EURONET NEWSLETTER
Issue 22 March - April 2004

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Introduction

Welcome to issue 22 of the EURONET, the European Children’s Network, Newsletter. The purpose of the newsletter 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 on children. The newsletter also aims to be a means of communication between NGOs at national level.

Please note EURONET’s contact details of the Secretary General Mieke Schuurman, tel: +31 187 481396, fax: +31 187 487390, e-mail: mieke.schuurman@tiscali.nl (from Mondays to Wednesdays). The office address remains Rue Montoyer 39, 1000 Brussels, tel. +32 (0)2 512 4500, fax. +32 (0)2 513 4903 and the contact person there is Carolina Santrich, e-mail europeanchildrennetwork@skynet.be

This issue of our Newsletter aims to update our readers on all children’s-rights-relevant topics and events that have taken place in Europe for the past two months.

EURONET has launched the Manifesto for Children in view of the coming European Parliament Elections and the accession of 10 new member states. We have also attended several high level meetings within the framework of Irish presidency activities to discuss children’s issues. Reports on this are available on our website.

If you have questions, ideas, articles or remarks about the newsletter, please contact Mieke Schuurman or Carolina Santrich at the address above.

Euronet Website http://www.europeanchildrensnetwork.org
EURONET Activities

Gearing up for the European Parliament elections: Manifesto for Children in Europe

EURONET has drafted a Manifesto including 12 Recommendations and Demands for children’s rights in the new European Union that are to be presented to candidates for the new European Parliament, as well as to all those new decision makers that are expected to arrive in Brussels during the year 2004.

Indeed, this year 2004 brings about a major change in the EU political environment: 10 new EU member states by 1 May; a new Parliament with the elections in June (10-13); a new Commission in November and newly elected national governments in Spain, Luxembourg, Greece and Poland. Recent studies also indicate the possibility that the European Parliament will undergo a 'major face-lift,' and that about two thirds of the MEPs will be new, including all the MEPs from the 10 new Member States. Surely, all these changes bring about a new array of possibilities for the mainstreaming of children’s rights at EU level (i.e. concrete references in the future constitutional text, children’s rights streamlining into EU policy; an EU commissioner for children, etc).

EURONET is circulating together with this Manifesto, the Guidelines on how to use the Manifesto for Children in Europe, which provide children’s organisations in Europe with ideas for campaigning, from sending letters, organising meetings, public hearings, to project visits, etc. The Guidelines also contain information on the elections and links to the addresses and contacts of all national political parties; this general information can be found in English, German, Spanish and French. EURONET hopes that the manifesto will be widely distribute and that child-rights advocates will approach their national candidate MEPs asking them to take a position on children rights protection and promotion.

At the end of the Manifesto there is a child-friendly layout of the 12-demands list, so that also children can use this in campaigning for the European elections. The Manifesto is written in English, however, since it is not a very long document it would be good to translate the text it into your own national language, before using it.
12 Demands for Children in Europe: EURONET Manifesto

About 76 million children (every human being up to 18 years) live in the EU 25 member states. Their voices are rarely heard and they are generally not encouraged to participate in matters that affect them. More then 21% of children in the EU are living in relative poverty and many children in the EU are trafficked or sexually exploited. It is time to build a Europe for children and make children’s rights real.

1. **Children in Europe have a right to their say:** Promote children’s participation in decisions that affect them, and give due weight to their views.

2. **More then 21% of children in Europe live in relative poverty in one of the richest regions of the world:** Eradicate child poverty in all EU member states.

3. **Six hundred million children around the world are living in extreme poverty:** Ensure that children’s rights and interests are taken into account in EU external-affairs policy and action.

4. **Children are trafficked and sexually exploited across Europe:** Enforce laws that can protect children against traffickers and abusers and offer protection to victims.

5. **Child pornography is abhorrent:** Take action to extend and continue EU action programmes and make the internet safe from this form of abuse.

6. **Many children in the Central and Eastern European region are living in institutions:** Take action to ensure that children can live in a family and appropriate environment.

7. **Many children grow up in polluted areas and child-unfriendly cities:** Guarantee a clean, healthy and child-friendly environment for children to grow up in and ensure access to the highest standards of health care whether in or out of hospital.

8. **Children in Europe still face discrimination:** Take action to end all forms of discrimination against children.

9. **Children are now included in the draft European Constitution:** Ensure that children’s rights and interests are no longer ignored in European legislation and policy.

