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News from Eurochild

Past Events

Why involve us? Children’s participation in the policy-making process

In advance of the publication of the Communication on the Rights of the Child, which was released by the European Commission on 4 July 2006, Eurochild AISBL organised a reception in the European Parliament on 7 June 2006.

On this occasion, a group of 16 children and young people at risk of social exclusion from 6 European countries presented their experiences of participating in political decision-making at a local, regional or national level, as well as their demands and arguments as to their involvement in all processes concerning them – as stated in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The reception was hosted by Mrs Lissy Gröner, Member of the European Parliament (PES, DE). The presentation by the children was followed by a panel discussion with Mrs Gröner, Mrs Catriona Williams,
President of Eurochild, and Adam Tyson, Head of the Social Inclusion Unit of the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of the European Commission.

This event represented a unique opportunity for the children and young people to present their views and concerns at the European level. It was attended by some one hundred participants from the European Institutions, national representations in Brussels, NGOs and others.

For the full report from the event, with more pictures: http://www.eurochild.org/index.php?id=28

Upcoming Events

3rd Annual Conference of Eurochild AISBL
14-16 November 2006, Berlin

The Child and Youth Welfare Association (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kinder- und Jugendhilfe - AGJ) in Germany and Eurochild AISBL are organising a European conference on "Policy and Practice for Social Inclusion of Children and Young People - the Role of Non-formal and Informal Learning".

The conference links three key issues from the EU political agenda that concern children and young people: cooperation on youth policy, the Youth Pact and the fight against poverty and social exclusion. The conference aims to explore the interaction between national and European policy development, as well as the synergies between the different policy areas. The linkages between participation, learning and social integration provide the backdrop to the conference agenda.

Non-formal and informal learning opportunities, provided through child and youth welfare services, make an important contribution to the overall development of a child’s personality. When confronted with poverty and social exclusion, support services that empower children and build self-esteem, can mitigate against the inter-generational inheritance of poverty and help to build successful life strategies. Critically, non-formal and informal learning can help children and young people gain access to, and make better use of, formal education opportunities.

The overall objectives of the conference are to:
• Exchange ideas and experience of different policy approaches across the EU on how educational systems overcome social exclusion by providing balanced learning contexts and participation opportunities.
• Exchange best practice between practitioners active in the field of non-formal and informal learning on how different approaches help to tackle social exclusion, and in particular ensure equal access to education;
• Develop and discuss possible recommendations for national and European policy development regarding inclusive educational models.

The conference is open to:
• practitioners working in the delivery of child and youth welfare services in Europe;
• academic experts and specialists in non-formal education and combating child poverty and social exclusion;
• government representatives and policy makers at regional, national and EU level

Participants should register by 10th October 2006. A link to the registration form will be posted on www.eurochild.org as soon as it is available.

News from the European Institutions

Launch of Commission Communication on Children’s Rights

The European Commission’s Communication on the Rights of the Child has finally been launched on 4th July 2006 in Strasbourg, during the plenary session of the European Parliament. It was followed by a Press Conference with the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, and its Vice-President, Commissioner Franco Frattini, the initiator of the document.

During the press conference, President Barroso and Commissioner Frattini spoke about some of the issues mentioned in the Communication, including future cooperation with the Council of Europe, the UN and NGOs on Child Rights, the creation of a child friendly website as well as an international help line for children with one European number. They said that the Commission “wants children to contribute concretely” to issues concerning them and “make suggestions”.

The Communication is not only intended to raise awareness on a European level about children’s rights, but also engender action by the Commission and Member States and exchange best practice. Mr Barroso and Mr Frattini underlined again that the implementation and performance of member states...
concerning Child Rights will be regularly evaluated through annual reports.

There will be a question and answer session with Commission President Barroso and Commissioner Frattini in Brussels on 13 July about the launch of the Communication.

The Group of NGOs on Child Rights, of which Eurochild is part, has issued a press release that same morning, in which it is calling for a Commissioner for Children’s Rights. For the full text of the press release, see: http://www.eurochild.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Press%20Releases/CR_press_release_Children_s_Rights_Communication.pdf


The final version of the Communication is available on the Eurochild website www.eurochild.org.

School competition on new name for environmental monitoring system

The European Commission, with the support of the Committee of Regions, has launched a school competition for young people to find a new name for the environmental monitoring system GMES (Global Monitoring for Environment and Security). GMES will gather relevant data, for example concerning environmental pollution, floods, forest fires or earthquakes in support of public policy makers’ needs.

The Commission has invited young Europeans to unleash their creativity and find a more accessible name for this programme. School classes from all 25 EU Member States, as well as Norway and Switzerland (members of the European Space Agency) can participate. In early September, those who have registered will receive the GMES school kit containing a leaflet for teachers, a poster for the classroom and a CD-ROM with a film illustrating different services of the GMES initiative. Pupils have until 31 October to send in the name they have chosen.

