News from Eurochild

Upcoming events
Membership Exchange Seminar on Positive Parenting
26-27 April 2007, Belfast, Northern Ireland

Eurochild AISBL and Children in Northern Ireland are organising a Members’ Exchange Seminar focusing on parenting support in Belfast on 26-27 April 2007.

Members’ Exchange Seminars aim to give members greater insight into each others’ way of working and deepen their knowledge and exchange of ideas on specific aspect of tackling child poverty and social exclusion. They also provide an important opportunity for member organisations to engage with policy-makers and opinion-formers in the host country to support national agendas for children and young people. It is anticipated that Members’ Exchange Seminars will become a regular feature of Eurochild’s work programme.

These seminars are open to all members of Eurochild and organisations with a clear interest to join the network. In this way we hope the seminars will initiate on-going collaboration on a specific theme and clear input to the Eurochild policy agenda.

The theme of parenting support was selected following a call to members to give feedback on their areas of specific interest. Several members expressed an interest to explore ways in which policies to promote positive parenting can contribute towards the fight against child poverty and social exclusion - a core element of Eurochild’s work.
Children in Northern Ireland offered to host this seminar, given the recent launch of the Children and Young People’s Strategy for Northern Ireland and the forthcoming launch of the Family and Parenting Strategy by the Northern Ireland Executive. This first seminar is therefore timely for the organisation, who will host the event in Belfast in collaboration with the Parents Advice Centre and with support from the Children’s Commissioner.

For more information: www.eurochild.org or www.cini.org.uk

Past events

3rd Annual Conference of Eurochild AISBL
November 2006, Berlin

The Eurochild/AGJ Conference took place on 14-16 November 2006 in Berlin and gathered over 120 participants. It has been a success and participants had a vivid and interesting exchange on the issues of non-formal and informal learning as a means of tackling social exclusion.

The final report from the conference as well as most of the presentations made at the different sessions are now available on Eurochild’s web site: www.eurochild.org.

Work shop “Who Cares?” during Social Platform annual conference
December 2006, Brussels

As last year, Eurochild co-organised one of the work shops which took place during the annual conference of the Social Platform “Social values and democracy: renewing the guiding principles of the European Union”, which took place on 5-6 December in Brussels. The work shop “Who Cares?” was organised in co-operation with the European Women’s Lobby (EWL) and the Federation of Unpaid Parents and Carers at Home (FEFAF).

Some of the main conclusions of the debate were:
• The importance of the quality of life (not only its economic side), rehabilitation of the private sphere
• Involving men + help them to get involved
• Recognise the needs and implement the rights of the person who needs/wants to care (it should be a free choice)
• Social rights of part-time workers should be the same than for full-time workers
• Providing adequate care and flexibility is a means of fighting social exclusion & poverty
• It is important to fight stereotypes, change cultures/mentalties, campaigns
• Importance of the diversity of providers (including associations, on-site child care…)

The programme and conclusions from the workshop can be found on the Eurochild web site: http://www.eurochild.org/index.php?id=28.

For more information on the SP conference: http://socialplatform.org/code/EN/about.asp?Page=77

For the EWL campaign “Who Cares?”: http://www.womenlobby.org/site/form_3.asp

News from the European Institutions

2007 - European Year of Equal Opportunities for All

The European Year of Equal Opportunities for All began on 1 January 2007 and will be officially launched at the European Equality Summit in Berlin on 30-31 January. Activities during this year will seek to make people in the EU more aware of their rights in order to enjoy equal treatment and a life free of discrimination, which are two of the basic principles of the EU. Activities will focus on the discrimination some individuals suffer because of their race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability. The Year intends to highlight the benefits of diversity for European societies.

The New Year also marked the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU. These countries have already been involved in anti-discrimination activities at European level under the Community Action Programme. They now participate in the European Year as full members of the EU.

For more information on the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/eyeq/index.cfm?cat_id=SPLASH

A single EU hotline number for missing children

On 20th December 2006 a committee of member state representatives endorsed the European Commission’s draft decision to reserve freephone numbers throughout the EU for services of social value. This means in particular that the 116 number will be made available for hotlines for missing children.
The Commission’s ‘116 initiative’ allows a single number to be reserved for the same service across Europe. Services provided through 116 freephone numbers will benefit citizens by helping those in difficulty, or by contributing to their well-being or safety.

Hotline telephone numbers for parents to report missing children already exist in several EU countries, but currently different telephone numbers are being used in different countries. Having a common number will help parents if they lose their child while travelling or on holiday in another European country.

Approval by the expert committee paves the way for the Commission to adopt this decision, which will be binding on member states in early 2007. A public call will be launched to identify other services that may benefit from 116 numbers.

Protecting young people from alcohol

European Union countries have been urged to do more to protect young people from the dangers of drinking too much alcohol. In a text prepared for two years under intense industry lobby pressure, the Commission urged the 25 nations to better combat deaths caused by binge and under-age drinking, drunk driving and drinking during pregnancy.

Sporadic alcohol excesses, under-age consumption and drunk driving are real public health problems in Europe, especially among young people. The EU remains the heaviest drinking region in the world, with 55 million adults estimated to drink at harmful levels. Binge drinking is one of the biggest problems. Overall, there are fewer people who drink, but those who drink, drink more.

Young people in the EU are particularly at risk, as over 10% of female mortality and around 25% of male mortality in the 15-29 age group is related to hazardous alcohol consumption. The proportion of youth and young adults with harmful and hazardous consumption patterns has increased in many member states over the last 10 years.

Taking into account Europe’s wide cultural differences when it comes to alcohol, the EU’s executive arm listed a number of areas of concern and laid out a strategy to target them through to 2012.

To download the Eurydice report:
http://www.eurydice.org/ressources/eurydice/pdf/0_integral/081EN.pdf

For more information:

PROGRESS Programme launched

The EU’s new PROGRESS Programme has officially been launched on 5 December 2006. It is the new integrated programme for employment and social solidarity. It will support the goals set out in the Social Agenda and contribute to the Union’s wider strategy for jobs and growth. The programme will fund studies, mutual learning, awareness raising campaigns and support for key actors across five broad areas: employment, social inclusion, working conditions, equality between women and men and tackling discrimination. It also aims to streamline EU spending on social and employment policies while improving their visibility and coherence as a whole.

