NEWSLETTER

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EURONET WEBSITE:
HTTP://EUROPEANCHILDRENSNETWORK.GLA.AC.UK
• INTRODUCTION

Welcome to issue ten 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 articles on any initiative which is relevant to Euronet’s work, either by phone (+32 2 512 4500), fax (+32 2 512 6673) or e-mail “savechildbru@skynet.be”. This issue contains an update on the work on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, which now contains a draft article on children’s rights. It also gives a report of the seminar on social exclusion and discrimination which took place in Portugal and an update of other activities organised in the Euronet project on social exclusion and non-discrimination. The youth project is on its way and children and young people in five European countries are meeting and discussing European issues. There is also information on the World Summit for children which will be organised by the UN in September 2001.

If you have questions, ideas or remarks about the newsletter or if you would like to receive the newsletter by email, please contact Mieke Schuurman at the address above.

NEWS FROM THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

EU Charter of Fundamental Rights:
Hearing with the Convention and a Specific Article on the Rights of the Child

On 27 April Euronet was invited to present during a hearing its position with regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights to members of the Convention. A few weeks later a new draft was presented to the Convention on civil and political rights. Euronet welcomed the fact that this draft contains a specific article on the rights of the child.

Hearing with the Convention

At the hearing with the Convention about sixty organisations presented their positions. Several mentioned the need to support and protect children in the Charter, some in relation to the family, others in relation to the sexual exploitation of children. AFEM, the Association of Southern European Women, supported Euronet’s position during the hearing. Several organisations stressed the need to make the Charter binding.

Euronet presented its position on the need for a specific article on the rights of the child in the Charter. Euronet argued that children need a separate expression of their rights in the Charter because firstly, existing international standards, notably the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, have established the importance of children having their own sets of rights. Secondly, children have not always been accepted as holders of rights and animals have often been given rights before children. Thirdly, children are a special category of people who have specific needs which are different from adults, and who often lack the
ability to protect themselves and have few opportunities to speak for themselves. Fourthly, children are all too often ‘invisible’ in the actions, legislation, programmes and policy of the European institutions. Euronet also presented suggestions for a specific text for the Article on Children’s Rights in the EU Charter. The first proposal was to include an overall reference on children’s human rights in the introduction to the Convention: “The Union shall respect and promote children’s rights, as guaranteed by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted on 20 November 1989”. The second proposal integrates children’s rights into the different categories of rights: “The European Union shall ensure that all EU activities are fully compatible with the principle of the best interests of the child as a primary consideration as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child”.

Article on Children’s Rights drafted by Convention

In the Draft Charter of Fundamental Rights on civil and political rights of 5 May 2000 (12.05), Convent 28, there is a specific Article on Children’s Rights, Article 23. The text of the Article is ‘Children must be treated as equal individuals, they must be allowed to influence matters pertaining to their person to a degree corresponding to their maturity’. This Article has been drafted in response to requests from Euronet and is based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Ms Maij-Weggen and Ms Hermange, members of the Convention, have tabled amendments on Article 23 in cooperation with Euronet. The amendment of Ms Maij-Weggen has taken over the proposed text by Euronet and makes a direct reference to the UN CRC within the Article. The amendment of Ms Hermange refers to two main principle of the UN CRC: the primacy of the best interests of the child and the right to participation. In the statement of reasons a reference to the UN CRC is made as the most universally ratified Treaty and as a minimum standard for the rights of the child.

Euronet has written a briefing on the Draft Charter and the amendments to the Convention, which states that our preference is for a direct reference to the UN CRC within the Article on Children’s Rights. If this is rejected a reference to the main principles of the UNCRC must be included. Euronet has also made a recommendation for amendment to Article 13 on Family Life, to support the family in giving children the special care and protection they need, which is another important principle of the UN CRC.

