

Find attached our fifth

Newsletter



European Federation for Street Children

Issue 5, December 2008

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Children in PROGRESS

EFSC Conference Explores the Challenges of Child Migration and Integration in the European Union

EFSC in co-operation with its member organisation Istituto Don Calabria (IDC), organized in Verona on the 4-5th of December a conference titled **“Promoting integration of marginalized children and youth through social inclusion: schooling, vocational training and participation”**.

The conference which brought together a very diverse body of participants created an excellent platform for an expert and lively discussion on the different aspects of the integration of marginalized children with a migration background, with focus on the exchange of good practices, capacity building effects and methodology development.

It was articulated along three thematic areas:

1. Intervention for street children in emergency situations;
2. From emergency aid to rehabilitation: giving marginalized children a perspective
3. Trans-european co-operation to protect marginalized children: alliance building between the public and private sector.

The experiences in these areas were analyzed as a practice-oriented contribution to the analysis of existing social and immigration policies at EU level.

Notable speakers analysed specific problem areas and presented recommendations on the best way forward. Examples include the issue of data collection and the harmonisation of definitions among different countries highlighted by Serenella Pesarin, General Director for the Implementation of the Provisions at the Italian Ministry of Justice. Ms. Pesarin called for the establishment of a Juvenile Justice Committee at EU level to be the leading agency for the resolution of definitional divergencies and data collection.

Reinhold Müller, Director of EFSC, stressed the increasing European phenomenon of street children and unaccompanied minors, linked to the freedom of movement within the EU territory and to the very specific situation in some new Eastern European Member States which more than ever requires a joint European effort towards its solution.

At the conference, the recent Terre des Hommes report on “Kids abroad : ignore them, abuse them or protect them ? Lessons on how to protect children on the move from being exploited” was presented (see Publications section for more details).

For more details on the conference, please see EFSC's [press release](#)

EFSC Gets Network Funding Approval for 2009 from Commission

EFSC is pleased to learn that its proposal for network funding to the European Commission for the year 2009 in the context of the Three Years Framework Partnership Agreement (2008 – 2010) under PROGRESS (VP/2007/013) has been successful.

EFSC 2009 work programme, following the requirements of the Commission, will take the following areas into account: tackling child poverty and promoting the well being of children; mainstreaming “the social impact of migration”; promoting successful pension reforms and analysing their social implications; promoting EU wide exchange on health and long-term care; promoting the active social inclusion of all; addressing the issue of housing and homelessness; improving understanding for SSGI (social services of general interest) and their interaction with community policies.

This year very significant priorities for EFSC`s mission and objectives are present in the list, in particular child poverty and well being of children, the social impact of immigration and health. EFSC appreciates this as a positive result of its advocacy work.

Among other ongoing information and network strengthening activities, EFSC workplan 2009 foresees the following events:

- **European Forum on Street Children 2009: Migration of unaccompanied children: the increasing challenge to a Social EU.** The origin countries in Central and Eastern Europe after the first years of EU membership. Bucharest, June 2009; Co-operating member organisations: FRCCF, ISMO, Megallo Group Foundation for Addicts, Alliance for Children and Youth.

- **Conference: Child poverty and drug addiction: Lessons from the Baltic States as a bridging region between old and new Member States.** How could the dialogue with the EU institutions on a child inclusive health policy be improved? Tallinn, September 2009; Co-operating member organisation: Tallinn Center for Children at Risk.

- **Workshop: The National Action Plans for Social Inclusion: Street children inclusive implementation methods for the period 2008 – 2010; lessons and advocacy strategies towards making them a key target group in the period 2011-2013,** Brussels October 2009, Target group: EFSC Focal Officers of EFSC member organizations.

- **Workshop: Project development meeting on a EFSC joint action within the European Year to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010.** Brussels, April 2009, Target group: EFSC member organisations.

A strong focus will be posed throughout the 2009 work plan on improving the influence of EFSC member organisations on the implementation of the NAPs and on the preparatory actions for the 2010 European Year to Combat Poverty and social exclusion.

Member States Submit their National Strategy Reports

As at the time of this publication, a total of 25 member states have submitted their National Strategic Reports on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008-2010.

Set up at the Lisbon European Council of March 2000, the Open Method of Coordination provides a framework through which Member States agree to identify and promote their most effective policies in the fields of Social Protection and Social Inclusion with the aim of learning from each others' experiences.

EFSC is pleased to note the attention given to the social inclusion and protection of children in some of the national reports although regrets the fact that there is no specific elaboration on policies affecting street children as a target group.

Please visit the [Commission website](#) to download the reports

Commission adopts a Recommendation on active inclusion

The European Commission on October 3rd 2008 put forward a set of common principles to help guide EU countries define policies for 'active inclusion' of people excluded from the labour market so as to step up the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

The Recommendation is based around three key aspects: adequate income support, inclusive labour markets and access to quality services.