Kicking off in 2007, PROGRESS will take up and develop activities already begun under four existing EU action programmes ending in 2006 – covering action against discrimination, equality between men and women, employment measures and the fight against social exclusion. It will focus on activities with a strong European dimension to ensure an EU added-value, such as:

- Europe-wide studies to improve knowledge of employment and social issues;
- Training of legal and policy practitioners or monitoring implementation of EU policies and laws to support coherent application;
- Building networks of national experts to encourage mutual learning and exchange of good practices;
- Supporting key EU-level networks of NGOs active in fighting discrimination or promoting gender equality;

In response to this evidence showing that young Europeans are less and less interested in science studies, the Commission has decided to create a small expert group of scientists and science educators to offer guidance. The group is set to formulate policy recommendations to improve science teaching both in primary and secondary schools in the EU.

Existing EU initiatives to promote science education in schools include the Xplora portal (www.xplora.org) which is aimed at teachers, pupils, scientists, science communicators and educators. It gives insights to innovative practices to teach science and aims to make science learning more interesting for young people.

The overall aim is to encourage a new generation of scientists capable of innovation in a knowledge-based society.
Promoting people's awareness of policies and legislation in the social and employment field across the EU;
Partnership with national authorities, employers' and workers' organisations and NGOs will be a key feature of PROGRESS.

A committee of national representatives will help the Commission to steer the programme, meeting for the first time on 12 December 2006.

The programme is aimed at national, regional and local authorities, public employment services, companies and employees' organisations. NGOs, universities, research institutes and specialists like statistical offices and legal practitioners will also participate. Activities will be open to the 27 EU members, EFTA and candidate as well as pre-candidate countries.

For more information on PROGRESS: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/progress

**Can EU cohesion policy help address demographic change?**

Regional policy Commissioner Danuta Hübner, on 25 January 2007 opened the 2-day conference "Regions for Economic Change: Regional policy responses to demographic challenges" in Brussels. In her opening speech she noted that the new cohesion policy of the European Union has a central role to play in supporting the efforts of European regions to adapt to demographic change.

Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Commissioner Vladimír Špidla, speaking on the second day of the conference, backed these comments, underlining the importance of the European Social Fund in helping to overcome the effects of a shrinking workforce.

The magnitude and rhythm of population trends varies substantially from country to country and from region to region. There is no "one size fits all" policy response. Regions already have experience in dealing with these changes, which must be exploited to the full. Danuta Hübner emphasised that the EU's cohesion policy is well adapted to many of the challenges of demographic change because it allows regions to respond to population change through policies which are tailored to their specific needs.

Commissioner Špidla said "The fact that we are all living longer is a positive development and a reflection of scientific and social successes in recent years. However, it is clear that a rapidly ageing population can have devastating consequences on some regions. He added "The European Social Fund (ESF) has a budget of almost 10 billion Euro each year to help offset the negative effects of our greying population, or for example by providing funding to improve access to childcare or training for workers."

For further information on regional policy:

For further information about the “Regional policy responses to demographic challenges” conference: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/demographicchallenge_jan07/home_en.cfm

**Erasmus @ 20**

The Erasmus Programme was introduced in 1987, with over 3,200 students participating in its first year. The number had risen to almost 150,000 students from 31 countries in 2006 - altogether 1% of Europe's students. It encourages student and teacher mobility, and promotes trans-national cooperation projects among universities across Europe. The scheme currently covers nine out of every ten European higher education establishments.

On 7 December 2006, the European Commission formally triggered a series of events to mark the 20th anniversary of what is considered as one of the most successful projects of the EU. Erasmus has developed beyond just being an educational programme. It gives many European university students the chance of living for the first time in a foreign country, and it has reached the status of a social and cultural phenomenon.

However, among the challenges left, the Erasmus grant remains far too low to allow students from less favourable financial backgrounds to enjoy the benefits of the Programme.

Twenty years after the EU launched the Erasmus Programme, the poorest students still find it difficult to take part in it. According to a report by the Commission, the proportion of students from lower than average income families is disproportionately under-represented amongst the students who considered their financial situation poor during their Erasmus period.

According to the Commission's survey, Erasmus students currently start seeking their first job later and it takes them less time than in the past - four months in average. But their study abroad has less of a positive impact for being hired than in early years of the exchange programme. The more international components of employment and work become common and the more students acquire international competences, the less pronounced is the professional value of Erasmus.

The report also shows that students from the new member states benefit "substantially" more in terms of professional follow-up thanks to Erasmus experience than their west European counterparts. There are also still far more outgoing students from
these countries than those coming to study in central and eastern European universities from the West.


New scholarship scheme outside the EU

The European Commission has launched a new "Erasmus Mundus External Co-operation Window" in December 2006, open to the EU’s neighbours (Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Ukraine and West Bank and Gaza Strip), Russia, Central Asia (Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan), Iran, Iraq and Yemen. These scholarships will facilitate the mobility of undergraduate, master, doctorate and post-doctoral students between these countries and the EU, as well as exchanges of academic staff for the purposes of teaching, training and research.

For more information:

New EU-Canada agreement on cooperation in higher education and youth

On 5 December 2006, at an informal education ministerial meeting in Helsinki, a new eight-year education agreement was signed between the EU and Canada. It not only renews their long-standing cooperation programme in higher education and vocational training, but also expands it by including youth measures. Over a period of eight years, new innovative joint study/training programmes will be launched, exchanges of students, teachers and other professionals will be promoted, as well as the strengthening of the collaboration between youth organisations. The agreement will also encourage a policy dialogue on priority issues in the fields of higher education and vocational training.

For more information:

European Parliament

Plan to protect children online

Researchers say that around half of European children use the internet for visiting web sites, chatting, sending and receiving e-mails. On average, minors spend more time on the internet than watching television. In doing so, between a quarter and a third are confronted with content of sexually explicit nature or are invited to meetings with strangers.

On 14 December 2006, the European Parliament adopted, with a broad majority, a Recommendation for a number of measures to better protect minors from illegal content on the internet. The report considers automatic filters to be the most effective measures for blocking access to violent or pornographic content. Presently, such filters can only work if they are provided with 'blacklisted' sites. The report calls on internet service providers to deliver and regularly update such information. Estimates say that more than 250 million internet pages contain material of a pornographic nature.