On 16 May (18.05) the Convention issued a Draft Charter on economic and social rights, Convent 34. In this Convention Article 37 refers to the protection of young people, in relation to employment. Euronet believes that not only young people but also children need protection in this respect and that a reference to ILO Convention 182 on the worst forms of child labour needs to be included in the statement of reasons.

Timetable
The timetable for adoption of the Charter has been accelerated. At the European Council in Oporto-Feira, Portugal, 13/14 June the President of the Convention, Mr Herzog, will make a first presentation to the Council. The final adoption of the Charter by the Convention is planned for 11 and 12 September 2000. The Council in Biarritz on 12 and 13 October 2000 will take a decision on the Convention contents and the Council in Nice in December 2000 will take a decision on whether the Charter will become binding or not.
Action

- Contact your national members in the Convention and ask them to support the amendments of Ms Maij-Weggen and Ms Hermange. This should be done preferable before the end of June. On 20, 29 and 30 June the amendments will be discussed by the Convention. On 19 July the definitive text will be drafted by the Praesidium on the basis of the contributions and discussion of the Convention.

- Contact your government and ask them to support the inclusion of an Article on Children’ Rights in the EU Charter and to make the Charter legally binding.

For more information on Euronet’s work on the EU Charter contact Mieke Schuurman.

New Youth Action Programme

A Youth Action Programme was adopted by the European Parliament on April 12 and formally agreed by the Council during the same month. The new Youth Programme brings together existing actions such as the “Youth for Europe” programme and the “European Voluntary Service”. The Programme has a budget of 520 million Euro for seven years until 2006.

The new Youth Programme aims at fostering co-operation in the area of youth policy, through informal education and training measures and exchanges of young people within the Community as well as with third countries. The objectives of the programme are to among others to encourage young people to contribute to the building of Europe, to help to promote human rights, encourage young people’s initiative and strengthen co-operation in the field of youth.

Shortly an extra call for proposals might be issued for the new Youth Programme. The deadline will be 15 June 2000. Another call for proposals will be issued with a deadline for 1 September 2000. There are also a lot of possibilities for smaller projects which can be applied for with the national agencies of the European Commission. These projects include European youth exchanges, voluntary work, youth initiatives and support measures. The budgets for these projects vary per project but could go up to 10,000 Euro and up to 100% could be financed depending on the type of project. Deadlines for applications are throughout the whole year and the national Commission offices select the projects. A Users’ Guide for these projects can be found on the website europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth.html. For more information, contact Ms Bonnefoy, European Commission, Youth Programme, Rue Belliard 7, 1040 Brussels, tel: +32 2 2967231, fax: +32 2 2994158, e-mail: Florence.BONNEFOY@cec.eu.int.

European Parliament Committee decides on Ban of Phthalates in Toys

On 24 May the European Parliament Committee on Environment, Public Health and Consumer Policy decided to ask the Commission for a ban of all phthalates in soft polyvinylchloride (PVC) toys and child care articles for children under three. In Addition, all
**soft PVC toys and childcare articles for children 3-6 need to have a warning label on the packaging when they contain phthalates.**

Euronet wrote to all members of the European Parliament Committee on Environment to ask them to take the best interests of the child (Article 3 UN CRC) into consideration when voting on the Commission proposals for amending directives on phthalates in toys. Euronet believes that there is sufficient doubt and uncertainty regarding the effect of phthalates in toys on small children. Therefore children’s interests should prevail above commercial considerations when EU legislation is made and affects them. The European Parliament Committee on Environment voted in favour of children's interests in the report drafted by Per-Arne Arvidsson MEP: 45 votes in favour with 3 against. The report will now be debated and voted on in the plenary of the European Parliament in June.