Registrations and submission of name is made possible through a dedicated website: www.gmes-competition.info. The winning entry will be selected in December 2006 and the name will be announced in early 2007. For more information about the GMES: www.gmes.info.

Erasmus Mundus 2006-2007

The Erasmus Mundus programme of Master’s courses has proven so popular since its launch in 2004 that it had to be expanded to keep up with demand. Erasmus Mundus Master’s Courses are top-quality courses offered by partnerships of European higher education institutions. There are currently 57 courses to chose from, covering everything from engineering and technology, natural sciences, life sciences, social sciences, business, economics, to law and the humanities. The European Commission has selected, for the 2006-2007 academic year, 1,377 students and 231 university teachers to participate in the programme.

The Erasmus Mundus students study for a European Masters’ degree for one or two years, in at least two universities located in two different European countries, so they experience of European lifestyles, cultures and languages. They are admitted onto the Courses only after a highly competitive process, ensuring that the Erasmus Mundus programme draws the world’s best talent. Erasmus Mundus university teachers spend up to three months in Europe working for one of the Erasmus Mundus Masters courses, thus strengthening ties between universities worldwide.

The Erasmus Mundus programme is proving to be very popular: the level of demand from third-country graduates and academics to study and teach in Europe’s universities has been increasing rapidly: the 57 Erasmus Mundus Masters Courses received almost 6,000 applications for scholarships from students and scholars from all over the world.

The European Commission is even considering giving more money to students participating in the Erasmus student exchange programme, a move expected to increase the number of people taking part in the scheme. At the moment Erasmus students receive an average sum of €160 a month and generally fund their studies with other forms of income such as bank loans. A Commission spokesperson said that Brussels is aiming to gradually increase the grant to €200 a month until 2013, but admitted that it is less than the original sum (€250) it had wanted.

Further information, including a geographical breakdown by country of origin of the Erasmus Mundus scholarships grantees, can be found on the Erasmus Mundus web site: http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/index_en.html

Agreement on EU-US cooperation in higher education & vocational training

During the EU-US summit in Vienna on 21 June 2006, a new eight-year education agreement was signed between the two parties, renewing their long-standing cooperation programme in higher education and vocational training. The new agreement will usher in innovative Transatlantic Degree programmes, promote exchanges of students, teachers and other professionals, strengthen the Schuman-Fulbright Programme and encourage greater institutional collaboration in tertiary education. The agreement was signed by Commissioner for External Relations and Neighborhood Policy Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Austrian Foreign Minister and Council President in
office Ursula Plassnik and US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

The EU and the USA have been running a joint cooperation programme in higher education and vocational training since 1995. The programme’s core activities are joint curriculum development and student exchanges in a wide range of disciplines. The programme enabled the creation of over 100 transatlantic consortia involving more than 700 institutions. Over 4 000 students have benefited from the resulting exchanges.

Further information on the EU-US cooperation programme in higher education and vocational training can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/eu-usa/index_en.html

'Safe Start' campaign to protect young workers

Across Europe, 18 to 24-year-olds are at least 50% more likely to be injured in the workplace than more experienced workers. Behind the statistics are harrowing stories of young people having to live with the consequences of accidents and damaged health for the rest of their lives, or dying when they had so much of their lives ahead of them.

Employers need to do more to protect young workers, and young people need to be more aware of health and safety issues when they enter the world of work. That is why the Safe Start campaign has been launched on 20 June 2006 by European Commissioner Vladimir Špidla, responsible for Employment, Social Affairs & Equal Opportunities, the current Austrian and forthcoming Finnish EU Presidencies and the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work. Safe Start is dedicated to improving the occupational health and safety of the EU's 75 million young people.

Safe Start features a wide range of quizzes, interactive learning materials and events, including good practice awards and a competition to find the European Young Film Maker of the Year on a health and safety theme. The campaign culminates in the European Week for Safety and Health at Work on 23 - 27 October 2006, with a range of awareness-raising activities being organised across Europe.

For more information, see: http://ew2006.osha.eu.int

'European Year of Equal Opportunities for all' in 2007 gets Green Light

The European Commission welcomed on 1 June 2006 the decision by the Council and Parliament to designate 2007 as 'European Year of Equal Opportunities for All'. The year will have four themes: rights, representation, recognition and respect.

The 2007 European year will focus on discrimination linked to gender, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. These are all discrimination grounds that can be addressed within EU law.

The year’s budget will be spent on an EU-wide information campaign, new Eurobarometer surveys on discrimination and attitudes towards it, as well as hundreds of national initiatives such writing competitions for schools on the theme of respect and tolerance or prizes for companies with the most effective diversity training. There will also be the first ever Equality Summit gathering together ministers, equality bodies, civil society and social partners.

Most activities will be co-ordinated nationally to ensure that they take place as locally as possible. The €7.6 million dedicated to national, local and regional activities will be matched by co-financing from national public and private sources.

