibition. For more information please contact Mieke Schuurman.

In June the elections of the European Parliament took place. Many Euronet members sent letters before the elections to the candidate MEPs or organised meetings with them to ask them about their commitment to children’s rights in Europe. Euronet members in Ireland, Spain, Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, Sweden and the UK wrote letters to the candidate MEPs. In Italy and Sweden, meetings were organised with candidates.

The new European Parliament looks very different from the former one. The European People’s Party (EPP), a group consisting of Christian-Democrats and Conservatives, and the Party of Socialists (PES) have reversed roles, in that the EPP is now the biggest group in the European Parliament with 224 seats and the PES with 180 seats the second biggest group. The Green Group is now the third largest group in the European Parliament followed by the Liberals. Several key MEPs who worked on children’s issues have not been reelected. Others who have been very active in the former European Parliament, such as Mary Banotti MEP (Ireland), Lissy Gröner MEP (Germany), Marie Therese Hermange MEP (France), Anna Terron I Cusi MEP (Spain), Hiltrud Breyer (Germany) have been reelected. Euronet will be trying to establish new contacts with MEPs who are interested in children’s issues. Some Euronet members have written to their new MEPs to introduce Euronet and European children’s issues. Please let the Brussels office know about responses you received to your letters. If you have not sent a letter, there is still time to do this. Please contact Mieke Schuurman for a model letter.

For more information about the new European Parliament you can consult the Parliament’s website on “http://www.europarl.eu.int”.

Youth for Europe Programme
Young people in Ireland and Spain have indicated that they would like to develop their own young people’s version of the Euronet report “A Children’s Policy for 21st Century Europe: First Steps”. Therefore, Euronet’s members BICE (International Catholic Child Bureau), Focus on Children (Ireland) and Save the Children have submitted a project to the Youth for Europe Programme to start a young people’s network within Euronet and to develop a young people’s version of the agenda for Europe. If the application were to be successful the project would start at the end of this year. The next newsletters will keep you informed on this.
Next Revision of EU Treaty

After the founding of Euronet in October 1995 Euronet’s members were active in lobbying and representing children’s interests to national Governments, MPs, the European Commission and MEPs. Euronet’s campaign gained the support of many of those involved in the IGC process including several Government Ministers and Prime Ministers. The result of this lobbying was that, for the first time in the history of the EU, children had been given and explicit mention in the new Amsterdam Treaty of 1997. However the new Treaty did not incorporate the respect for the fundamental principles of children’s rights and it gives very limited competence to the EU to work on children’s issues.

The Amsterdam Treaty which has just come into force will be subject to review again at another Intergovernmental Conference (IGC). The German Presidency at the Cologne summit prioritised several issues for this revision of the EU Treaty. They include mainly institutional issues such as the reform of the European Commission. However, a charter of fundamental citizens rights is under discussion for inclusion in the next EU Treaty. This should also include children’s rights. The new President of the European Commission Romano Prodi is supporting a more ambitious agenda for the review of the Treaty, which is supported by the European Parliament. However the final decision lies with the member states. The Finnish Presidency will draw up a comprehensive report on the IGC, which will be discussed at the Tampere Summit in Finland in October. It is likely that the IGC will then be convened under the Portuguese Presidency in March and then completed under the French Presidency with a Treaty of Paris by the end of 2000.

NEWS FROM EURONET MEMBERS

National Euronet Organisations promoting Euronet Agenda

Several member organisations of Euronet have been organising meetings with other children’s NGOs in their countries to promote the Euronet report “A Children’s Policy for 21st Century Europe: First Steps”.

Meetings have been organised in Ireland, Greece, Belgium (French speaking) and Portugal and Spain. Forthcoming meetings of national platforms of children’s NGOs are going to be organised in Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Finland and the UK. The meeting in Austria will take place on 29 September in Vienna. The contact person for this meeting is Paul Arzt, tel: +43 (0)662-430550, fax: +43(0)662 430590, e-mail: kija@salzburg.co.at.

In the UK the AGM of the Children’s Rights Alliance for England will take place on 6 November, where it is hoped to establish a small group working on European issues. For more information contact Demet Dayanch, tel: +44 2072788222, fax: +44 2072789552, e-mail: info@crights.org.uk.