**Calls for Proposals**

**Preparation for the implementation of the proposed action programme on combating discrimination (B5-803)**

This call for proposals focuses on the exchange of information and good practice in combating discrimination in the framework of Article 13 of the EC Treaty, the article on non-discrimination. The Commission wishes to subsidise initiatives which contribute to the development of policies and practice to combat discrimination on grounds of racial and ethnic origin, religion and belief, disability, age and sexual orientation. Priority will be given to those initiatives which tackle multiple discrimination. Partners must come from at least four Member States and will involve a variety of partners (e.g. NGOs, universities, local authorities). The Commission will fund up to a maximum of 80% of the total eligible costs. There will be two deadlines for submission of applications, 22 May 2000 and 1 August 2000, with funds divided two-thirds and one-third respectively. Application forms and guidelines are available from the internet at [http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg05/tender_fr.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg05/tender_fr.htm) or by emailing a request to antidiscrimination@bxl.dg5.cec.be or sending a fax to +32 2 295 18 99, or a written request to: the European Commission, Directorate General EMPL/D/4 – J37 2/2, Rue Joseph II, B-1049 Brussels.

**Supporting the Commission’s research work in the area of social affairs**

This call is aimed at generating quantitative data, analyses and methodologies based on the most recent knowledge and experience in Europe in the areas concerned. Grants will only be awarded to transnational projects that make a significant contribution to improving the Union’s knowledge base on social phenomena and their changing pattern in European society. This call includes the target group children. Priority areas are social quality, demographic trends and the knowledge society. The Commission will fund up to a maximum of 60% of the total eligible costs with a minimum amount of 50 000 Euros. Deadline for applications are 30 May 2000 and 22 September 2000. Application forms can be obtained from: the European Commission, Employment Directorate E.1, Rue de la Loi 200, J127 0/233 (P. Bacchielli), B-1049 Brussels.
EURONET CAMPAIGNS

Building a Young People’s Network
Youth and Children’s groups in five EU Member States, Belgium, Italy, Spain, the UK and Ireland have started to meet and discuss European themes. The discussions are taking place within the Youth for Europe Project which aims to set up a Young people’s network and aims that young people should develop their own European Agenda.

Different methods are used by the youth groups. Some groups in Belgium and the UK go beyond their own groups and carry out questionnaires with other young people. For example in Belgium these questionnaires are submitted at their schools or to other groups of young people in their community. In the UK interviews are carried out with young people from different backgrounds, such as refugees, disabled young people, drugs users, youngsters from single parent families, children excluded from education, etc. In Italy, some groups are looking at their local situations and look at information provided by newspapers, magazines, the internet, and contact other groups of children in order to produce an interactive text. More than 450 children and young people are involved in Italy and they will have a children’s and young people’s seminar on 30 June in Rome to prepare a report for the Dublin meeting in October. In Ireland the groups intend to work with the internet and e-mail to contact other groups in Ireland and the rest of Europe.

Among the themes which are chosen by the young people and children in the different countries are education, health, employment, social exclusion, media and internet, participation, discrimination and racism and sexual exploitation.

For more information on the youth project you can contact the youth co-ordinator Alain Aussems (BICE/Belgium), tel: +32 2 231 0388; fax: +32 2 2301133; e-mail: aussems@gate71.be.

On 22 November there will be a meeting in the European Parliament in Brussels where the children and young people will present their European Agenda and their Network to the EU institutions. For more information on the final meeting and how you can be involved in this contact Luisa Maria Aguillar (BICE), tel: +32 2 231 0388; fax: +32 2 2301133; bice@village.uunet.be or Mieke Schuurman.

Euronet Campaign on Non-discrimination, Social Inclusion and building the Participation of Children

Euronet Seminar in Porto calls on Portuguese Presidency to include Children in Social Inclusion Programme
On 5 May Cooperativa “Mais Criança”, a network of Portuguese children’s NGOs, academics and researchers, organised a seminar within the framework of the Euronet project on non-discrimination, social inclusion and participation of children. The theme of
the seminar was social exclusion and discrimination of children. At the end of the day the seminar adopted a resolution which was presented to the Portuguese Presidency.