This initiative comes exactly a decade after the European Year Against Racism and the introduction into the EC Treaty of Article 13 - allowing the EU to combat discrimination.

For more information: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equality2007/index_en.htm

EU drug consumption increasing

Figures published by the European Commission on the occasion of the World No Drugs Day on 26 June, show that in the EU Member States, over 8,000 people die of drugs overdoses each year. According to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), the majority of those dying from drug overdoses are mainly young men in their 20s and 30s. But it is estimated that the total number of drugs-related deaths could be as much as 3 times higher, due to under-reporting of deaths and to deaths indirectly linked to drugs such as HIV.

The amount of drug consumption is continuously increasing and there are little signs that the situation might get better, the EMCDDA indicates. Each month, about 1.5 million Europeans use cocaine and 12 million persons use cannabis with 3 million of those taking cannabis doing this on a daily basis. The EMCDDA study also says that 8% of young people within the EU take ecstasy on a regular basis, making ecstasy the second most common drug after cannabis.

Meanwhile, the European Commission on 26 June adopted a Green Paper which calls for more dialogue with civil society organisations active in the fight against drug abuse. Its objective for the coming months is to bring civil society organisations more closely into the policy process at EU level. The commission adopted an Action Plan on Drugs in 2005, expected to cover the period till 2008. The
The European Commission has adopted its 2006 Annual Work Programme for grants in the area of food aid and food security with a global budget of €197 million. The EC approach is focused on the integration of food security policy within the fight against poverty, hence recognising hunger as the basic dimension of poverty. Activities foreseen in the Annual Work Programme aim at contributing to the achievement of the first Millennium Development Goal: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.

The European Commission is committed to give priority to food security operations instead of food aid. Reinforcing rapid alert systems, developing national strategic stocks to prevent dramatic imbalances of local markets in case of severe drought or plagues or improving children's nutrition through schools are key actions of Commission's sponsored programs.

The present Annual Work Programme covers commitment appropriations available in 2006 for grants to International Organisations and NGOs.

The grants will be awarded to:
- NGOs,
- UN Relief & Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA),
- The World Food Programme (WFP),
- The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC),
- The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

For more information, see:

**Presidency of the EU**

**Social NGOs’ assessment of the Austrian Presidency**

On 30 June, the last day of the Austrian Presidency, the Platform of European Social NGOs issued a press release assessing the achievements of their 6-month lead of the European Council. In short, Austrians reinstated Social Europe in the political agenda, but failed to engage citizens in an open and structured debate on the Constitution.

The Social Platform has given credit to the Austrian Presidency for having put back at the core of the Lisbon strategy the fight against poverty and social exclusion, but is disappointed at the Presidency’s lack of ambition in devising a real strategy to make the debate on the future of Europe more visible, which would have pushed citizens to take full ownership of the issues at stake.
The Austrian Presidency proved successful in securing from the Spring Council conclusions the central role for social cohesion in the EU's objectives. However, social NGOs are deeply worried by the lack of visibility of the social inclusion strand in the Lisbon strategy follow-up. For example, the Commission staff working paper “Further steps in implementing the revised Lisbon strategy” lacks any reference to the OMC on social protection and social inclusion.

On the Constitution, the Austrian Presidency tried hard, but without much success to launch a wide debate on the future of Europe and the Constitutional Treaty.

For the press release and more information, see: www.socialplatform.org

**Finnish Presidency launched**

Both the Presidency logo and website were launched on 31 May by the Finnish Minister for European Affairs, Paula Lehtomäki. The logo is the result of an open competition run by the Finnish authorities. It is inspired by the lines and colours of the Nordic landscape. The logo design is also intended to symbolise cooperation among member states and an aspiration to debate and make decisions on matters of common interest.

The official Presidency website www.eu2006.fi, which will be the main channel of communication for the six-month Presidency, will be available only in English and French. But as happened with the last Finnish Presidency, information in Finnish and Swedish will be available on another website (www.eurooppa-tiedotus.fi). The Finnish Presidency begins on 1 July 2006.

**Main themes of Finnish Presidency**

Addressing Finnish Parliament on 21 June 2006, Finnish Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen has said that the Finnish EU Presidency, during the second half of 2006, will seek consensus between member states on central questions of EU enlargement. Vanhanen said his government will be holding bilateral talks with all member states in order to reach common ground on enlargement, before the issue will be tackled at the 14 - 15 December 2006 European Council in Brussels. Vanhanen added the EU should also be seeking better relations to Russia, that should not be restricted to energy and other trade issues.

The Finnish Prime Minister said Finland would actively strive to turn the ‘Pause for Reflection’ on the EU Constitution into a phase of actively thinking how to bring the project forward. He conceded, however, that one of the main problems the EU is facing is a growing number of people questioning the EU’s necessity.

**7 tests for the Finnish Presidency**

In presenting the programme for the Finnish Presidency, Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen took on one commitment: get the Union to look into the future, participate in global change and ideally to lead it and become number one. To succeed on this challenge he set several missions: identify the basis for economic growth and competitiveness, win citizens' confidence in making the legislative process more transparent and establish a wide debate on the Constitution.