The meeting in Finland will take place on 26 November. The contact person for this meeting is Eeva-Liisa Wallius, tel: +358 13 264 52 00, fax: +358 13 264 52 15, e-mail: eeva.liisa.wallius@pela.fi.
The meeting in the Netherlands will take place on 3 December in Utrecht. The contact person for this meeting is Annemieke Wolthuis of DCI/NL, tel: +31 20 4203771, fax: +31 20 4203832, e-mail: dcinl@wxs.nl.

**Child Rights Information Network (CRIN)**

At the beginning of this summer Euronet took part in a meeting organised by CRIN to discuss the regionalisation of the CRIN Network. Euronet was asked to play a role in setting up a regional child rights information network in Europe.

The Child Rights Information Network (CRIN) is a very useful information network for any organisation dealing with children’s rights. CRIN is a global network of children’s rights organisations striving to improve the lives of children by promoting the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, by exchanging information about children’s rights and by developing networking tools and capacity building for information exchange among CRIN’s members. CRIN’s members come from United Nations agencies, from international and national NGOs, grassroots organisations and youth groups. CRIN produces a quarterly newsletter with news about the network, members, events, etc. CRIN also has its own web site: http://www.crin.org. This web site on children’s rights issues has references to hundreds of publications, up to date news on major children’s rights events, reports submitted to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, details of hundreds of children’s rights organisations, theme desks on different subjects such as child labour, children and media, initiatives against the sexual exploitation of children and links to many other web sites. The CRIN network also has a CRINMAIL which is an email list linking hundreds of organisations together. This email list is used by CRIN members to advertise their activities, announce new publications, request information, etc. All information on the CRIN network is in English, although an organisation in Latin America has taken up the initiative to translate email messages into Spanish.

To join CRIN you can register with the Coordinator of the Child Rights Information Network, 17 Grove Lane, London SE5 8RD, United Kingdom, fax: +44 171 793 7626, email: crin@pro-net.co.uk

**AGORA: Children and Media Conference**

Euronet was represented at the AGORA meeting on Children and Media organised by the European Children’s Television Centre in Thessaloniki, Greece in June 1999. There was a special children’s meeting involving workshops on different types of media. Participants included those working in the media, programme and film makers, UNICEF, the European Commission. Euronet had a stand and gave a presentation at this meeting.

The purpose of the Conference was to prepare for the Third World Summit on Children and Media which will take place from 11-15 March 2001 in Thessaloniki. An advisory committee was formed which had its first meetings during the conference. Euronet is represented on the Advisory Committee for the World Conference.
During the Conference there were also special meetings with the European Commission, DG X and DG XXII, who want to create a Task Force within DG X (audiovisual media) with DG XXII (education/youth) for cooperation between the different DGs dealing with children and media. In addition, they would like to have a wider cooperation and coordination with the European Commission on children in general. The Task Force could also function to inform people working in the media about projects financed by the Commission and to exchange information between people working in the media in different EU countries on European projects they are involved in.

For more information on the World Summit in March 2001 you can contact Alexandros Athanassiadis, European Children’s Television Centre, 20, Analipseos, str., Vrilissia, 15235 Athens, Greece; tel: +30 1 68 51 258, fax: +30 1 68 17 987, e-mail: summit@childrens-media.org, internet address: http://www.childrens-media.org.

Forthcoming Events

- **Brussels, Belgium**
  **27 September 1999:** Roundtable discussion: Challenges and opportunities in improving the lives of children in difficult circumstances, organised by Rädda Barnen EU office and the European Network of Street Children Worldwide (ENSCW). For more information contact Gloria Macias Svensson, tel: +32 2 7321800, fax: +32 2 7322115, e-mail: gloria.svensson@bryssel.lo.se.

- **Portugal**
  **12 October 1999:** Conference on the integration of children in politics organised by the National Commission on the Rights of the Child. For more information contact Jorge Ferreiro, Instituto de Apoio à Criança (IAC), tel: +351 1 362 17 93, fax: +351 1 362 47 56.

- **Venice, Italy**
  **Autumn 1999:** European Seminar on the issue of children and justice, organised by BICE Italy. For further information contact Isabella Poli, tel/fax: + 39 0573 401804, e-mail: “biceit@tin.it”.