At the seminar, at which 130 persons participated, there were several panels with different speakers. One panel looked at European perspectives of a social policy for children, another panel talked about practical experiences around child abuse and children and the media in Europe. One round table talked about poverty and social exclusion indicators and about a regional project for children in Spain. At the end of the day there was a panel of young people from a socially deprived area in Porto, who talked about their experiences in their neighbourhood, such as school, violence and drug use. Many children drop out of school since they need to work to help their family and are not able to pay school expenses.

During the seminar participants from Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece worked on a resolution which was adopted at the end of the seminar and was handed over to the Portuguese Presidency. The resolution stated that children should be included in the Social Inclusion and the Non-discrimination Programmes of the European Commission. The resolution also called on the Council to identify priority areas to better support children and young people living in “excluded territories”, through the coordination of social policies and the adoption of positive discrimination measures, as an emergency strategy to combat exclusion and promote full social integration. The resolution also recommended to create a Permanent Observatory for Childhood and Youth, within the framework of the European Union. It was also requested to reinforce the participation of children and the European Commission was asked to write the communication on the rights of the child.

Cooperativa “Mais Criança” will make a full report of the seminar. The full text of the resolution can be obtained from Mieke Schuurman.

Regional Seminars
Three more seminars will be organised by other members of Euronet in which different aspects of discrimination and social exclusion will be discussed. On 30 June Defence for Children International Section the Netherlands will organise a seminar around the theme of discrimination of children. This seminar will look at the discrimination of children in different countries of the European Union (the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Austria), at discrimination of children in institutions and bullying in schools. For more information contact Annuska Overgaag, PO Box 75297, 1070 AG Amsterdam, the Netherlands, tel: +31 20 4203771, fax: +31 20 4203832, e-mail: dcinl@wxs.nl.

Another seminar will be organised by COFRADE in France at the end of September or beginning of October. Save the Children – Finland will organise a seminar for the Northern European countries at the beginning of September. More information will follow in the next newsletter.

Final Conference on 23 November in Brussels
The project will close with a conference in the European Parliament at which the results of the consultation with children and young people in Europe, the seminars and the research
will be presented to representatives from the EU institutions. Please note the date of 23 November 2000 in your diaries.

**How to get involved?**
If you have information on how children experience discrimination or social exclusion, please send this to the co-ordinator of the project, Mieke Schuurman. On the basis of this a report will be written by researcher Gerison Landsdown, commissioned by Euronet. For more information on this project you can contact Mieke Schuurman.

**NEWS**

**Global Partnership for Children: World Summit for Children in 2001**

In September 2001 the United Nations General Assembly will organise a special session on children. The aim of this world summit is to examine the achievements of the past decade for children in the world and to make proposals for a new century. The global partnership for children is a call to all leaders to mobilize for children and young people everywhere. The initiative is sponsored by Nelson Mandela and Graca Machel and UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy.

Ten years after the first World Summit for Children Governments all over the world have been asked by the Secretary General of the UN to prepare end-decade reviews of what has been achieved for children in their countries. Indicators have been provided which were derived from the goals adopted at the last World Summit for children. However, the vast majority of children in industrialized countries, such as the EU countries are now protected from many of the urgent problems affecting children in poorer parts of the world. For these countries, UNICEF developed a set of additional indicators. These include:

- the child mortality rate, including deaths due to injuries and suicide rates in adolescents.
- the access to quality education and enrollment rates at secondary schools and at tertiary level.
- the child poverty rate, including the proportion of children living in households with an income below 50% of the national median and the prevalence of unemployment in households.
- sexual exploitation and child abuse and the proportion of children living in institutions.
- teenage pregnancies and sex education for children between 11 and 19 years old.
- maternity and paternity leave, such as conditions provided in terms of length of leave, terms and level of payment for working women and men and preschool care.

UNICEF is in charge of preparing the World Summit and has asked Euronet to be involved in the regional preparation in Europe. More information will follow in future newsletters.