Social NGOs welcomed the Finnish political will and, as for each incoming Presidency, devised seven tests upon which to assess the performance of the Finnish Presidency in 6 months time.

The Platform of social NGOs thinks that this Nordic Presidency can be crucial in helping the EU to balance the “growth and jobs” strategy putting a strong emphasis on social protection and social inclusion. The Platform is convinced that competitiveness at all cost will not only alienate the citizens, but create irreparable consequences.

Looking at the social record, the Finnish Presidency has succeeded to combine flexibility and competitiveness with a sufficient degree of security. Therefore, the Finnish government is well placed to ensure active stakeholder involvement in the definition of common principles on ‘flexicurity’ and to follow up on the commitment made to make a cost benefit analysis of the impact of this approach for people furthest from the labour market.

The Presidency is also well fit to give political leadership to ensure that the streamlined Open Method of Coordination (OMC) on Social Inclusion and Social Protection addresses the implementation gap that was identified in the Joint reports on social protection and social inclusion.

It has the capacity to also find a better balance between social rights and market freedoms by ensuring that the negotiations around the services directive continue to recognise the specificity of social services and their exclusion.

Taking into account the decision adopted by the last European Council to make all Council deliberations under the co-decision procedure public, social NGOs also call for the Finnish Presidency to make sure that the follow-up of the commitment to bring greater transparency in the Union will be enforced through the active involvement of civil society.

The same kind of involvement should be established as well in creating an open, structured and visible discussion on the Constitution, aimed at achieving
an agreement and including debates on the social dimension in the future text.

For more information, see:  

**European Ombudsman**

**Meeting between Ombudsman and Commission**

On 6 June European Commission Vice-President Margot Wallström, responsible for Institutional Relations and Communication Strategy and European Ombudsman Mr. Diamandouros met the network of civil servants, who in various Directorates General at the Commission, follow the Ombudsman’s enquiries. The purpose of the meeting was to achieve greater transparency in the Commission’s work and enhance its capacity to listen to citizens’ complaints.

The new procedure adopted by the Commission last October gives stronger political ownership of the Ombudsman’s enquiries, with each Commissioner now signing replies to the Ombudsman in the name and under the authority of the whole Commission. The meeting also provided an opportunity to review the relations between the Commission and the Ombudsman and examine how the commitments entered into at the meeting between the Ombudsman and the College of Commissioners on 25 May 2005 were followed up, especially as regards the possibility of reaching friendly solutions more frequently in the disputes between complainants and the Commission.

The Ombudsman plays an active role as an external control mechanism to guarantee the right of citizens to good administration on the part of European institutions, and also as a resource at the disposal of the EU administration to set up structures based on a culture of service and respect of human rights and the rule of law. The Commission and the Ombudsman have decided to organise joint initiatives on a more regular basis, particularly a meeting with Directors General and Heads of service and another meetings between the Ombudsman and the College of Commissioners to review progress.

**European Court of Justice**

**EU court allows national restrictions on immigrant children**

EU countries can impose conditions on children over 12 trying to immigrate to countries within the EU in order to join their families, the European Union's highest court ruled on 27 June. The European Parliament had brought a case to court claiming the legislation that allows these conditions to be imposed was contrary to fundamental human rights.

The judges rejected the plea however ruling that it is not discriminatory on the grounds of age when children over 12 years are treated differently from their parents and younger siblings.

"The very objective of marriage is long-lasting married life together, whereas children over 12 years of age will not necessarily remain for a long time with their parents," the judges said.

The Luxembourg-based European Court of Justice also found that the respect for family life creates no "individual right to be allowed to enter the territory of a state and cannot be interpreted as denying member states a certain margin of appreciation when they examine applications for family reunification."

While the Court in this case consolidated member states' autonomy to decide on immigration laws, the Commission is to announce on 28 June new proposals to give the EU a bigger role in settling asylum, immigration and visa cases. The Commission plan, to be adopted at the weekly meeting of Commissioners, suggests more extensive use of the so-called "bridging clause" in Article 42 of the Treaty lifting national vetoes on justice affairs and giving the Court competences to rule in the area. The move would however eventually require unanimous agreement among Member States in order to go through.  
[source: EU Observer.com]

**General European News**

**Commissioner Figel at G8 on Education**

On 1 and 2 June, Mr Jan Figel, European Commissioner in charge of Education & Training, has participated in a meeting of G8 Education Ministers in Moscow. Russia has highlighted education, alongside energy security and infectious diseases, as one of the three priorities for its Presidency of the G8. The Ministers meeting in Moscow will look at the role of education in relation to four sets of issues: building innovative societies; developing skills for life and work; advancing the Education for All agenda; and the role education plays in empowering migrants.

