The involvement of all Euronet member organisations in the regional seminars, a group of experts, and interviews carried out by Euronet organisations in their national member states and in Brussels will result in the launch of a European Agenda for Children on 28 January 1999.

On 28 January the European Agenda for Children will be presented to Commission officials, MEPs, Euronet member organisations and other NGOs. This exciting event will take place in Brussels, probably in the European Parliament. The Report will give recommendations on issues which affect children Europe wide and which require a response.
The European Parliament includes children in new EU Social budget lines

Since the interinstitutional agreement between the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament and the Commission, there is no longer a legal basis for the budget line Measures for the Family and the Children. However, after some active lobbying by Euronet, the Employment and Social Affairs Committee and the Budgets Committee of the European Parliament have adopted two new budget lines which include children. One line concerns social exclusion and one line deals with non-discrimination. A new budgetline on Action against illegal and harmful content on the internet has received 5,5 MECU and the budgetline for the campaign against child sex tourism in third countries received 1 MECU. The DAPHNE budgetline was also increased to 5 MECU.

At the end of October or the beginning of November the Commission will submit a call for proposals for projects on non-discrimination and on social exclusion. Euronet’s member organisations should begin discussions about projects for submission. The next Newsletter will contain more information on the call for proposals.

Euronet recently held a meeting with Soledad Blanco(DG V). She said that the European Commission is particularly interested in projects on child care research from the perspective of the child. For example, is a child happier when she or he is only in child care part-time or does this not make a difference? If any of Euronet’s organisations is interested in submitting a research project on this theme they can inform the Euronet Secretariat or Soledad Blanco, DGV, European Commission, Rue de la Loi 200, 1049 Brussels.

- EURONET ACTIONS

Austrian presidency prioritizes the protection of children against abuse and violence

In its work programme for the second half of 1998 the Austrian Presidency has expressed one of its priorities as the protection of children against any form of abuse or violence.

Euronet welcomes the positive attitude of the Austrian Presidency, which was supported by the rest of the Council of Ministers and the European Commission.

Euronet strongly supports the proposal of the European Commission for a special programme for the protection of children against abuse and violence. This DAPHNE Programme needs to be adopted by the Council of Ministers unanimously. We therefore ask all Euronet members to contact their national Justice and Home Affairs Ministers and ask for their support for the DAPHNE Programme.

European Commission decides against a ban of dangerous PVCs in soft toys

Commissioner Emma Bonino tried to introduce a ban on PVC in soft toys, since Greenpeace’s evidence indicates that this can seriously harm children who suck on it. However the Commissioner lacked one vote in the Commission and therefore the ban was not adopted. Euronet urges its members to take action to persuade the Commission to adopt a ban.

Euronet was informed about the danger of PVC in soft toys by Axel Singhofen of Greenpeace. The ban is also supported by BEUC(Bureau Europeen des Unions de Consommateurs).
Greenpeace gave Euronet the following information about their campaign and about why PVC is so dangerous for small children. The production and disposal of PVC is dangerous, because of the additives and softeners it contains. These products can cause cancer and chemicals are known to leak from PVC products during use, especially when pressure is applied, for example when a baby is sucking or chewing on a toy. The industry argues that there is so little leakage that there is no harm. However, Greenpeace’s evidence indicates the opposite.

Most consumers do not know whether a toy contains PVC, because it is not labelled, although there are some producers which label toys as ‘PVC Free’.

Some countries have already adopted a ban on soft toys made with PVC. Austria will ban them from 1 January 1999 onwards, Denmark from 1 November 1998 onwards and Sweden and Norway are planning to ban them. In Germany, the Netherlands and Italy, Ministries have requested producers to stop producing PVC in soft toys.

Greenpeace is urging an emergency ban of these toys. Euronet believes that, in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is a child’s right to have the best possible health. Euronet will send letters to the Commissioners on the issue and urges national contact people in countries where no ban exists to put pressure on their national ministries.

More information on this subject can be obtained from the Euronet office in English. Other languages (French, Spanish, German) are available from Greenpeace itself. Contact Axel Singhofen, Greenpeace International, European Unit; 37-39 Rue de la Tourelle; 1040 Brussels; Tel: +32 2 280 1400; Fax: +32 2 230 84 13.

- **IRISH ACTION ON CHILD PORNOGRAPHY ON THE INTERNET**

**The STOP Programme**

International media attention has recently focused on the discovery of a child pornography network on the internet in the Netherlands. This problem demands a European and international response. A European Programme which is combating the trade in human beings and the sexual exploitation of children is STOP. The Irish Euronet member organisation Focus on Children, which represents over thirty children’s organisations on the island of Ireland, has taken the initiative to combat child abuse on the internet with the help of the STOP programme.

In 1996 Focus on Children approached Dublin City University and Queens University to develop a joint project under the STOP Programme. Since then the Garda Siochana (Irish Police Force) and the Royal Ulster Constabulary (Northern Ireland Police Force) together with representatives of Europol, the Belgian Police and several European universities have joined the initiative. The initiative has been called the CAIR Programme (Child Abuse on the Internet Research).

The CAIR Programme seeks to produce strategies to support the Departments of Justice and Home Affairs for action for those involved with children, including establishing transnational cooperation around a practical programme for police forces, NGOs, educators, social workers and other agencies working with and on behalf of children.