The Parliament also called for the creation of a sub-domain of the .eu top level domain, called .kid.eu, which would only contain content fit for children. Parents could then set filters to restrict their children's access to this sub-domain. MEPs called for information campaigns to be organised by member states in order to raise awareness of internet risks. In addition, they asked for the creation of hotlines to report illegal or suspected illegal content or behaviour on the web.

For the EP report:

MEPs fail to vote ‘not before 9pm’ for alcohol ads on TV

On 13 December 2006, the European Parliament voted on the Audiovisual Directive. MEPs were urged to vote for Amendment 169 of the directive, which sets the standard of not before nine for alcohol advertising on television across the European Union. This would mean that families and children, the core TV audience before 9pm, would not be exposed to alcohol advertising. A website called “Not before 9” (http://www.notbefore9.eu/) had been created, which contains examples of print and TV advertising for alcohol showing why time restrictions are needed. Unfortunately, only 185 MEPs voted to block alcohol adverts before 9pm, 430 MEPs decided that alcohol adverts should be permitted during the early evening programming.

Alcohol advertising is currently covered by Article 15 of the TVwF and is largely implemented at national level through self-regulation by the advertising industry. According to Article 15, alcohol may not be linked to physical performance or driving, social or sexual success, show immediate consumption, dangerous behaviour or be targeted at young people. However, a number of NGOs working on alcohol policy have raised concerns that existing restrictions on alcohol advertising (Article 15) fail to provide adequate protection for children and young people.
Across Europe there is a growing trend for children to start drinking alcohol at young ages (average starting age is 12.5 years) and to drink heavily. Children that drink early are more likely to develop dependency and suffer long-term health damage. There is also a strong impact on the family of alcohol which is linked to 40% of all domestic violence and 16% of child abuse and neglect.

In terms of advertising, research shows that young people remember and enjoy alcohol ads. In focus groups they frequently mention such ads as their favourite and say that they think that the adverts are aimed at young people.

The current initiative is being supported by leading European networks of children and family organisations (Eurochild, COFACE, EuroNet, Eurosafe, European Child Safety Alliance) and the European Policy Alliance on Alcohol (Eurocare).

For the Alcohol in Europe report, setting out the social, economic, health and crime impact of alcohol in the European Union: [http://www.epha.org/a/2291](http://www.epha.org/a/2291)

**Presidency of the EU**

On 1 January 2007, Germany took over the rotating EU Presidency from Finland. They will organise and chair the Council meetings until 1 July. The motto of the presidency is "Together Europe can succeed". Germany will also chair the G8 from the same date.

**High hopes**

Hopes for the chairmanship of the EU’s largest member state are high, but were played down by its Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who said “we will not perform miracles in 6 months”. This comes despite a presidency agenda which does not lack ambition and includes: the breaking of the EU’s constitutional deadlock, enlargement, energy and innovation policy, climate change and fighting bureaucracy. Highlights will include the launch of a European energy policy at the Spring summit on 24-25 March, as well as the 50th anniversary of the Rome Treaties on 8-9 March.

In its programme, the German presidency stresses that “the debate on the European social model must be filled with content”. However, it prepares to relaunch the EU’s Lisbon Agenda without highlighting the key role that education must play to reach its objectives. Instead, they will emphasise increasing the mobility of young people. In addition, the presidency will work on the interim report on the implementation of the Commission’s ‘Education and Training 2010’ work programme, which invites member states to ensure access to education for all and aims to open European education systems to the wider world.

**Presidency tests**

As a method of narrowing presidential attention on tangible targets, the Platform of European Social NGOs presents each presidency with a number of questions relating to social issues of current interest. The questions are used to evaluate their performance at the end of their term of office.

The Platform considers the German presidency’s position on social issues especially important, because its term coincides with the Commission’s consultation on modernising labour law, which, according to social NGOs will be key in devising a new approach for flexicurity.

The Platform has presented the new Presidency with a nine-point catalogue of questions to expound on: the Future of Europe, the social dimension of the Union’s action, flexicurity, equality and the fight against discrimination, and the “European alliance for families”.

**European Alliance for Families**

The catalogue is meant to be a platform for exchanging experiences and opinions at all levels concerning concrete projects and cooperation. In this framework, the President of the Social Platform Anne-Sophie Parent has met with Ursula von der Leyen, German Minister for Families, Women, Youth and Senior Citizens. She presented the first reaction of Platform members, including Eurochild’s contribution, on the issue.

The Minister very much welcomed this input from Social NGOs. She explained the German context and how strongly her country was affected by demographic change. For her, the “alliance” could offer a unique opportunity for member states to debate policies and to identify good practices.

When asked what definition would be used of “family”, Minister von der Leyen insisted on the need to stick to today’s reality and not to enter ideological discussions. She also believes that all member states have an interest in addressing families in a pragmatic way.

In relation to the structure of the alliance the Minister envisaged a system of high level expert groups and exchange linked to Council meetings. She also explained that she was supported by DG Employment, social affairs and equal opportunities to establish a close link to the demographic change processes announced in the recently published Communication on this issue. As a conclusion to the meeting she expressed her commitment to work closely with Social NGOs.

The alliance is likely to be launched in cooperation with the European Commission through a Communication on families, due to be published in May 2007.

The Eurochild position on the announcement of the European Alliance for Families can be found on its website [www.eurochild.org](http://www.eurochild.org).

**European Organisations’ News**

**Treatment of unaccompanied children**

As Europe has recently seen a growing number of children being forced by various reasons or circumstances to move from their country of origin, at its last annual meeting in Athens, in September 2006, the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC) has released a statement on governments’ obligations for the treatment of unaccompanied and separated children coming into European countries. Regardless of the reasons why these children are arriving, most countries have shortcomings both in legislation and in administrative practices when dealing with children.

In its statement, ENOC has summarised the principles that its members believe must be respected and included in national and international legal instruments, administrative practices and services. These principles are mainly based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, with a specific reference to Article 2 on non-discrimination.

To read the full Statement: http://www.ombudsnet.org/enoc/resources/infodetail.asp?id=11850

**Putting poverty and social exclusion back at the heart of Lisbon**

On the eve of the EU's Employment Committee meeting due to prepare input to the EU Spring Council, the European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN) urged EU member states to put poverty and social exclusion back at the heart of the Lisbon Strategy.