**Council of Europe discusses Appointment of European Ombudsman for Children**
On 7 April the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee of the Council of Europe discussed the report by Ms Elisa Pozza Tasca about the appointment of a European ombudsperson for children. The report (Doc. 8552) looks at already existing ombudspeople in European countries and other countries in the world. The report also refers to the resolution adopted by the European Parliament (A4-0393/96) which suggested the appointment of an ombudsperson for children. The rapporteur recommends setting up a European ombudsman for children in order to make Europe genuinely a reality for all the children in this continent and because children are European citizens too.

Website for Missing Children

Since 1997 the local association Kisdorf from the Deutcher Kinderschutzbund has supported the parent initiative for missing children. This initiative aims to support families whose children have gone missing and uses internet as a means to search for their children across borders. The address of website is http://www.vermisste-kinder.de
For more information about this initiative contact Monika Bruhns, Pommernstrasse 9, 24629 Kisdorf, tel: +49 4193 890998, fax: +49 1803 661669376, e-mail: Info@vermisste-Kinder.org

European Campaign “Not me” to prevent and protect children from sexual abuse

Hocmâ is a French media company which is in the process of developing a European campaign “Not me” which aims to prevent and protect children from sexual abuse. The idea is to develop a set of short films which will be shown on the French television and in the French cinema and are intended to raise awareness around child sexual abuse. The project is supported by Ms Hermange MEP and by Euronet’s French member organisation COFRADE. Hocmâ would like to broaden the project to other European countries, which is possible since no spoken text will be used in the films. If you would like to have more information on this campaign or would like to support this campaign in your country you can contact Manfred Hofer, 155, rue du fbg. Saint Denis, 75010 Paris, France, tel: +33 1 53267342, fax: +33 153267393.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- Chaldiki, Greece
  23-26 June 2000: AGORA 2000 to prepare for the 3rd World Summit on Media for Children organised by the European Children’s Television Centre in Athens. For more information contact Athina Rikaki, tel: +30 1 6851258, fax: +30 1 6817987, e-mail: agora@childrens-media.org

- Lisbon, Portugal and Magdeburg, Germany
19-25 June 2000 and 16-22 October 2000: Training seminar “Social exclusion of families as challenge for the practical work of organisations and associations in the field of families”. For more information European Regional Committee of WFO, Elisabeth Hoffmann, tel: +49 228258464, fax: +49 228254179, e-mail eureg.iufo@familia.de

- **Amsterdam, the Netherlands**
- **30 June 2000**: Seminar on Discrimination of Children, organised by Defence for Children section the Netherlands. For more information contact Annuska Overgaag at DCI/NL (see details above)

- **Maastricht, the Netherlands**
- **6-7 July 2000**: ’Topical Issues on European Family Law’, a course as part of the Amsterdam-Maastricht Summer University. The seminar is open to practising lawyers, academics, graduate students and others with a keen and growing interest in European Family Law issues. For more information contact Mireya Serra-Janer, tel: +31 206200225, fax: +31 20 6249368, e-mail: office@amsu.edu

- **Vienna, Austria**
- **20 July 2000**: Children’s World Conference, organised by Die Kinderfreunde in Austria. For more information: Romana Wöber; Tel: +43 512 12 98/51; E-mail: romana.woeber@kinderfreunde.at

- **Brussels, Belgium**
- **31 August - 1 September 2000**: Final conference on the inclusion of fundamental rights in the EU Treaty, organised by ETUC and Platform of European Social NGOs. For more information contact Sandrine Grenier, Tel: +32 2 511 3714; Fax: +32 2 511 1909; e-mail: sandrine.grenier@brutele.be

- **Strasbourg, France**
- **11-13 October 2000**: European preparatory conference for the World conference against racism, racial discrimination and related intolerance, organised by the Council of Europe.