The Commission is currently developing a European Qualifications Framework which will make it easier to relate qualifications acquired in one country to those used in another. This is already attracting interest among non-EU countries including Russia, and its non-binding nature makes it interesting as a model for cooperation with countries outside the EU legal framework.
Similarly the “Bologna process”, while building on the achievements of Erasmus, is independent of the EU legal framework, and 45 European countries are now in the process of establishing, by 2010, a European Higher Education Area, reaching from Reykjavik to Vladivostok. Comparable qualifications, clear quality assurance arrangements and educational credit transfer open up a diversified set of study opportunities for students from the wider Europe and other world regions. Russia joined the Bologna Process in 2003 and is stepping up its efforts to reach the common objectives set for 2010.

Education has featured in the conclusions of G8 summits for most of the last 25 years, but this is only the second meeting of education Ministers. Their conclusions will be sent to the Heads of Government at the G8 Summit (St. Petersburg, 15-17 July 2006).

More information, see: http://en.g8russia.ru/

US universities tower over ‘dilapidated’ EU schools

EU universities are among the worst-funded in the world, falling behind US schools and becoming vulnerable to competition from Asia, according to a new report by the London-based think-tank, the Centre for European Reform (CER), which was published in June.

EU Member States spend between 0.9% (Slovakia, Italy, Czech Republic) and 1.8% (Denmark, Finland, Sweden) of their GDPs on higher education, compared to 2.6% in the US, the study notes. "Europe's universities, taken as a group, are failing to provide the intellectual and creative energy that is required to improve the continent's poor economic performance,” CER states. “There is a kind of drab uniformity across the sector: many institutions (especially in France, Italy and Germany) are struggling to cope with growing numbers of students and inadequate resources, delivering uninspiring teaching in dilapidated buildings.”

CER cites Chinese and UK analyses saying that eight out of the top ten universities in the world and 36 out of the top 50 are based in the US, with China and India catching up and expected to enter the rankings in 2010.

CER's rescue plan for Europe suggests weak universities should be closed so that resources can be concentrated in elite centres of excellence that carry out diverse types of research. Universities should be more selective on students with fees helping to eliminate those who just want to "pass the time" and helping to cut the average EU drop out rate of 40%. Member state governments should butt out of university management, with French and Italian education Ministries the most intrusive, while giving "clear incentives for business participation" CER adds.

For more information, see: www.cer.org.uk

The link between Poverty and obesity

With mounting evidence showing the link between poverty and obesity, experts are urging Brussels to help low income families buy healthy food while drugs firms will cash in on the west’s fat epidemic.

Teenagers aged 15 to 17 living below the poverty line in the US in the early 2000s showed 23% obesity rates compared to 14% in wealthier post codes, latest studies on the subject show. But class and education are also important, with poor households eating more fatty and sweet foods, binge-eating due to food insecurity and spending more leisure in front of the TV or in the bar instead of playing sports. Anxiety related to parental neglect, exposure to violence and lack of control over employment status also contributes to making poor people fat, other studies indicate.

Scientists have in the past few years begun urging EU governments to improve the availability of good food. The link between European eating patterns and the structure of the EU’s heavily-subsidised agricultural industry has also become a target for the International Association for the Study of Obesity (IASO).

With CAP reform on the horizon for 2009 at the earliest and with the changes set to focus on budgetary rather than health-related goals, the EU’s fat - both rich and poor - are in the meantime creating new market opportunities for the pharmaceutical industry. A French firm expects to get Brussel’s green light to begin the production of the anti-obesity drug Acomplia, with US approval expected by 2007 and with other drugs firms working on similar projects. It is expected to become one of the world’s best-selling drugs...

Survey on EU communication with citizens

A large majority of EU citizens feel that European institutions communicate poorly with them, according to a poll published on 30 May by the Brussels weekly, European Voice. Some 82% of the poll respondents are unhappy with the level of interaction with the Brussels institutions with only 18% responding favourably. And around the same large majority (80%) said the Council's decision-making process should be open and visible to public scrutiny.

The European institutions must work more on strengthening their communication strategy. Environment (86%), food safety (82%), energy (78%) and trade (73%) are the areas where most European citizens feel that European institutions should be involved.

The poll also shows that half of European citizens believe that EU membership had a positive effect on their country.
A large proportion of EU citizens (68%) are against the two seat system for the European Parliament, according to the survey, with Brussels supported by 76% as the favourite location and only 24% in favour of Parliament meetings being held in Strasbourg.

Old member states tend to trust the EU less than new member states. This shows that citizens in the original member states have less enthusiasm than those in new Member States. [source: EU Observer.com]

### News from Member & Candidate States

#### FRANCE

**13th meeting of the Children’s Parliament**

Children from all over France and its over-seas departments participated in the 13th Children’s Parliament, which came together on 10 June 2006.