10. **Children are invisible in EU policy and programmes:** Promote the establishment of an EU Representative on children’s rights to ensure co-ordination of European policies on behalf of children.

11. **Children are only targeted by few funds in the EU budget:** Ensure that more money is directed at children in the EU budget.

12. **Over 2 million children have been killed and more than 6 million injured as a result of conflict since 1990:** Promote serious and effective implementation of the EU Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict.

For the full version of the manifesto and the guidelines, please visit our web site [http://www.europeanchildrensnetwork.org](http://www.europeanchildrensnetwork.org)
Updates from the EU Presidencies

Children’s Participation at the L'Europe de l'Enfance meeting in Dublin

On 22 April 2004 the Irish EU Presidency organised a "L'Europe de l'Enfance meeting" which brought together national experts and civil servants of EU members states and the new accession countries on children. EURONET was invited as observer to the meeting with three of its member organisations. The subjects discussed were children's participation; the voice of the child in legal proceedings; valuing play and recreation and a presentation of the work of ChildOnEurope (a network of national observatories on children's rights). On each of the subjects EURONET had prepared papers for the meeting.

The subject of children's participation was introduced by Rachel (17 years) and Kevin (11 years). They were very enthusiastic about the participation of children in local children's councils and the national children's parliament in Ireland. They learn from making their views known, but also find it valuable that the Irish government is listening to their ideas, for example when a Code on Advertising was made. From the contributions of the experts it appeared that in most European countries some forms of children's participation exist. The meeting found it important to ensure a balanced representation of children in children's councils to avoid that only skilled children take part in the councils. Following the discussion on the subject of the participation of children the meeting was invited to attend a meeting of the Dublin children's and youth Council, which was at the same time meeting next door.

Concerning the subject of the "Voice of children in legal proceedings" Geoffrey Shannon, an Irish solicitor, presented the Irish situation. He stated that there is an invisibility of children in legal proceedings. Also in legal proceedings children should be listened to and be able to participate. A more general remark he made was that children should have a more prominent place on the EU agenda. The different legal systems aware discussed by the participants. It turned out that these differ between the EU countries and that it might be interesting to make a comparison of the voice of the child in all legal systems in the EU. Several participants said that judges and social workers needed training to listen to children.
The Irish National Children's Office presented their New National Play Policy. A children's consultation was held on what they liked and did not like. The children were also involved in a working group with different ministries and the National Children's Office to set up the National Play Policy. The National Play Policy is aimed at children 0-12 years and is about public play, funded by the public authorities. It includes funding for disadvantaged areas and hospitals. However, the Play Policy is not only about funding, but also about making a child-friendly environment. In addition to the National Play Policy a National Recreational Policy will be set up for children of 12-18 years old. This will be completed in 2005. The meeting brought up national initiatives for play, but did not go into the European aspects of play, such as European directives on playgrounds and the European Child-friendly City Network.

The conclusions of this session were that multiple actors are involved in providing activities and that local government activities for play and recreation are very important.

ChildOnEurope presented the work they had done in 2003 and their plans for 2004. The plans for 2004 are to have their own website launched, publish an information brochure, and a CD-Rom on Unaccompanied Foreign Children. They will continue to collect data on Unaccompanied Foreign Children and start to collect data on abuse and on national and international adoption. A last subject they would like to work on is doing an analysis of social exclusion of children. To obtain the papers that EURONET prepared for the L'Europe de l'Enfance meeting you can contact Mieke Schuurman.

**Social Exclusion: A priority for Dutch Presidency of the EU**

The organisation of the Round Table on Social Exclusions to be held during Dutch government aims at raising the profile of the European social inclusion process. The Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment will organise in co-operation with the European Commission a Round Table on Social Exclusion in an enlarged EU: challenges, good practices and key priorities in Rotterdam on 7 – 19 October 2004.

A workshop on child poverty and social exclusion has been included in the draft programme, and Dutch organisers are planning to invite children's rights organisations from across the EU. EURONET’s Dutch member DCI/Netherlands and the Dutch Children’s Rights Coalition are closely following the preparation for this event. Child Poverty and Social Exclusion of Children is a pressing problem in, many EU member states, including the Netherlands and the new member states, and children’s organisations consider necessary that a special strategy to eradicate child poverty be developed.