Whilst 2007 may have been considered by the Commission to be a “year of delivery”, EAPN in its new report “Making Lisbon deliver for people experiencing poverty: EAPN response to 2006 Implementation Reports on the National Reform Programs” is clear: Lisbon has not yet “delivered” on improving social cohesion, ensuring better jobs or significantly reducing poverty and is not likely to do so, unless a radical re-think is carried out.


**Campaign and Petition on Care**

The European Women’s Lobby electronic petition “Advancing equality between women and men through the better provision of care services in European Union” calls for action at national and European level to advance equality between women and men through the provision of affordable, accessible and high quality care services in the EU. The Petition is available for signing until International Women's Day (8th March) 2007 on the EWL website: http://ewl.horus.be/site/form_3.asp

**Discussion Paper on services for young children**

Children in Europe, a network of 11 national magazines who joined to produce a unique magazine about services for young children and their families, has drafted a discussion paper on “Young children and their families: developing a European approach”. You can contribute and comment on the discussion paper until 30 June 2007 under: http://www.childrenineurope.org/eng_discuss.php
Protection of Public Services

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) on 28 November 2006, launched a campaign to collect one million signatures to put pressure on the Commission to present a framework directive for the safeguard of services of general interest (SGI). Services such as schools and hospitals, clean water and safe public transport systems, are being undermined by liberalisation, privatisation and the introduction of free market rules, ETUC argues. There is a need for member states to be able to define a number of SGI that are not subject to market rules.

SGI were excluded from the scope of the final version of the controversial Services Directive and in October Parliament adopted a report on the Commission’s White Paper on SGI, which calls on the Commission to adopt “appropriate legislative initiatives” to guarantee the high quality and affordability of public services.

However, the approach advocated by ETUC of a framework directive establishing common safety, consumer protection and environmental standards for all SGI, was dropped in the EP report in favour of a sector-specific approach, following pressure from liberals and democrats which believe that the market is capable of providing excellent services – as they say is the case for telecoms, electricity and gas - and that a “one-size-fits-all solution for Europe” goes against the principle of subsidiarity.

For the ETUC petition on high quality public services accessible for all:
http://www.petitionpublicservice.eu/

The European Federation of Public Services Union (EPSU) is currently running a similar campaign, which can be found under:
http://www.epsu.org/a/2141

News from European States

ALBANIA

Albania’s Roma call for end to child trafficking

Roma in Albania called on the authorities in Tirana and the international institutions to take all necessary measures to put an end to trafficking in children in Albania. Trafficking in human beings, especially in children, is the bitter aftermath of transition in Albania. Reports say that more than 5,000 children, mostly Roma children, are victims of child trafficking rings in Albania. Child traffickers force the children to prostitution and bagging. They also sell children’s organs to other European countries.

Albanian television Top Channel has run a documentary programme featuring a story on selling Roma children from Albania to Greece for 3,000 Euros. With candid cameras, Top Channel has exposed several Roma families involved in illicit transfer of children across the border. The video footage shows that police officers from Albania and Greece have also been involved in the traffic.

For more information:

AUSTRIA

School drop-out rate of foreign born youth

The Institute of Advanced Studies (HIS) has found that the drop-out rate of youths aged 15-24 years is generally low in Austria with 9% (EU average in 2005: 15.2%). However, youths without EU citizenship are four times more likely to be affected than native Austrians. The rate for second or third generation youths born in Austria but speaking a first language other than German is still twice as high as that of native speakers.

For more information:
http://www.ihs.ac.at/publications/lib/30102006bildung.pdf

IRELAND

Children’s Rights Alliance calls for constitutional change in Ireland

Eurochild’s member organisation Children’s Rights Alliance on 9 January 2007 presented a report entitled The Constitution and Children: A Position Paper on the Proposed Referendum to the Irish Minister for Children, Mr. Brian Lenihan. This comprehensive report is the result of a consultation held among Alliance members and other NGOs in November and December 2006. It follows the announcement by the Government in November that they intend to hold a referendum to strengthen the position of children’s rights in the Irish Constitution. The report sets out 14 key principles that the Alliance believes must be reflected in the proposed amendment. The recommended principles, reflecting the state’s UN Convention obligations, include: equality and non-discrimination, the principle of best interests and respect for the views of the child, protection from abuse and the right to identity. They also address the State’s duty to intervene where necessary to uphold the child’s rights.

Jillian van Turnhout, Chief Executive, Children’s Rights Alliance said, “The amendment should make children rights visible within the Constitution and reinforce Ireland’s commitment to truly valuing childhood and respecting children.”
Ireland ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992. Since then, there have been eighteen proposed amendments to the Constitution, none of which has tackled the need to strengthen children’s rights to enable the full implementation of the Convention.

The Alliance believes that strengthening the rights of children in the Constitution will have a real and positive impact on the lives of all children in Ireland and that it is possible to amend the Constitution to give greater protection to children without unduly diminishing the very important role of the family.

For the position paper: http://www.childrensrights.ie/pubs/CRAConstitution.pdf

**Irish campaign to restore universal child benefit is launched!**

FLAC (www.flac.ie), the Irish Free legal advice centres, along with its partner organisations, have launched a campaign to restore universal child benefit on 20 November 2006, International Children’s Day, the date on which the Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989. Through this campaign, FLAC is seeking the reinstatement of child benefit in Ireland as a universal payment. Its removal in May 2004 has left many families in vulnerable situations, and especially their children, deprived of this important anti-poverty mechanism.

For more information: http://www.flac.ie/news/CB%20factsheet%20nov06.pdf. Or contact FLAC at campaigns@flac.ie.

**SPAIN**

**Law on Criminal Responsibility of Minors**

The Spanish Congress of Deputies has approved the reform of the Organic Law 5/2000 of 12th January, regulating the criminal responsibility of minors. The reform emphasises, that the measures stated in the L.O. 5/2000 will not be applicable for delinquents between the ages of 18 and 21 and they will be tried according to the general penitentiary regime. In the final text, there is an improvement of the protection of the victims in all situations, specifically the protection towards minor aggressors. This law will also respond in matters of minors. The reform emphasises, that the measures stated in the L.O. 5/2000 will not be applicable for delinquents between the ages of 18 and 21 and they will be tried according to the general penitentiary regime. In the final text, there is an improvement of the protection of the victims in all situations, specifically the protection towards minor aggressors. This law will also respond in matters of minors.