Each year since 1994 children aged 11 have had the possibility to participate in a live lesson of civic education at Palais Bourbon, seat of the French national Parliament. They walk into the shoes of one of the 577 MPs, or "junior MP", per constituency. Their objective is to work out bills, of which 10 are going to be retained. Following this they come together in Commissions in order to select 3 among these bills, whose aim seems to be key to them.

In the end they sit down in the Hemicycle, where they take the seat of the MP of their constituency, defending and voting within the Parliament one of the 3 selected bills.

This year the Children’s Parliament voted in favour of a proposal:
- Aiming at informing the consumer about the use of child labour in the manufacturing of products by imposing a visible logo which certifies which has or has not been produced using child labour.

The two other bills which have been voted:
- Aiming at permitting access of cycle paths for disabled people in wheel chairs,
- Aiming at sensitising the population and the younger generations at national as well as local level to better taking into account the state of coral reefs.

The bills voted are usually taken up by the grown ups, but have again to go through the legal procedure. Let’s hope for the young participants that this year again the grown ups again listen to them and give life to the project they voted for.


#### Council of Europe News

**All Different, All Equal Campaign**

The “All Different, All Equal” campaign for diversity, participation and human rights has been officially launched in Strasbourg on the 29 June. The public launch with balloons, drummers and music took place on the forecourt of the Palais at 1 pm. In the evening a cultural programme with percussions by Allons Z’Enfants de la Batterie, Country line dancing, Capoeira, Jambe by Afrique Etoiles and music from Les artistes de la table ronde was offered. During the launching event meetings of the European Steering group and the National Campaign Committees took place.

Forty young Albanians, Serbs from Kosovo, Israelis and Palestinians between the ages of 18 and 22 are meeting at “Europa Park” (Rust, Germany) for the third peace camp jointly organised by the theme park and the 46 nation Council of Europe. (1 to 8 July 2006).

The camp – the third of a series – aims to bring youngsters from troubled areas together to learn how to gradually break down prejudices and stereotypes. They are designed to heighten young people’s awareness of cultural and social differences and similarities at a time when conflicts are never out of the headlines and to encourage them towards dialogue.

For further information: www.coe.int or http://alldifferent-allequal.info/

#### United Nations News

**Establishment of New World Council on Children without Parental Care**

In the report “Children on the Brink” of 2004, UNICEF estimated over 143 million orphaned and abandoned children, in 93 developing countries, worldwide. That means 8.4% of all children in the world. International Advocates for Children (IAC) is concerned about this increasing group of children in the world and its impact. IAC will create momentum by creating global awareness, dialogue,
research and knowledge-exchange on the needs of children without parental care. Children who are deprived of the guidance and protection of their primary caregivers are more vulnerable to health risks, violence, exploitation and discrimination and they are often deprived of education.

IAC strives to guard the fundamental rights of this disadvantaged group, as declared in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention of the Rights of the Child. Wherein all member states recognised that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.

IAC will unite and coordinate countries, NGO’s, universities and thought leaders in a strong coalition of alternative care experts. They will do this through the new IAC World Council on Child Welfare (WCCW), for orphaned and abandoned children. The Council will focus on all available child welfare options for children without parental care, including Reunification, Foster Care, Adoption and Institutional Care. The Council will also serve as a global knowledge network on behalf of the development of child welfare policies, and legislation for these children and enforcing their rights.

This year IAC organises the 3rd Annual World Conference on Children without Parental Care in The Hague, NL, in October. Already over 60 nationalities registered for the largest conference ever held on the topic of orphaned and abandoned children. It will also be the official launch of the IAC World Council, the triangle of partnership between UN-governments, NGOs and the academic world.

Making Europe & Central Asia fit for Children

Representatives of governments from across Europe and Central Asia met together in Palencia, Spain, on 19-20 June 2006, to assess progress against the goals of “A World Fit for Children” – the outcome document of the UN General Assembly’s Special Session on Children of May 2002. It was the third such meeting, the first taking place in Berlin in May 2001, the second in Sarajevo in May 2004.

Jana Hainsworth attended the Intergovernmental Conference, participating in the round table discussion on child poverty and social inclusion. The purpose was to share innovative approaches to developing rights-based and child-specific indicators on poverty and social inclusion. The discussions centred around two key issues: how to coordinate government policy and to ensure targets to combat child poverty and social exclusion are integrated into the work plans of all relevant ministries; and secondly how to broaden the range of indicators to reflect the multi-dimensional nature of child poverty and social exclusion.

The role of the EU was also mentioned, firstly in the context of the EU’s social inclusion strategy which is placing growing priority on child poverty, but also in relation to its negotiations with neighbouring countries. There appears to be increasing openness on the part of the departments for external relations to address the EU’s social objectives within cooperation agreements with third countries.

For more information on Child Rights around the world, you can also visit the Resources website of the Child Rights Information Network (CRIN).

Further Reading

Publication “What Will it Take to End Child Poverty?”