The common principles set out by the Commission represent a voluntary framework for Member States when designing their policies. They will be formally discussed by national governments at the Employment and Social Affairs Council in December 2008 that will draw conclusions on follow-up actions.

Read the [Recommendation](#) and the [supporting communication](#)

EFSC Comments on the Strategic Framework Document “Priorities and guidelines for the Implementation of the 2010 European Year’s activities”

EFSC has provided comments on the Strategic Framework Document on the Implementation of the 2010 Year to Combat Poverty and Social Inclusion in close co-operation with the European Anti-Poverty Network.

EFSC welcomes the selected objectives of the Year, particularly Objective 1, “Recognition of rights”, and the Commitment to concrete action under objective 4. The focus under objective 2 to “provide opportunities for forms of participatory assessment of EU and national social policies” is in line with EFSC’s willingness to give a stronger voice and boosting participation of the most marginalised children of our societies and street children in particular. The focus under the “Cohesion” Objective 3 on providing “opportunities to organisations and sectors not usually engaged in poverty” is also coherent with EFSC’s long-lasting commitment to leveraging the responsibilities and resources of the business sector through corporate social responsibility in favour of the most marginalised children of our societies.

EFSC comments in further detail on the following points of the document: the Commission’s focus on accessibility of actions, child poverty, partnership with civil society and stakeholders, the role of EU-level networks in the Year stating in particular that more clarity is required on the ways for EU-level networks to get involved.

EFSC’s comments are geared towards ensuring that the European Year 2010 will have a concrete inclusion impact on the socially excluded citizens in our society among which street children are certainly one of the most vulnerable groups. For this sake, a more structured consultation with the civil society is necessary.

[Download](#) EFSC’s full comments on this document

EFSC Conference underlines the role of civil society for building a Social Europe and urges Member States to prioritise street children in the European Year 2010 for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion

EFSC in collaboration with the Portuguese child care organisation Instituto de Apoio à Criança (IAC) organised a successful two-day conference on the 6th and 7th October 2008, in Lisbon titled, **“Street Children as a challenge to social policy and the renewed Lisbon strategy: the role of the civil society as a catalyst for the social inclusion process for children at high risk and street children”**

The conference attracted a number of high level national politicians and personalities such as the former President of Portugal Mr. Ramalho Eanes and the Minister of Labour and Social Solidarity Mr. Vieira da Silva, representatives of the EU Institutions (Parliament, Commission and ECOSOC) and expert practitioners from the field (mostly EFSC member organisations).

Key themes of the discussion were the role of the European Union in social issues and in particular the drafting of a much-needed European Charter on Volunteering, setting formal obligations for Member States. The presentation of numerous case studies and innovative examples of civil society involvement, with particular focus on street children, stimulated the discussion about adequate training for volunteers, about setting standards for their selection and about finding ways for motivating them and ensure their continuous commitment through non-financial remuneration. It was particularly emphasized that strong efforts must be made within the New EU Member States to raise awareness of the importance of voluntary work for social cohesion and economic prosperity.

Reinhold Müller, Director of EFSC stressed the urgent need to collect reliable and up-to-date figures and data on street children in the EU and called for a joint European effort in this direction in order to establish a statistical base as a pre-requisite for any systematic approach to the problem.

[Press release of the conference](#)

Joint Declaration Adopted at Lisbon Conference on Civil Society

EFSC is pleased to note the successful adoption of a joint declaration at the conference held in Lisbon on the 6 – 7 October 2008. The declaration stresses the need to make strong efforts in order to reach the goal set by the European Parliament towards eradicating the phenomenon of street children by 2015. It recommends that the National Implementing Bodies for the Year 2010 provide civil society organisations working with street children with adequate resources to raise awareness on the living conditions of street children in the framework of the year, and ensure an adequate follow-up to those actions, while giving media prominence to the EP goal to eradicate the phenomenon by 2015. The declaration also calls on the EP to establish an Intergroup on Street Children and adopt a joint opinion to lead to the creation of an EU budget line to support the organisations working with this target group. It finally asks for better coordination between the European and national level to ensure sustainability and synergising to the actions taken in favour of street children.

The declaration was adopted by consensus at the conference in the presence of major political and civil society representatives. EFSC will strongly advocate jointly with IAC for making sure

that this success will actually translate into better living conditions for street children Europewide

Joint declaration

Social Protection and Social Inclusion in Europe – Key Facts and Figures

The European Commission on the 16th of October, 2008 published its yearly review of social trends in EU countries under the common objectives of the EU strategy for social protection and social inclusion. The report included demographic data on the following areas: poverty, unemployment, pension systems, life expectancy and health.

