



PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The European Federation for Street Children and the Pupil Parent Partnership joined forces to address the inclusion needs of youth migrants in Europe at a conference held in London on the 25th and 26th of November

EFSC and its member organisation, Pupil Parent Partnership, launched the annual ***European Forum on Street Children 2010*** focusing on the issue of: ***Youth Rebellions in European Metropolis; second and third generation migrant children and adolescents in search of their place in society.***

With a wide European appeal, representatives from across Europe (national governments, EU institutions, NGOs, and national and regional local authorities) working on the field and directly with youth migrants on integration issues presented on the approaches towards integration; on fighting against poverty; on the culture and identity-related aspects of social inclusion and on the risk factors that second and third generation migrant children and youth face. The location of the conference was a reflection of the demography being addressed as the borough of both Ealing and Hounslow count, according to its Majors Rajinder Mann and Collin Ellar, with a high proportion of second and third generation migrants.

Jonas Grimheden, representing the Fundamental Rights Agency, presented a study carried out to investigate the reasons behind discrimination, marginalisation and violence while emphasising the ethnic and religious aspects of their social inclusion. Among the main conclusions was the need to design specific policies aimed at addressing radicalisation and violence. The children facing inclusion challenges have an unresolved accumulation of anger and this was something corroborated by on-the-ground researchers like Heather Ureche, working closely with the Roma communities in the UK and Javed Khan, Chief Executive Director of Victim Support. Agnes Cser, Member of the European Economic and Social Committee highlighted the concern regarding the lack of reliable indicators and stressed the need to conduct a wider and more beneficial research. She also highlighted the importance of making the adaption and integration work an immediate compulsory one for civil society and organisations. Reinhold Müller, Director of the European Federation for Street Children, and Brian de Lord, Executive director of the Pupil Parent Partnership highlighted their concern regarding the fact that at least 60% of the national legislations relevant for social inclusion of children and youth are initiated in Brussels, and not so much attention is given to the outcomes of the projects as it is given to the quality of these. It was agreed by everyone present that more work should be done and voice be given to the local authorities and NGOs working directly with the children. In fact Collin Ellar, Mayor of Hounslow agreed that local authorities have in fact very little power in influencing policy making even though these are the ones who have first-hand information and one to one contact with the children in question.

. All of these issues have allowed for a further contribution to the discussion of the post-2010 Lisbon Agenda and have highlighted the role of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) in ensuring that specific culture-sensitive measures are addressed to specific exclusion problems. In fact Bernd Hemingway, regional representative from the International Organization for Migration emphasised the need to include among those measures, one that addresses the lack of bridging links that second and

EUROPEAN FEDERATION FOR STREET CHILDREN

third generation migrants have towards the rest of the population given that there is a proved continuing legacy of initial disadvantage passed on from one generation to another.

Under the occasion of the *European Year 2010 to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion*, this conference aimed at investigating the long-term social impacts of migration and the situation of ethnic minorities in Europe and raise awareness among the civil society and organisation on the need to put a greater effort into addressing the inclusion needs of these minorities. The importance of a preventive approach aimed at safeguarding the identity and cultural needs of children at every stage of the integration process was stressed. Altogether the actors involved in the conference pledged for the following in their joint declaration: second chance education; promotion of quality standards in all schools; improved cooperation between national policy level and local levels of implementation; the development of benchmark indicators and assurance of no criminalisation while conducting ethnic reporting; reinforcement of vocational training; the quality improvement of physical and mental health services and on the focus on the improvement capacity of the system and society to overcome cultural resistance and improve the effectiveness of the integration strategies.

Our future depends on our children's present and it is now time to combine forces and make a change..

For further information, please contact Carla Chirico (carla.chirico@efsc-eu.org) or Martyn Weeds (MWeeds@theppp.org.uk)

Notes to the editor:

The European Federation for Street Children (EFSC) is a Luxembourg-based association committed on a non-profit basis to the improvement of the rights and situations of children at risk and particularly street children. As a European network, it acts as a platform for lobbying and advocacy towards the European Union, it provides non-governmental organisations committed to this cause with information and advice concerning all children and youth-related policies and assistance programmes of the EU and facilitates the exchange of best practice between them.

Building on its cross-country knowledge pool on best practices, it also provides expert consultancy to European Institutions, private foundations, companies and partner NGOs in the development of innovative concepts and practices for the social reintegration of street children.

Contact: Reinhold Müller (Director)

European Federation for Street Children

Route d' Esch 15, L-1470 Luxembourg

Tel +352 27 44 51

Fax +352 27 44 51 70

reinhold.mueller@efsc-eu.org

Website: <http://www.efsc-eu.org>



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15, Route d'Esch - L- 1470 Luxembourg

Tel: +352 274451 – Fax: +352 274451 70 – Email : info@efsc-eu.org; Website : www.efsc-eu.org