The British Government’s existing policies will not be enough to reduce child poverty in line with its targets, despite its recent success in bringing child poverty down. A wide-ranging study, What Will it Take to End Child Poverty? Firing on All Cylinders, by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has estimated the future impact of current policies and examined what it will take to halve child poverty by 2010 and end it by 2020. This is the first systematic attempt to calculate what will be needed to achieve these ambitious targets. The report suggests that if current policies continue unchanged, the Government’s earlier target of reducing child poverty by a quarter (by 2004/5) might not be met until 2020. Although the number of children living in relative poverty has already fallen by 600,000, a further 1.1 million children will need to be reached to meet the 2010 target. For more information: http://www.jrf.org.uk/.

Report on social exclusion of young LGBT people

ILGA-Europe and IGLYO have launched the results of a comprehensive survey on discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) young people. The Europe-wide study that looked at discrimination in different areas of life, clearly demonstrates the need for national and European actions targeting young LGBT people. Most young LGBT people experience discrimination and exclusion at school (61% of respondents) and family environment (51%). The report highlights the lack of visibility of LGBT people at school and in society and shows how bullying and harassment continue to be major problems for LGBT youths.

To download the report, go to: http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/publications/non_periodical/social_exclusion_of_young_lesbian_gay_bisexual_and_transgender_people_lgbt_in_europe_april_2006
Caritas Europa’s third report on poverty in Europe

Caritas Europa has recently launched its third report on poverty in Europe, which highlights poverty and social exclusion of migrants in Europe. It defines asylum seekers and ‘sans-papiers’ as some of the most vulnerable groups of the EU population. Poverty refers to more than just the absence of sufficient income and material wealth. It includes factors of social empowerment such as social exclusion, dependency, and the ability to participate in society.

To download the report: http://www.caritas-europa.org/module/fileLib/Poverty2006ENWeb.pdf

Social Inclusion in Europe 2006

The European Commission has published a report assessing progress made in the implementation of the EU’s Open Method of Coordination on poverty and social inclusion. It identifies key priorities of policy action, highlights ways in which the implementation of national action plans could be further improved & identifies innovative approaches and good practice of common interest to the Member States. It aims to bring a strengthened focus on implementation and delivery of actions to eradicate poverty and social exclusion and an increased urgency of the process. It is based on an analysis of the Implementation reports of the 2003-2005 National Action Plans on poverty and social exclusion (NAPs/Incl.) by the EU15 Member States. It also takes into account reports from 4 of the EU10 Member States updating the priorities and/or key policy measures from their 2004-2006 NAPs/incl.

For more information: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/emplweb/publications/index_en.cfm

Book on “Politics and Policies of the Social in the European Union”

Currently, the EU is shaken – the results of the referenda are just the tip of the iceberg. Beneath we find a major block of frozen policies and polities, largely responsible for the current «hyperactive paralysis». There is no doubt, that many initiatives are currently taken – suggesting to overcome the crisis by hyperactive reactions. However, it is a good opportunity as well to look more fundamentally at the situation. The present volume gives the opportunity to do so, allowing the reader to get familiar with developments in the social policy and governance area which are usually not considered.

The book, looks in 4 lectures at the following issues:
- The pillars of the European Social Model
- Social Services – the European Perspective
- The Service Providers-self images & networks
- Social Policy, Social Administration, Social Management, Social Work, Community Work

For more information: https://www.novapublishers.com/catalog/product_info.php?products_id=4521

e-book “EU Funding Explained”

This book is a direct answer to the need of enterprises, corporations, foundations, NGOs and public authorities to find financial support from the EU in order to run and develop their current activities. It deals with almost everything that someone needs in order to benefit from EU funding in 270 pages. That is the structure of EU processes, budget, funding policy, future of the EU, funding opportunities per area of interest, successful examples of already funded projects, EU funding programmes for the next time period 2007-2013, detailed and simple steps for successful proposals, how to improve proposal writing skills, EC contact details, from where to start, etc. For more information: www.e-isotis.org/publications.php

@@ Surfing the Web @@

Education in Europe: new and easy access to key information

Launched in 1980, Eurydice is the institutional network for gathering, monitoring, processing and circulating key information on education systems and policies throughout Europe. The network launches a revamped website. www.eurydice.org will offer as from today various modes for browsing and Eurydice’s most recent publications, comparative studies, indicators and its databases. Studies cover different subjects such as teacher education, foreign language teaching, Information and Communication Technologies, etc. and offers information on 31 countries (UE 25 + Lichtenstein, Iceland, Norway, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey). Browsing is available in English, French and German.

Internet for all

A pan-European drive to use information and communication technologies to help people to overcome economic, social, educational, territorial or disability-related disadvantages was endorsed by Ministers of 34 European countries in Riga (Latvia) on 12 June 2006. The Riga Ministerial Declaration, signed sets out the following specific targets:
- half the gap in internet usage and digital literacy and skills for groups at risk of exclusion,
- increase broadband coverage,
- all public websites are accessible by 2010,
- make recommendations on accessibility standards & common approaches,
- assess the necessity for legislative measures in the field of e-Accessibility.
Calendar of Upcoming Events

Peer Reviews in social inclusion in 2006

The Peer Review Programme is a voluntary mutual learning process involving the scrutiny of specific policies, programmes or institutional arrangements presented as good practice in the various National Action Plans on social protection and social inclusion. It consists of a series of peer review sessions, in which the experience of the host country is confronted with the comments and critical analysis of peer countries and other stakeholders, including NGOs.