**TURKEY**

Children assert their own rights

Children from all over Turkey have launched the “Rights of the Child Promotion Campaign”. The campaign has been initiated by the Child Forum, which held its 7th annual gathering in Ankara in November. It represents a new departure in the activities supported by the Government of Turkey and UNICEF with a view to ensuring that children have a voice of their own. The coming twelve months will show how far adults are prepared to help children to make themselves heard - and to listen to what they have to say. The aim of the children’s campaign is to promote and raise awareness about children’s rights, and to boost children's participation in decision-taking at all levels. The campaign was launched on 20 November, World Child Rights Day - the date on which the Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989.

For more information: Nilgün Çağuşoğlu at UNICEF Turkey: ncaagusoglu@unicef.org

**UK**

**Worst rates of child poverty revealed**

The constituencies with the worst rates of child poverty in Britain have been revealed on 18 January 2007 to coincide with Save the Children’s day of action on child poverty. Manchester Central, Liverpool Riverside and Poplar and Canning Town top the list of the 10 constituencies with the worst rates of child poverty in Britain. In these three constituencies about 50% of children are living in poverty, which is double the national average.

In the week when the UN revealed that more than half of the world’s population lives in cities, these new figures show that British cities - Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, London and Birmingham - have by far the worst rates of child poverty in the country.

Despite the boom in affluence, illustrated by ever-rising house prices, these figures show that cities remain the places most scarred by poverty. Families are struggling to cope - especially during winter when the weather turns cold and the bills are high and the financial demands on families become unbearable. According to Save the Children, without urgent action this year, the government will fail to meet its own target to end child poverty by 2020.

All three major political parties have now signed up to the target of eradicating child poverty by 2020 but these figures reveal the extent of the problem in Britain’s biggest cities. The Government now needs to turn their promises and rhetoric into reality and use the vital opportunities of 2007, the Budget and Comprehensive Spending Review, to change the lives of the poorest children in Britain.

Save the Children is calling on the Government to introduce Seasonal Grants to help families at the most difficult times of year. These grants alone would lift 440,000 children out of poverty.
Alcohol risk to babies

A new study has revealed that up to 18,000 British babies a year are born damaged because their mothers drank in pregnancy. This figure represents 3% of all births what has prompted calls for legislation to persuade mums-to-be not to drink.

Unfortunately, the Government insists moderate drinking in pregnancy is safe and said it is working with drinks firms on warning labels.

For more information:
or:
http://www.thesun.co.uk/article/0,,2-2006500267,00.html

Tackling youth homelessness in England

A package worth 164 million pounds aimed at helping young homeless people get back on their feet has been unveiled by the UK government. They will be used to support measures for young homeless people and on improving hostels. The government aims to end the use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation for 16 and 17-year-olds by 2010.

In 1998, there were 1,850 homeless people sleeping rough each night, but this has been slashed to just over 500 – a drop of 73%. Despite this, local authorities in England accepted about 6,800 applications for homelessness from 16 or 17-year-olds in 2006. When this group was widened to 16 to 24-year-olds, the number increased to 34,500.

The new measures include mediation services for families to deal with the fact that one in four (23%) of all new homelessness cases are the result of parents no longer wanting to keep their children at home. In addition education and training schemes will be made available for vulnerable youngsters.

Kelly acknowledged that with 94,000 households in temporary accommodation there was "much more to do". To tackle homelessness in the long term, more social housing is needed. The government aims to build 75,000 new homes between now and 2008.

Homeless charities welcomed the government’s plans as a move forward. However, FEANTSA member Shelter criticized the government of issuing contradictory welfare policies. While Kelly urged charities and councils to set up new lodging schemes for young people who have been thrown out of the family home, Home Secretary John Reid said he wanted new powers to evict people within 48 hours. Shelter argues that Reid’s proposals will only create more homelessness instead of ending it.

Mental health: Bill to allow services to treat 16- and 17-year-olds as adults

Sixteen- and 17-year-olds suffering from mental illness are to be treated in the same way as adults, under proposed legislation published in November 2006.

The mental health bill, which amends part of the Mental Health Act 1983, would allow health services to detain mentally ill patients for treatment without their permission if they are perceived as a danger to others, whether their illness is curable or not. This would include 16- and 17-year-olds. Currently health services can only detain patients with curable problems.

The bill has been criticised for not specifying that children and young people should have age-appropriate care as well as for not including principles for race equality.

For more information:

Initiative for Universal Education within a Decade

British Finance Minister Gordon Brown on 4 January urged rich nations to help ensure all the world’s children had access to education within 10 years, saying failure to do so could fuel Islamist extremism.

Brown’s comments, his first political intervention of 2007, were made as attention focused on his expected bid to take over from Blair, who has pledged to step down in 2007.

Brown, pushing for universal education to be achieved within a decade, said he and International Development Secretary Hilary Benn were publishing a pamphlet telling teachers and pupils about their “Education for every child” initiative.

For more information: http://www.dfid.gov.uk
Pamphlet: The World Classroom: Developing Global Partnerships in Education:

[Source: AlertNet / DFID]

Lottery protects Human Rights of Children

The Big Lottery Fund has made a huge investment in the rights of young people across England with the announcement of over £3.6 million in funding to support four innovative youth charities for projects protecting children. The money comes from £12 million funding pot awarded today by the Young People’s Fund National Grants Programme to
organisations that recognise the potential of young people to make a difference.

The money has been awarded to the Children's Rights Alliance England (CRAE) for a project to give young people an international say in how their human rights are assessed and reported (see following article), the social care organisation Turning Point for a project that will give a support lifeline to young people at risk, Rainer – working to offer positive solutions based on the needs of the whole family, and the Fostering Network for Leading our Lives, for a project to give young people a voice and real influence in the development of the fostering service.

Full details of the Big Lottery Fund programmes and grant awards are available on the website: http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Supporting children's engagement in the UN CRC reporting process

The Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE) has been awarded a major three-year grant from the Big Lottery Fund to support children's and young people's active engagement in the Convention on the Rights of the Child reporting process (see previous article). The centrepiece of the project will be an interactive website, built to a specification developed by young people. Qualitative research will be carried out with children and young people. A team of young 'children's rights investigators' will be trained and supported to ensure no voices get left out.

CRAE will run a ‘Get yourself to Geneva’ competition to assemble the youth delegation from England, ensuring that at least 50% of the group has direct experience of the major issues facing children and young people in England today. At a local level, the project will recruit children's rights champions – young people leading local awareness-raising and advocacy.