The draft programme presented for this Round Table focuses on EU Enlargement, and puts the accent on the situation of the most vulnerable. The Dutch authorities have expressed their intention to be consistent with the overall EU Inclusion Process and to ensure a strong link
with the NAP/incl. process and other activities under the Community Action Programme to combat social exclusion (Peer Review, projects, etc.). The enlargement focus implies that attention should be drawn on both continuity and change in the social inclusion process (demographic profile; institutional issues, etc.).

The programme also envisages discussing priorities for the next Community Action Programme in the light of the reform of the European Structural funds post 2006, and the question on how this would impact on mainstreaming social inclusion.

The presidency intends to continue linking the European Round Table to the International day of Poverty (17th October), as a step forward in terms of visibility of the event and of the overall process.

**European Constitution**

*IGC re-opens with clear deadlines*

EU Governments are to resume consultations and formal negotiations in the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC)\(^1\), according to a decision of the General Affairs Council at its meeting of 26 April. The first IGC meeting will be been taking place before the General Affairs Council on 17-18 May. The objective remains to make as much progress as possible prior to the European elections (10-13 June) although it has been already decided that agreement on the Constitutional Treaty should be reached no later than the European Council to be held on June (17-18). Since it is expected that further meetings will be necessary in the meantime, additional IGC meetings could also take place on 24 May and 14 June. EURONET considers this a positive signal towards the inclusion of children's rights in the final Constitutional text.

The Irish presidency wants to obtain a realistic package for the June summit, which would only leave two or three questions pending. The issues to be discussed are mainly institutional questions and there is still a long way to go before a compromise can be found on the issue of voting in the Council following the failure by EU leaders to agree on the new 'double majority' voting formula at the December summit meeting. It is widely held that no final agreement will be feasible before the very last minute at the June European Council.

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\(^1\) EU governments began an intergovernmental conference (IGC) on 4 October 2003 to revise the draft Constitutional Treaty, adopted by the European Convention on 10 July. Heads of State and Government of the EU-25 failed to agree on qualified majority voting during the IGC session of 12-13 December 2003.
It is very difficult to know what the different Member States want exactly to be approved or not. It is interesting to note that former EU Commissioner Barnier, who is now French Foreign minister, has called for improvements on the social dimension of Europe.

The UK’s decision to hold a referendum has already opened the debate in other countries, such as France, on the ratification process. Prominent figures, including the Austrian Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel, have called for an EU-wide referendum on the Constitution.

For more information, consult the IGC’s official website http://ue.eu.int/igc/doc_register.asp?content=PRESID&lang=EN.

European Parliament to discuss Constitution.

A group of 150 MEPs have signed an appeal calling for a debate during its plenary session on 4 May about the European Constitution. They have invited the Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern to this debate and call on the European Council to take into account the situation of discussion on the Constitution. They are likely to call for an agreement before European elections on June (and additionally on a symbolic signing of the Constitution in Madrid in order to pay tribute to the victims of the terrorist attacks of March 11) on the basis of the draft treaty proposed by the Convention.

News from the EU Institutions

EC Communications on Education and Citizenship


Both communications set out guidelines for a new generation of programmes intended to replace the current Community programmes on education, lifelong learning, and on citizenship, which will all come to an end in 2006 (Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, Tempus, Youth, Culture 2000 and Media Plus).

The commission rationale behind these two communications is expressed in the introductory text of the first communication: “The coming decade will greatly increase the diversity of the Union. With the accession of 10 new Member States on 1 May 2004, it will undergo the most significant enlargement in its history.
By 2007 the total population of the Union will approach 500 million (...). These developments make it more necessary than ever that Europe’s citizens have an opportunity to experience a feeling of *belonging* to the Union (...). The new programmes could thus help (...) encouraging direct involvement of European citizens in the integration process, i.e. of Youth, Culture, Audiovisual and Civic Participation. On the other hand the new programmes on education and training will contribute to achieve the objective of sustainable development in the enlarged EU (namely the Lisbon objective of making Europe the most competitive knowledge-based economy by 2010).”

Furthermore, the Commission’s decision to simultaneously issue these 2 communications may partly respond to some flaws in earlier Commission’s planning ahead for the reform of precisely these programs. Oddly enough, in the Commission’s proposals to the financial perspectives for 2007-2013 (presented in February of this year) the Education sector is “hardly visible.” Similarly, some observers think that the Commission had been less critical than announced earlier in the Joint Report on "Education and Training 2010" submitted at the European Council of March (annual follow-up instrument of the objectives set by the Lisbon agenda for education and training systems in Europe).