- **Sinaia, Romania**
  **28-29 October 1999:** “Roma children in Europe, a national Plan of Action”, organised by Salvati Copiii and Rädda Barnen EU-office. For more information contact Gloria Macias Svensson, tel: +32 2 7321800, fax: +32 2 7322115, e-mail: gloria.svensson@bryssel.lo.se.

- **Brussels, Belgium**
  **3 November 1999:** 17.00 hr Euronet meeting in room 5H1, European Parliament, Rue Wiertz 47, Brussels followed by a reception at 18.30 in the Bar Forum at the Spinelli building. For more information contact Mieke Schuurman, Euronet co-ordinator, tel: +32 2 512 4500, fax: +32 2 512 6673, e-mail: savechildbru@skynet.be.
• **United Kingdom**
  **9 November 1999**: Launch of the report UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 10th Anniversary. For more information contact Bill Bell, tel: +44 171 7035400, fax: +44 171 7937610, e-mail: b.bell@scfuk.org.uk.

• **Braga, Portugal**
  **17-20 November 1999**: International Congress on Child Social and Cultural worlds organised by the Institute of Child’s Studies from the University of Minho. For more information contact Instituto de Estudos da Criança da Universidade do Minho, tel: +351 53 616685, fax: +351 53616684, e-mail: piip@iec.uminho.pt.

• **Spain**
  **20 November 1999**: Forum with children from different Spanish regions, with children from France and Portugal on the tolerance between the regions. For further information contact Purificación Llaquet Baldellou, Save the Children Spain, tel: +34 91 5130500, fax +34 91 5523272, e-mail: "stch@savethechildren.es”

• **Brussels, Belgium**
  **19-26 November 1999**: Exhibition on street and working children, organised by Rädda Barnen EU office and ENSCW in the European Parliament. For more information contact Gloria Macias Svensson, tel: +32 2 7321800, fax: +32 2 7322115, e-mail: gloria.svensson@bryssel.lo.se.

• **Brussels, Belgium**
  **27-28 November 1999**: Symposium on « Children’s needs and resources for concerted action at a European scale: A socio-demographical analysis», organised by BICE (International Catholic Child’s Bureau), in collaboration with the University of Louvain. BICE carried out a research, in collaboration with the department of sociology and anthropology from the University of Louvain, on life conditions among young and children in 5 European countries. on the following themes: everyday life structures, socio-economic aspects, health and well-being, school situations, judicial statistics. Results of this research will be presented at the symposium. For more information contact Luisa Maria Aguillar, BICE, tel: + 32 2 231 03 88, fax: + 32 2 230 11 33, e-mail: bice@village.uunet.be.

• **Barcelona, Spain**
  **30 November 1999**: “Children and War” organised by Save the Children Spain and Rädda Barnen EU-office. For more information contact Gloria Macias Svensson, tel: +32 2 7321800, fax: +32 2 7322115, e-mail: gloria.svensson@bryssel.lo.se.

• **Ghent, Belgium**
  **10-17 December 1999**: The International Interdisciplinary Course on Children’s Rights organised by the Children’s Rights Centre of the University of Ghent. The course is meant for professionals from governmental as well as non-governmental organisations who are working on the implementation of children’s rights on national or international level. Also
academics, people who are professionally working with children in different domains and child advocates working in a broad social field are invited to take part in the course. The registration fee is 49.000 BEF/1.650 US$. Registration for the course can be done with the University of Ghent - Children’s Rights Centre, Henri Dunantlaan 2, B-9000 Ghent - Belgium. For more information contact Kathy Vlieghe, Tel: +32 9 2646281, Fax: +32 9 2646493, e-mail: Kathleen.Vlieghe@rug.ac.be.

• LIST OF PUBLICATIONS


• Euronet -Leaflet ‘ Children are European Citizens Too’, in 11 European languages.


• 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)

• Euronet Report of the Austrian Seminar “Participation of Children and Youth in Political Decision Making-Processes. Is the lowering of the Age Limit for Political Participation an Answer for Europe?” , in English. (October 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, on e-mail and on the website. Euronet partners are encouraged to translate the newsletter in their own language or highlights of it. The Spanish member organisation 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.