EURONET Contribution to the FRA Platform Panel discussion of Monday 10th December 2007 – Second Plenary Session

FRA Consultative Meeting with Civil Society on the Setting Up of the Fundamental Rights Platform

Title: Fundamental Rights Platform as a mechanism for enhancing exchange of information and pooling of knowledge between FRA and civil society stakeholders.

These questions regard the FRA and the FRA Platform’s Communication and Liaison Strategy and address the need to establish a resource centre / dissemination system.

These leads to 3 further points:
1. How the FRA can collect the information
2. What the FRA will do with that information
3. How the FRA will disseminate the information

- Collection of information and consultation with stakeholders/ civil society needs to follow some general principles. These would include:
  - **Timing (1):** Civil society needs sufficient time to collect and submit information (e.g. networks must consult with members and submit agreed information)
  - **Timing (2):** Consultation must take place at the early stages of a process in order for the information to have an impact – how much influence will the collected information have on a given area?
  - **Transparency:** What would the information be used for? Analysis of the inputs, presented as a report, must be carried out following any consultation – the report would be of value to civil society as well as the FRA since it would share information across civil society as well as within the FRA.
  - **Access:** How much access would NGOs have to the information from civil society and from Member States (for example information from MS on the implementation of children’s rights at national level); will the information be accessible to all, and if so, how much of the information will be public; will the information from civil society and MS be shared and open to all?
  - **Expertise:** How will selection of expertise be guaranteed to ensure the Platform is not overwhelmed with information that is not directly relevant to/ does not represent expert knowledge on a particular subject.

- **Mechanisms:**
  - Online mechanisms could be set up – e.g. email groups, user-friendly, jargon-free websites for engagement with broader civil society as well as Platform site.
  - Links to other websites, information and resources
  - Online resource library
  - Thematic-based seminars/conferences/working groups for exchange of information
  - Funding for travel especially to civil society groups that cannot afford to attend EU-level meetings
  - Meetings should take place in an easily accessible location (many European networks are based in Brussels)
• Concluding points:
  o Necessary to clearly show the value to civil society of pooling information and of engaging with the FRA. One way of doing this could be to ensure follow-up with analyses and feedback on the influence / impact the information submitted has had.
  o Make it as easy as possible for civil society to engage (often human and financial resources are limited)
  o The FRA should dedicate sufficient resources to the Platform to ensure that quality activities take place and that a strong two-way communications strategy can be developed and implemented. Financial as well as human resources are required as civil society would need a point of contact to work with, such as a unit / person to engage with.

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The European Children’s Network (EURONET) is a non-profit-making, non-governmental organisation (NGO) committed to promoting children’s rights at a European Union level. The network is made up of European and national NGOs advocating on behalf of children and children’s rights. The European Children’s Network campaigns for the interests of children across Europe by putting children’s rights on the EU agenda. Its activities include policy development, research, and projects involving children and young people.