Only later on, Commissioner Reding (Education and Culture) made a statement during the presentation of these 2 communications, asking for: current spending on education and training programmes to increase threefold 'if the European Union is going to meet the Lisbon objective.' Commissioner Reding also announced that the Commission will present its legislative proposals for the next programming period 2007-2013² to Education ministers on 26 May 2004. According to the timetable envisaged, the financial perspectives for the period 2007-2013 are expected to be adopted at the European Council in June 2005.

For the full text of both communications, please visit the following sites:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education_culture/index_en.htm
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/newprog_en.html

**MEPs table a last-minute declaration on youth policy**

3 MEPs have submitted a written declaration on 'devoting attention to youth in policy measures outside youth policy' during the May session of the European Parliament at Strasbourg. The text of the declaration calls on the Commission to devise a standard consultation procedure involving the principal players in youth policy, to adhere to this

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² Except for Civic Participation, which will be tabled in early 2005 on the basis of an initial appraisal of the new programme in this area launched in 2004 and of the outcome of the European constitutional debate.
procedure in connection with every legislative initiative, and to incorporate a 'youth section' in each Commission proposal.

Given that this is the last session of the present Parliament's term of office (before the June European elections), the declaration is to follow an 'abridged procedure' and it is most likely to be passed at the EP Plenary meeting of 4 May.

On the other hand, this is also the first formal sitting of the enlarged EP: 162 new Members representing the ten new EU Member States with full voting rights from 1 May 2004. The adhesion of the enlarged parliament to this declaration could give child-rights advocates a 'first taste' of the disposition of the new EU representatives towards the promotion of children’s rights in the enlarged EU.

The 3 signatories of the declaration are MEPs Bart Staes, Eurig Wyn, and Saïd El Khadraoui

News from our Members

**EACH’s resolution on maternity wards crisis**

The European Association for Children in Hospital, EACH, adopted a resolution on its 8th Conference in Lisbon on March 28, resolving to take a closer look on maternity and neonatal wards. The final text of the resolution reads: “(this) Conference urges all governments, health care services, professional bodies and hospitals to implement the EACH Charter from the first moment a child is born, whether it is in neonatal care, intensive care or maternity wards.”

The background to the EACH resolution is the well being of premature babies who are in hospital for 2 or 3 months, under a care system whose expertise is not growing to the extent necessary. This means that a premature baby in his first weeks of life is pretty much left alone, that is, left in the care of machinery and staff.

Recent press coverage of maternity wards in Europe denounce the closing down of smaller hospitals with maternity wards which are replaced by big "birth factories" (France is mentioned as an example - where two new-born babies died recently due to lack of access to a near enough hospital). It is also noted that hospital planners do not take the care of new-born babies sufficiently into account.

For more information contact Hanne Sieber from EACH at hsieber@kommtexkor.ch; tel., +41 61 731 33 23.
New Research on Trafficking in Minors in Europe

The ECPAT, Europe Law Enforcement Group, has published the report "Joint East West Research on Trafficking in Minors for Sexual Purposes in Europe: The Sending Countries."

This is the second part of a study into trafficking in children for sexual purposes in Europe.

The first part of the research ('Trafficking I'), published in 2001, had concluded that there was a need for further research in the Eastern European countries of origin, and for such research to be carried out in collaboration with partners in those countries.

Focusing on legislation, law enforcement, co-operation and prevention, and the care facilities available to child victims, these current research results are intended to indicate the formulation of specific policy recommendations, as well as to share practical ideas for prevention, training and cooperation.

The research has been coordinated by ECPAT Netherlands/Defence for Children International-Section, with some funding from the European Commission (the STOP II programme). Patsy Sörensen MEP hosted the official presentation of the report on 29 April at the European Parliament in Brussels.