The following Peer Review sessions will be:
- 7-8 September: Norway: National strategy to prevent and tackle homelessness
- 23-24 October: Spain: Social integration of Roma people. Municipal programme of shanty towns eradication in Avilés (Asturias)
- 6-7 or 13-14 November: Netherlands: Amnesty of debts: a legal solution to over indebtedness
- 4-5 December 2006: Sweden: Financial coordination within the field of rehabilitation

Conference on Child Abuse
3-6 September 2006, York, UK

The XVIth ISPCAN International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect will take place from 3 to 6 September 2006 in York, England. This Congress is being organised by the International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) in collaboration with the British Association for the Study and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect. The title of the Congress "Children in a Changing World: Getting It Right" reflects the need to ensure that research, knowledge, policies, the shape of services and practice skills address the challenges faced by those working to protect children and their welfare. This academic programme will provide an opportunity for those from all disciplines working at every stage of professional development to participate in sharing knowledge and experience and to learn from sources of expertise with highly regarded international reputations.

Day of General Discussion
Child’s Right to be Heard
15 September, Geneva, Switzerland

The Committee on the Rights of the Child has decided to devote its next day of general discussion to the theme: "To Speak, Participate and Decide - The Child’s Right to be Heard." The meeting will take place in Geneva, on 15 September 2006. The meeting is open to representatives of NGOs, children and their organisations/networks, UN programmes and agencies, governments and other interested individuals, experts & organisations.

NGOs and children are invited to submit written contributions on the themes mentioned above to the Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) as soon as possible. The Committee requests that written contributions be limited to a maximum of seven pages. Oral contributions from NGOs are also welcome during the day itself but should be limited to interventions in the debate rather than formal statements.

For more information, see: http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/discussion.htm

Seminar on Children with Disabilities – What about their Rights?
10-14 October, Sion, Switzerland

The Institut International des Droits de l’Enfant (IDE) is organising its next international Sion seminar on the rights of children with disabilities. The aim of the seminar is to better understand the life of children with disabilities, to find out the protection potential of the future Convention, and to promote handicap as a real richness. Issues tackled in the seminar include: the WHO definition of disability, the national and international protection tools, as well as specific issues like education and training, family, institutionalisation, participation, environment, positive & negative discrimination. IDE is launching a call for papers to any individual, NGO, State, private or public agency, and/or university, working in the field of children with disabilities. Contributions will be presented during the seminar and given out to all the participants.

World Conference on Children without Parental Care
23 October, The Hague, NL

The 3rd annual World Conference on Children without Parental Care is going to take place on 23-26 October in The Hague, The Netherlands. It is organised by International Advocates for Children (IAC), a non-profit organisation whose mission is to vigorously advocate for human rights of orphaned and abandoned children worldwide. The objective of the conference is to create an active forum of discussion and debate amongst participants from all over the world. This “Symposium for Enforcing the Human Rights of Orphaned and Abandoned Children” will host up to 100 countries, represented by officials, NGO’s and scientists. That is why participation is limited per country. Pre-registration forms must be received by 30 April 2006. For more information: info@iachildren.nl

Conference on Juvenile Justice in Europe
24 - 25 October 2006, Brussels, Belgium

The 2nd International Conference of the International Juvenile Justice Observatory, which belongs to Foundation Diagrama, entitled ‘Juvenile Justice in Europe: A Framework for Integration’, will take
place in Brussels (Belgium) on 24 - 25 October 2006. The subject matter of this conference is based on the challenge of promoting a reflection about a major harmonisation of legislation and common ways of action in prevention, treatment and integration policies, regarding juveniles and young people in conflict with the law. The First International Conference took place in Salamanca (Spain) in October, 2004, under the title "Juvenile Justice and the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency in a Globalised World". This meeting opened the debate and the analysis concerning the different strategies of juvenile crime prevention, as well as the recent evolution of juvenile justice systems in the world. For more information: http://www.oijj.org.

Conference: non-formal & informal learning
14-16 November, Berlin, Germany

The next Annual Conference of Eurochild AISBL will take place on 14-16 November 2006 in Berlin. It is co-organised with Eurochild AISBL's member organisation in Germany, AGJ (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Jugendhilfe). The title of the Conference will be: "Policy and Practice for Social Inclusion of Children and Young People - the Role of Non-formal and Informal Learning". For more information, see: www.eurochild.org.

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

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 Convention on the Rights of the Child. At the heart of our activities lies the Child Poverty Programme.

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