For more information: http://www.crae.org.uk

Young people's participation to the UN Commission for Social Development

United Nations Association-United Kingdom (UNA-UK), in partnership with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, is sending a youth delegate to represent the UK at the UN Commission for Social Development in February 2007. The Commission for Social Development is part of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations.

Natalie Wease was chosen to be the UK's delegate. Natalie is currently consulting with UK youth organisations on these issues. She would like to get the broadest picture possible of the views of British young people from all regions of the UK and is welcoming young people's opinions on all issues relating to education and employment, particularly considering this year's theme of "promoting full employment and decent work for all". After the event, she will report back to share her experiences.

Send your views to: nat_wease@yahoo.co.uk

Visit http://www.childpolicy.org.uk for the latest on child policy matters across the U.K.

Council of Europe News

Recommendation on Positive Parenting

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 13 December 2006 adopted a recommendation designed to get states to recognise the importance of parental responsibilities and the need to provide parents (the term "parents" refers not only to biological parents but also to those who are involved in caring for and raising children) with enough support to help them fulfil their responsibilities.

The Committee of Ministers recommends that member States take all the appropriate legislative, administrative, financial and other measures, in line with a number of principles set out in the text, including:

- Policies to support families
- Content of positive parenting
- Services to support parents
- Special services for parents at risk of social exclusion

The explanatory memorandum includes key messages for parents and guidelines for professionals working with children and families.

Positive parenting fosters parent-child relationships based on trust and mutual respect and helps to optimise the child's development potential. It improves families' quality of life and is an integral part of a strategy for social cohesion.

For the full text of the Recommendation: https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1073507&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Council of Europe launches European action on UN children's violence study

The Council of Europe has called for European governments to put every effort into making a better life for children by acting on the findings of the United Nations Study on Violence against Children. The call was made at an event to launch the Study at European level, which was held during
Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly session in Strasbourg. It follows a debate on children in the Assembly session.

The UN study - launched worldwide at the end of 2006 - paints a picture of the situation of violence against children around the world, and gives concrete recommendations on how to remedy the situation. The Council of Europe participated in the European region's input to the report and is now taking action for children through its programme "Building a Europe for and with Children" - aiming to promote children’s rights, protect children against violence, ensure their participation and prosecute the perpetrators of violence. On this occasion, the Council of Europe has signed a joint declaration with UNICEF to strengthen their cooperation.

For more information on the CoE programme "Building a Europe for and with children": http://www.coe.int/children

For the UN Study: http://www.violencestudy.org

Child victims: stamping out all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse

In a report published on 22 December 2006, Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) rapporteur on child victims, Jean-Charles Gardetto (Monaco, EPP/CD), explains that maltreatment, physical violence or neglect is the cause of death of three children per week in France and two per week in Germany and the United Kingdom (According to UNICEF figures).

"Every day, children are bought, sold, imported, exported, used as commodities, subjected to forced marriages, prostitution. They become soldiers, servants, have their organs removed for the purpose of trafficking. They are victims of sexual abuse, everyday maltreatment, corporal punishment, trivialised domestic and parental violence as well as intimidation at school. Although there is an extensive legal apparatus at the international level intended to secure children’s rights and combat certain forms of exploitations, there is a glaring discrepancy between the rights secured to children on paper and the reality", Mr Gardetto says in his report.

PACE is due to adopt a series of proposals for more effective prevention and punishment of all forms of violence and abuse involving children during a debate on 23 January 2007 (see following article).

For the report, draft resolution and draft recommendation: http://www.assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/WorkingDocs/Doc06/EDOC11118.htm

Children's rights at PACE

The Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly has held the first part of its 2007 regular session from 22-26 January 2007. On the 25th a debate on HIV and AIDS took place, and more specifically the situation of children, including AIDS orphans, as well as women and girls.

The world is now entering its 25th year of HIV and AIDS. The disaster affects every continent, including Europe. Poor countries are hardest hit by HIV and AIDS, and so are children. There is an urgent need for everyone – and particularly decisions-makers – to address the specific problems of combating the disease among HIV and AIDS children and also to recognise the need to take care of abandoned infected children or orphans children whose parents become AIDS victims.

The report from rapporteur Mr Michael Hancock (Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee) indicates a certain number of measures to be taken: the first amongst them, for member states, is to introduce a “child perspective” into their HIV and AIDS policies and development aid policies to the third world, in particular Africa.

In addition, Princess Caroline of Hanover, President of the World Association of Children’s Friends, and the Executive Director of UNICEF Ann Veneman intervened, on 23 January, in the debate on combating violence against children and other forms of child exploitation and abuse, as part of the three-year Council of Europe campaign “Building a Europe for and with children”.

For more information: http://www.coe.int/t/transversalprojects/children/default_EN.asp

Commissioner for Human Rights viewpoint on juvenile crime

In a Viewpoint on juvenile crime for the Child Rights Information Network (CRIN) in January 2007, Commissioner Thomas Hammarberg has argued that young offenders should be treated in the spirit of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC), and authorities should be seeking family-based or other social alternatives to imprisonment.

Today, there are two very different approaches to juvenile crime. One is to lock up more and more young offenders, at an increasingly young age. The other trend – in the spirit of the UN CRC – is to avoid criminalisation and to seek family-based or other social alternatives to imprisonment. Mr Hammarberg argues for the second approach.

The message of the UN CRC is that criminalisation of children should be avoided. This does not mean that young offenders should be treated as if they had no responsibility. On the contrary, it is important that young offenders are held responsible for their actions and, for instance, take part in repairing the damage they have caused.

European and international standards are clear, but they are not widely known. This is unfortunate because they are highly relevant to the discussions in member states, where the cry for “tougher
methods” is now increasingly heard. In Mr Hammarberg’s opinion, the Europe we want to build for and with children should include those children who have had a bad start in life.

For the full article: http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=121 31

For more information on the Human Rights Commissioner: http://www.commissioner.coe.int

United Nations News

New Secretary General

In the beginning of January 2007, former Republic of Korea Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon took over formally as United Nations Secretary-General. Mr. Ban succeeded Kofi Annan to become the 8th UN Secretary-General, becoming the first Asian in more than 30 years to be elected secretary general of the United Nations. He took over the post at a daunting time in international affairs, starting from Darfur to Middle East, Lebanon, Iran, Iraq, North Korea, and many other crises that troubling our world. He stressed that these issues need to be addressed collectively.