To order this publication or for more information on the project, you can contact Theo Noten or Anke van den Borne at ECPAT Netherlands, P.O. Box 75297, 1070 AG Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Tel: + 31 20 4203771, Email: info@ecpat.nl, Website: www.ecpat.nl

HUMAN RIGHTS

Children’s Human Rights Caucus

The 60th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights (15 March – 23 April 2004) held a Children’s Human Rights Caucus at its 15 March session. The meeting was opened by Brian Cowen, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland, speaking on behalf of the European Union. He said that children's rights are a priority for the EU including the implementation of the EU Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict (adopted on December 8th 2003). Further, he regretted that the general situation of children remains grave and unacceptable and that conflict-parties violating the rights of children continue to benefit from impunity. For this reason he urged all states to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which includes - as a war crime - conscription or enlisting children under the age of fifteen years or using them to participate actively in hostilities, in both international and non-international armed conflicts.
Joschka Fischer, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany also talked about the implementation of children's human rights as a priority for his country and remarked that notwithstanding the almost universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, millions of children are still subject to violence every day. He particularly named child labour, the recruitment of child soldiers, trafficking in children and child prostitution, but also domestic violence against children and other previously ignored forms of abuse. He referred to the Conference on the situation of children in Europe and Central Asia, that Germany, in collaboration with Bosnia & Herzegovina and UNICEF, organised to set out ambitious goals for the implementation of children's rights in the form of the "Berlin Commitment." News about the first follow-up meeting to be held in Sarajevo in May 2004, follows below.

Calls for Proposals

- Social Exclusion Projects, DG Employment and Social Affairs

✔ National Awareness raising actions on social inclusion. (under budget line 04040202) - Open Call for Proposals VP/2004/05  Published in OJ n° C C 88, 08.04.2004

This call for proposals is funded under the Community Action Programme to encourage cooperation between Member States to combat social exclusion. The aim of this call is to increase information and awareness within Member States, candidate countries and EFTA/EEA countries of the Union's social inclusion process in order to mobilise support for and participation of all relevant actors in the preparation, implementation of National Action Plans against poverty and social exclusion (NAPs/inclusion) and Joint Inclusion Memoranda on Social Inclusion (JIMs).

✔ "Group of non-governmental experts in the fight against poverty and social exclusion - extension to seven accessing and candidate countries" Open Call for tender VT/2003/47 (Published in OJ 2003/S 131-117282 of 11.07.2003)

The purpose of the call for tender is to contract 7 non-governmental experts in accession and candidate countries to join the existing 15 experts. Their tasks will be to assist the Commission in monitoring the development of the social inclusion policy measures in the context of the Joint Inclusion Memoranda (JIMs/incl). The call for tender is composed of 7 parts, one for each of the above-mentioned accession and candidate countries.

European Refugee Fund


This call for Proposals is addressed to non-governmental organisations, national, regional and local authorities registered in one of the Member States participating in the European Refugee Fund (all EU countries except Denmark and the new member states), as well as international organisations working on a strictly non-profit basis, with proven experience and expertise in the fields covered.
Events / Announcements

- **1 May 2004, European Union**: 10 New Member States accede to the European Union

- **5-9 May 2004, COUNCIL OF EUROPE, Strasbourg**: Europe, Youth and Globalisation
  Under the slogan "How Big Is Your World?" more than 400 young people aged between 18 and 30 will participate in a large-scale event on the themes of Europe, Youth and Globalisation organised by the Council of Europe. For more information go to: http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=4135&flag=event

- **6 May 2004, European parliament, Strasbourg**: 1ère Assemblée Parlementaire des Enfants de l'Europe au Parlement Européen Contre l'exploitation des Enfants dans le Monde –L’Étoile de l’Espoir en partenariat avec Unicef Bas-Rhin, Grand’rue –1, Pl de Lattre de Tassigny – 67000 STRASBOURG 67000 STRASBOURG

- **13-15 May 2004, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina**: Second Intergovernmental Conference co-organised by the Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Germany on Making Europe and Central Asia "Fit for Children." This is the second time that this regional group of governments will meet as part of the follow-up process to the World Summit for Children. The conference will focus on the implementation of the agenda of A World Fit for Children.

- **26 May 2004, Brussels (Borschette Centre, Rue Froissart 36 – Room 3A)**: Roundtable on "EU Action against Child Trafficking and Related Forms of Exploitation." For more information, contact Jürgen Merz by e-mail at juergen.merz@cec.eu.int (+32 2 296.97.47)

- **10-13 June 2004, European Union**: European Parliament Elections

- **20-22 October 2004, London, UK**: Child in the City, organised by Child in the City Foundation. For more information contact, Ms Sandra van Beek, tel: +31 306933 489; fax: +31 30 6917 394; email: svanbeek@europoint-bv.com; web: www.europoint-bv.com
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