One of the key points noted in the review was that children are often at greater risk-of-poverty than the rest of the population (19% in the EU-27). This is true in most countries except in the Nordic States, Greece, Cyprus and Slovenia. The main factors affecting child poverty levels in the EU are the labour market situation of their parents and the effectiveness of governmental intervention through income support and the provision of enabling services such as childcare. This is particularly evident in the case of lone parents who face a risk of poverty of 32%.

Detailed information on this review

Background information



7th European Round Table on Poverty and Social exclusion

The **7th European round table on poverty and social exclusion**, organized by the French Presidency and held in Marseille on 15 and 16 October.

This round table, chaired by Martin Hirsch, the French High Commissioner for Active Solidarity Against Poverty, focused on the subject of the "active inclusion strategy for the people furthest from the labour market" and concentrated on four topics: Social services, Services of general interest, Housing and Minimum income.

The work of the Round Table will also contribute to the preparation of the European Year of combating poverty and social exclusion in 2010.

For more information, [http://www.ue2008.fr/PFUE/lang/fr/accueil/PFUE-10_2008/PFUE-15.10.2008/7e table ronde europeenne sur la pauvrete et l exclusion sociale](http://www.ue2008.fr/PFUE/lang/fr/accueil/PFUE-10_2008/PFUE-15.10.2008/7e_table_ronde_europeenne_sur_la_pauvrete_et_l_exclusion_sociale)

Results of the Informal Ministerial Meeting on the Fight against Poverty

Organised in line with the **7th European round table on poverty and social exclusion**, the European ministers responsible for combating poverty and social exclusion met for the first time on 16 October 2008 under the aegis of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union in a meeting chaired by Martin Hirsch, the French High Commissioner for Active Solidarity against Poverty.

The ministers' meeting focused more specifically on the European strategy of active inclusion and on the instruments needed to implement it. The aim of the active inclusion strategy is to create a new framework for coordinated action to combat poverty based on three inseparable and complementary pillars: assistance for a sufficient minimum income, inclusive labour markets, and access to quality services. The ministers' discussions were thus able to build on the key messages developed by the participants in the round table, i.e. people living in poverty, European voluntary networks, social partners, businesses, representatives of local authorities and of the Member States.

Highlights included commendation on the development on a voluntary basis of social experiments in the area of childcare, financial inclusion, access to housing for the homeless and the social integration of ethnic minorities, migrants and the Roma, which could be carried out within Member States in the context of transnational programmes. The possible creation of a European network for sharing best practices will be discussed at the first conference on social experiments in Europe, which will take place in Grenoble on 21 and 22 November, with the support of the Commission, by means of the European Social Fund and the Progress programme.

Belgium, which will host the 9th Round Table on Combating Poverty in 2010, the European Year of Combating Poverty, has already expressed its intention to organise a ministerial meeting on this issue.

Read more on

http://ue2008.fr/PFUE/site/PFUE/lang/en/reunion_des_ministres_sur_la_pauvrete_et_l_exclusion_sociale

Latest Developments in EFSC

EFSC nominated as one of the permanent civil society representatives at the Forum on the Rights of the Child

EFSC has been nominated as one of the 13 child rights NGOs on the European level to be a member of the newly established group of permanent civil society representatives for the Forum on the Rights of the Child. Ten organisations have been nominated to be permanent representatives of the civil society and five to participate on the basis of their specific field of expertise.

In addition to this, three civil society organisations will be part of the Steering Group of the Forum. As a permanent civil society representative, EFSC will contribute to advise and assist the Commission and other European Institutions in particular as regards mainstreaming of children's rights in EU legislation, policies and programmes, as well as to exchange information and good practice between stakeholders, guided by international and European treaties on the rights of the child.

EFSC is confident that this new institutional framework will still better enable it to defend efficiently the rights of street children on the level of European policy making and awareness rising.

The Forum on the Rights of the Child is a permanent group which has been established through the European Commission Communication "Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child" to bring together the key players active in the field of children's rights.

Further background information on the European Forum on the Rights of the Child on http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/fsj/children/forum/fsj_children_forum_en.htm

EFSC Comments on the Issue Paper for building an EU strategy for the rights of the child

EFSC shares and welcomes the two-fold approach set out in the paper of combining mainstreaming of children's rights with specific actions in identified areas to be categorised under the clusters of rights set out in the UNCRC; of creating synergies between the various institutional actors involved at EU level in the protection of children's rights; of focusing on data collection of which EFSC recommends that the recommendation set out in the 2008 Report on "Child Poverty and Well being" to elaborate new ways of collecting data for the most vulnerable groups of children, including street children, is respected and actively implemented.