Stressing his determination to follow through on the goal of management reform at the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon used his first address to staff as Secretary-General to call on them to work with him to help make the Organisation more mobile, professional and capable of responding to the expectations of the international community.


Committee on the Rights of the Child 44th Session

The 44th Session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child is taking place in Geneva on 15 January to 2 February 2007. The Committee will examine reports from several governments on their implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as on the implementation of the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (OPSC) and the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OPAC).

States Parties reports submitted by governments to the Committee on the Rights of the Child are available in English, French and Spanish on the website of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR): http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/crcs44.htm

Alternative Reports submitted by NGOs to the Committee on the Rights of the Child are made available on the CRIN website in partnership with the NGO Group for the UN CRC: http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=121 97 The reports can also be searched by country, Committee session or by organisation and are posted on the website as they are received.

Jaap Doek, Committee Chairperson, said in his opening statement, that during this session the Committee would start work on a General Comment on the rights of children of indigenous peoples. They would discuss an outline for the Day of General Discussion in September on Article 4 (which specifies that States must undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognised in the Convention). Other issues to be discussed included follow-up on the UN Report on Violence against Children and continued work on a General Comment on juvenile justice.

For more information about the 44th session: http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/crcs44.htm

UNICEF at 60

UNICEF was brought to life in December 1946 by unanimous vote at the first session of the UN General Assembly. The United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund, as it was then known, was to provide short-term relief to children in post-World War II Europe. It was never meant to be here today, in the first decade of the 21st century. Yet today, a world without UNICEF is unimaginable.

Then as now, UNICEF was funded entirely by voluntary contributions – and once the immediate post-war needs of Europe’s children had been seen to, many thought UNICEF should cease to exist. What began as a temporary experiment 60 years ago has become the world’s leading agency for children. Today, UNICEF is active in over 190 countries, uniting people and partners to make the world a better place for future generations.

Sixty years is but a blink of an eye in the course of history, but in that brief span of time the world has become a different place for children entirely. Millions of young lives have been saved and transformed, but millions more face new challenges of HIV/AIDS and conflict worldwide. With the Millennium Development Goals as a guide, UNICEF will continue to evolve and respond to the challenges children face in a complex yet wondrous world.

For more information: http://www.unicef.org/about/who/index_37404.html
Committee on the Rights of Women: Violence against girls

States who have signed the United Nations international bill of rights for women must continue to press for an end to gender-based violence, a senior UN official today told experts gathering in New York on 17 January 2007 for a two-week session to evaluate compliance with the treaty. During this session, the Committee’s 37 panel members will examine the reports of 15 countries (including Austria, Greece, the Netherlands and Poland) regarding their implementation of measures to eliminate discrimination against women.

Youth report to the 51st annual Commission on the Status of Women

The Working Group on Girls and UNICEF’s Voices of Youth, are calling for children and young people’s feedback on the youth version of the report of the Expert Group meeting on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child. The report talks about girls which are in danger of violence and unfair treatment and suggests ways governments and their citizens can protect them.

Children and young people’s recommendations and suggestions will be presented at the 51st annual Commission on the Status of Women at United Nations headquarters in February-March 2007 and will influence how the world works to stop discrimination and violence against girls.

In addition, the Working Group on Girls and Voices of Youth have set up an online forum at www.unicef.org/voy, which provides the opportunity for girls to share their thoughts and suggestions about what must be done to end discrimination and violence against the girl child. The forum will close at the end of the month. The results will also be used in the Youth Report to be presented at the 2007 meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

[Source: CRIN, UN, UNICEF]

New Disability Convention

On 13 December 2006, the UN General Assembly adopted a new Convention to protect the rights of persons with disabilities around the world (Disability Convention). Countries that ratify the Treaty agree to enact laws and other measures to improve disability rights, and also to abolish legislation, customs and practices that discriminate against persons with disabilities. Currently only some 45 countries have legislation that deal with persons with disabilities. The Convention will be opened for signature and ratification on 30 March.

So what does this mean for children with disabilities?

A paradigm shift

The focus should no longer be on addressing the ‘special needs’ of children – the approach embodied in Article 23 of the UN CRC. Rather, it should be on the realisation of their rights. The Convention recognises that a change of attitude in society is necessary if persons with disabilities are to achieve equal status, and includes a specific Article on awareness-raising to promote respect for the rights and dignity of people with disabilities. However, the Convention in its entirety is dedicated to achieving that change. It will finally ensure that countries will no longer be allowed to relegate children with disabilities to the margins of society. Governments that ratify it will be legally bound to treat them as subjects of the law with clearly defined rights.

New obligations to protect the rights of children with disabilities

Children with disabilities, have the same human rights as all other children. Human rights are universal. But, in practice those rights are violated or neglected in almost all areas of their lives – they experience discrimination, for example, in relation to family life, education, health, participation and personal freedoms. The new Convention seeks to introduce new obligations on governments and other duty bearers to take all the measures necessary to ensure that all their rights are fulfilled, protected and respected.

All the provisions in the new Convention apply to children with disabilities as well as adults, but there are also additional measures included to address the specific situation of children.

Recognising the importance of the process as well as the outcome - the participation of NGOs, disabled people and children

Children and young people with disabilities played an important role in the drafting process of the Convention. There had been a widespread view among many government delegations that it was not necessary to include provisions on children in the text. The reasons varied, but included the belief that the adult provisions applied equally to children, that it was unhelpful to make special pleading for different groups, that children already had the Convention on the Rights of the Child and that inclusion of provisions in the new Convention might serve to undermine those rights. The presence of children at the meeting served to challenge those views.

The involvement of people with disabilities, including children, as key actors in the development of the Convention was transforming and a learning experience for all involved. Government delegations that had no previous experience of the issues, let alone of working directly with people with disabilities, were confronted with profound challenges to their stereotypes and prejudices. The very presence and competence of the disability organisations confounded traditional perceptions of people, including children with disabilities as victims in need of care, protection and support. It forced a
recognition that these were people entitled to respect for their rights and able to articulate and advocate forcefully for that respect.

Moving forward

The Convention represents a monumental step forward. However, of itself, it is only a paper document. It will take sustained commitment to translate its obligation into meaningful action at the country level.