- **Italy**
- **10-11 November 2000**: “Differences? Children and cultures in Italy”, a seminar organised by BICE Italy to present their project. The project is aimed at studying and discussing the impact of the presence of foreign children (refugees, immigrants, etc.) in Italy and to propose actions to struggle against social exclusion and discrimination. A specific working group of BICE Italy partners has been established and a consultation on these issues, involving groups of children, young people and teachers is being undertaken. For more information, contact Isabella Poli, BICE/Italy, Via della Quiete, 61, I-51100 Pistoia, tel/fax: +39 0573 401804, e-mail: biceit@tin.it

- **Gent, Belgium**
- **8-15 December 2000**: Interdisciplinary Course on Children’s Rights organised by the Children’s Rights Centre, University of Ghent. For more information and an application
form contact: Kathy Vlieghe, tel: +32/9/264.62.81; fax: +32/9/264.64.93; e-mail: Kathleen.Vlieghe@rug.ac.be

- **Thessaloniki, Greece**
  11-15 March 2001: 3rd World Summit on Media for Children, organised by European Children’s Television Centre. For more information: tel: +30 1 6851258; fax: +30 1 6817987; e-mail: summit@children-media.org

- **LIST OF PUBLICATIONS**

  These publications can be obtained from the Euronet office.


  - **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.
Euronet Co-ordinator
Mieke Schuurman
Place de Luxembourg 1
B- 1050 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: +32.2.5124500/5127851
Fax: +32.2.5126673
E-mail: savechildbru@skynet.be

EURONET Member Organisations:

Diana Sutton
International Save the Children Alliance
Place de Luxembourg 1
B - 1050 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: +32 2 5127851
Fax: +32 2 5126673
E-mail: savechildbru@skynet.be

Luisa Maria Aguillar
Bureau International Catholique de l’Enfance
16, Rue Stevin
1000 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: +32 2 231.03.88/32.2.231.04.74
Fax: +32 2 2301133
E-mail: bice@village.uunet.be

Jacqueline Andries
Organisation Mondiale Pour l’Education Prescolaire
Avenue de Montalembert, 27
B-1330 Rixensart
Tel: +32 2 652 18 87
Fax: +32 2 653 48 12

AUSTRIA
Paul Artz
Kinder- und Jugendanwaltschaft Salzburg
Ombudsoffice for Children & Youth
Strubergasse 4
A - 5020 Salzburg
Tel: +43 662 430550
Fax: +43 662 43059017
E-mail: kija@salzburg.co.at

BELGIUM
Jan van Gils
Kind en Samenleving
Nieuwelaan 63
B - 1860 Meise
Tel: +32 2 269 7180
Fax: +32 2 269 7872
E-mail: jvangils@ndo.be

DENMARK
Suzanne Glending
Red Barnet
Rantzaugade 60
DK - 2200 Copenhagen N.
Tel: +45 7020 6120
Fax: +45 7020 6620
E-mail: sg@redbarnet.dk

FINLAND
Juha Eskelinen
Pelastakaa Lapset r.y.
Lapinrinne 2
PL 177
00180 Helsinki
Tel: +358 9 413255400
Fax: +358 9 41355444
E-mail: juha.ekelinen@pela.fi

FRANCE
Henry Delaunay-Belleville/Etienne Rohart
COFRADE
7 Rue St. Lazare
75009 Paris
Tel.: +33 1 42 80 96 10
Fax: +33 1 42 80 47 19

GERMANY
Katharina Abelmann-Vollmer
Deutscher Kinderschutzbund
Schiffрабen 29
D- 30159 Hannover
Tel: +49 511 30485 25
Fax: +49 511 30485 49
E-mail: Abelmannvollmer@dksb.be

GREECE
Helen Agathonos
Institute of Child Health
7 Fokidos
GR - 11526 Athens
Tel: +30 1771 57 91
Fax: +30 1779 36 48
E-mail: agatinst@otenet.gr
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.