**Contents of the Irish initiative**
The initiative will make proposals about the development of software and hardware to tackle the problems of paedophile networking, trafficking and child abuse and very importantly disseminate the information to the 15 member states of the EU. It will also make suggestions to national Governments on the need for legislation under the Third Pillar of the EU Treaty. This is legislation dealing with justice and home affairs. All initiatives taken under the Third Pillar have to be agreed on a case by case basis by all member states’ Governments in the EU, the Community institutions have no role to play.

Commissioner Gradin, responsible for justice and home affairs, in her Aide-Memoire on the sexual exploitation of children, outlined several issues to be addressed including:

- the enforcement of laws preventing the production and distribution of material including child pornography
- the protection of minors when accessing computer networks and services which may impair their normal physical and mental development

The remit of the CAIR initiative is specifically to address these issues including the right of children to be free from abuse and sexual exploitation.

- **FUNCOE, SAVE THE CHILDREN SPAIN, ON THE ROLE OF THE SPANISH YOUTH PLATFORM**

In Spain various organisations that work with children’s issues have constituted the Platform of Youth Organisations. Euronet’s member organisation FUNCOE is one of their members and is chairing the Board of this Platform.

Following an increased concern in society for children’s issues, many new organisations that work for and with children have been formed in Spain. In order to provide better co-ordination between these organisations, a platform of children's organisations was formed.

The Youth Platform states “We must reflect on the impact that the European political economy and the amplifying of the European Union will have on children. We also must develop ways in which we can assert that children are European citizens too”.

What are the objectives of the Platform?

- Influencing general and sector politics so as to increase the well-being of children and disadvantaged youth.
- Recording and reporting all violations of children’s rights by public and private institutions.
- Developing dialogue, collaboration and participation within relevant public and private organisations.
- Encouraging children to participate in organisations that promote their rights.

The Youth Platform has undertaken several activities, for example, a group from the Platform has been working on youth participation in both familial and societal education. Three young people took part in the Children's Forum organised by the European Association of BICE in March of this year. The Platform is also writing a report on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Spain, to inform the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the situation of children in Spain. The Platform has also taken part in the activities organised by Euronet, for example the revision of the Maastricht Treaty, where the Platform undertook a letter campaign to European politicians and Spanish Parliamentarians. As a result, a proposal was
made by all parliamentary groups to the Government, regarding including the rights of the child in the new Treaty.

Euronet, the European Children’s Network, supports the setting up of national platforms of children’s NGOs and them taking up European issues.

• DEFINING THE EUROPEAN AGENDA FOR CHILDREN: THE REGIONAL SEMINARS
  HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

For more information on the organisation of the regional seminars please contact the Euronet co-ordinator or the responsible organisation.

• On 25 September the regional seminar in Paris took place with its theme ‘The Protection of Children at European level’. Participants from NGOs in France, Belgium (Wallonia) and Luxembourg took part. The experts Anthony Simpson from the European Commission and June Kane from Child Communication gave their views on the DAPHNE and STOP programmes of the European Union and its effectiveness for the combat of the abuse of children.

• On 2 October the regional seminar of Austria, Germany, Greece and the Netherlands took place in Vienna. The theme was the political participation of children in Europe. Experts and young people gave their views on the participation of children in decision making and on the lowering of the voting age.

• The Northern European seminar will take place in London. The theme of the seminar will cover the social exclusion of children in Europe and the future of the welfare state. Participants and speakers will come from Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Ireland and the UK. For more information contact: Bill Bell at Save the Children UK, 17 Grove Lane, UK-London SE5 8RC, tel: +44 171 7035400, fax: +44 171 7035760, e-mail: “b.bell@scfuk.org.uk”.

The next issue of the Newsletter will give a fuller report of these seminars.

• DON BOSCO MEETING OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

On 27 June Don Bosco - the international Belgian youth network - organised a European Youth Encounter in the European Parliament. Young people from about 31 European countries joined this meeting where they presented a Declaration to Commissioner Cresson and the President of the European Parliament Gil-Robles Gil-Delgado MEP

The Don Bosco movement is an international youth organisation founded in the 19th century. The Don Bosco organisation has offered opportunities to all kinds of groups of vulnerable young people in European society by offering training and education.

The European Youth Encounter highlighted the following points for action at the European Union and member state level:
• greater investment in education and training
• possibilities for exchanges in different European countries.

• FORTHCOMING EVENTS
• **Early November: London**
  Regional Seminar of Euronet organisations from the UK, Ireland, Sweden and Denmark.

• **16-23 November 1998: Italy**
  “The Week of Communication between Adults and Children”, which includes a series of initiatives by the member organisations of the Italian BICE network.

• **17-20 November 1998: Braga, Portugal**
  International Congress on Child Social and Cultural worlds organised by The Institute of Child’s Studies from the University of Minho

• **26 November 1998: Austria**
  Youth Council of Ministers, which will adopt a resolution on the participation of children and young people.

• **LIST OF PUBLICATIONS**

  • **The new Treaty on European Union: What is in it for Children?**, in English, French and Spanish. (November 1997)

  • **A Proposal and Invitation: Building a Europe with and for children**, in English, French and Spanish (September 1997).

  • **The Single Market - What is in it for Children?**, in English (February 1998).

  • **Active Voices, Children’s Choices - Children as Citizens of Europe** by Sandy Ruxton (researcher Euronet): a Discussion Document, in English and Spanish

  • **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 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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