The intention of the EU to sign the treaty


Further Reading

State of the World’s Children 2007

The State of the World’s Children 2007 examines the discrimination and disempowerment women face throughout their lives – and outlines what must be done to eliminate gender discrimination and empower women and girls. It looks at the status of women today, discusses how gender equality will move all the Millennium Development Goals forward, and shows how investment in women’s rights will ultimately produce a double dividend: advancing the rights of both women and children. To download the report: http://www.unicef.org/sowc07/report/report.php

Report exposing UK companies marketing junk food to children

The new campaign report, entitled “Fables: Exploding industry myths on responsible food marketing to kids”, names and shames UK food companies who are targeting children as consumers of junk food. This research, published by Which? in November 2006, reveals that leading food companies in the UK are increasingly marketing junk food to children, despite concerns about rising rates of obesity and diet-related disease. To download the report: http://www.which.co.uk/files/application/pdf/FoodFables%20231106-445-100487.pdf

OECD Family database

Following up on the OECD Babies and Bosses reviews on the reconciliation of work and family life in selected member states, and in view of the strong demand for cross-national indicators on the situation of families and children, the OECD has developed an on-line database on family outcomes and family policies with indicators for all OECD countries. The database brings together information from different OECD databases (for example, the OECD Social Expenditure database, the OECD Benefits and Wages database, or the OECD Education database, and databases maintained by other (international) organisations. For more information: www.oecd.org/els/social/family/database

Preventing Juvenile Crime in the EU

An Experts’ Committee of the European Institute of Social Services of the University of Kent (UK), has developed a ‘Review of good practices in preventing juvenile crime in the European Union’. The aim of this report is to identify new good practices and to underline the importance of the development of local and national policies in the juvenile crime prevention in Europe. It examined the prevention of crime by young people, in the 25 countries of the EU. To download the report: http://www.kent.ac.uk/eiss/Documents/qcteurope/final%20juvenile%20design.doc

Report on sexual exploitation of children

ECPAT International has today released a global monitoring report on the commercial sexual exploitation of children. The report provides information and analysis on more than 50 specific country situations and an assessment of the efforts made, and still needed, to protect children from sexual exploitation. The report is available as a series of country reports. For more information: http://www.ecpat.net

Education of Roma children in Europe

The Council of Europe has organised numerous activities involving Roma. This publication was compiled as part of the “Education of Roma children in Europe” project, which is responsible for implementing a Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to the member states on the education of Roma/Gypsy children in Europe. It outlines the Council of Europe’s official texts on Roma and Travellers, highlighting references to education. The resulting summary gives an overview of the working context for these texts, their implementation and the activities of the Council of Europe in this area. Price: 19€/29$, Council of Europe Publishing: http://book.coe.int. To place an order directly http://book.coe.int/sysmodules/RBS_page/admin/redirect.php?id=36&lang=EN&produit_aliasid=2141

Report on approaching children in trouble

Reforming youth justice was one of New Labour’s top priorities but while some improvements have
been made, a fundamental shift is needed in the way we respond to young people in conflict with the law. A new approach should comprise: greater prevention, difficulties underlying much offending behaviour, limits on the way we criminalise young people and a more appropriate system of prosecution and courts etc. Author: Rob Allen. Centre for Crime and Justice Studies. To download the report: http://www.kcl.ac.uk/depsta/rel/ccjs/2006-punishment-to-problem-solving.pdf

Lives of children on either side of Britain’s housing divide

Against the Odds provides powerful new evidence of a generation of children torn apart by the housing divide. One in seven British children - 1.6 million overall - are growing up homeless or in bad housing. This is part of the shocking picture that emerges from new research released this week by a UK organisation, Shelter, to mark 40 years since its launch. To download the report: http://www.crin.org/docs/shelter_against_odds.pdf

Respect for diversity in the education of young children

The Bernard van Leer Foundation has released a new issue of its Working Papers series on Early Childhood Development. In Respect for diversity: An international overview, Professor Glenda M MacNaughton, of the University of Melbourne, presents an overview on ways of thinking about young children’s respect for diversity. To download the report: http://www.bernardvanleer.org/publication_store/publication_store_publications/respect_for_diversity_an_international_overview/file

Leaflet on European Year of Equal Opportunities for All

A new flyer providing general information on the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All is now available. It includes some statistics on the current equality situation in the EU, and provides practical information on the Year’s activities. In the coming weeks it will be published in 22 EU languages, including Romanian and Bulgarian. To download the leaflet: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equality2007/kdoc/flyer_en.pdf. European Year of Equal Opportunities for all website: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equality2007/index_en.htm

Anti-discrimination law in your country

In 2000, the European Equality Directives set out the legal basis for anti-discrimination law across the EU. A new study, available in English and French, has twin aims of providing comprehensive and independent mapping of existing national legislative measures (in strand 1 of the report) and their impact (in strand 2) in tackling discrimination outside the field of employment and occupation - on the grounds of sex, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation. The Mapping Study covers all 27 EU Member States and a further five countries included for comparison: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and the United States of America. For further information: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fundamental_rights/public/pubst_en.htm#stud

New European Commission Civil Service website

Too often, the Commission is described as a faceless bureaucracy, an army of anonymous ‘eurocrats’ in Brussels, with a mission to make life complicated. This new portal website aims at lifting the veil on the people who make up the Commission Civil Service – who they are and what they do. For the first time, information on the Commission Civil Service is accessible through a single entry point, which helps European citizens to find their way through the wealth of information at their disposal on the EUROPA website. It is one of the first of a new generation of thematic websites to help citizens find their way through the information jungle.

The site brings together information which was previously spread through many different Commission websites. It also introduces new features such as portraits of some of the people who work for the Commission to show what working-life is really like in this international organisation.

The site is currently available in English, French and German. However, during 2007 the users will be able to consult almost the entire site in most of the official languages of the EU.

For the new Commission website: http://ec.europa.eu/civil_service/index_en.htm

Sharing Information

Do you wish to share information, announce something or make a contribution to the e-News Bulletin? Please send it to: info@eurochild.org.
Eurochild AISBL is a network of organisations and individuals, who are working in and across Europe to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of children and young people. Our work is based on the principles enshrined in the UN CRC.

If you would like to become a member of Eurochild AISBL, please visit our website www.eurochild.org.