In respect to its target group and future areas of intervention for EU action, EFSC comments on the following: general principles, civil rights and freedom, family life and alternative care, basic health and welfare, education, culture and leisure, special protection measures.

EFSC will follow closely the developments in the strategy and entrusts EURONET to represent its view at the steering group.

[Download](#) EFSC's full comments on this document

EFSC street children-related amendments incorporated in the European Parliament social inclusion report

On the 9th of October 2008, the European Parliament Employment Committee adopted the Report on "**Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty, including child poverty, in the EU**", taking into account the FEMM Committee's Opinion adopted on this topic on 26.06.08. EFSC had been previously involved, in close co-operation with MEP Christa Prets, in the elaboration of street children-related amendments to the FEMM Opinion, with the aim of prioritising the issue of street children in EU social inclusion policies.

These amendments have now been largely incorporated in the report, which calls for a holistic and rights-based approach to combat child poverty, and in the field of child poverty it deals extensively with the issue of income support, access to housing, healthcare, education and social services, as well as on child participation.

The report encourages the Member States, among other, to recognize that the vicious circle of extreme poverty, vulnerability, discrimination puts children and street children in particular at particular risk and calls for differentiated and individualized actions (paragraph 22.h)

The Employment Committee of the European Parliament furthermore calls on the Council to agree on the EU-wide commitment based on the EP report "Towards an EU strategy on the rights of the child", to make sure that by 2015 no children have to live in the streets (paragraph 22.g)

EFSC considers this inclusion of street children as a key target group in the social inclusion field as a significant awareness-raising success towards the European Parliament. EFSC will build on this basis and promote the adoption by the European Parliament of a report on street children which should pave the way for the establishment of a specific EU budget line for supporting the social inclusion of street children.

To download the report:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P6-TA-2008-0467>

[Background information](#)

EFSC Hosts First General Meeting on October 5 2008 and Welcomes Two New Board Members

On the 5th of October, EFSC held its first General Meeting since the organisation's legal change from a foundation to a Dutch association in July 2008. 14 member organisations were present or represented at the meeting. Two new board members were selected to replace the two former board members: Ms Annette Boscher and Mr. Ernesto Caffo. The nominated candidates, Ms. Susanne Messner-Spang and Mr. Mihai Florin Rosca were unanimously appointed. Mr. Rosca will assume his term of office from 1 January 2008 at the expiration of Mr. Caffo's term.

News from EFSC Member Organisations

Gavroche Foundation releases results of project – “Promotion of Best Practices in Child Protection in Bulgaria”

On 30th of October, in the BTA Building in Sofia, Gavroche Foundation in cooperation with Alliance for Children and Youth, organized a press conference to disseminate the results obtained from the first year of the realization of the Project, “**Promotion of Best Practices in Child Protection in Bulgaria**” financed by OAK Bulgaria. 13 media representatives from 12 media groups were present at the press conference.

For further information, please visit Gavroche Foundations's [website](#)

Megallo Group Foundation Wins Best NGO Award

In recognition of its commitment and support to drug addicted street children, the Megallo Group Foundation for Addicts has been given an award for best NGO of 2008 in Hungary by the Nonprofit and Training Centre (NIOK) Foundation. EFSC is proud of this recognition given to the Megallo Group Foundation as it also represents a heightened awareness of the situation of street children, a target group which is most often excluded in society.

For further information, please visit Megallo Foundation's [website](#)



MATRA Living Room Seminar: a success

On October 1st, ICDI and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs MATRA Programme for social transformation organised a Living Room Seminar, called MATRA Children and Youth projects: lessons learned. People from various organisations that have MATRA projects for children and youth in Central and Eastern Europe, participated. During the seminar, two young persons from Romania and their teacher gave a presentation about their 'mini-project' as part of a MATRA project called '**Children and Youth as builders of civil society**'. In addition, the results were presented in a questionnaire that was distributed among MATRA implementing organisations. The participants of the seminar contributed to a lively discussion which led to some interesting lessons learned.

A final conference on the MATRA project was held on October 17th. Jaap Werner, the Dutch Ambassador spoke of an exemplary Matra project. There was also an exposition of the Mini projects. A booklet on the Mini Projects was also presented. These mini project were activities designed and implemented by the beneficiaries of the project: Children, Young people and professionals working with children and youth. Despite only having funds between 500-1000 euro, these projects were highly successful, targeting environmental issues, bullying, reading and writing and sexual education and mainstreaming children with disabilities amongst others. For people who are interested in the brochure (containing 49 projects), please contact rutger@icdi.nl

[For more information about the project](#)

First Children's Embassy Begins Campaign to highlight the issue of child abuse in Macedonia: See it, Hear it, Say it

With an intention to encourage children, parents, neighbours and friends not to be quiet about any form of violence but to report it, First Children's Embassy is launching a campaign with the message: **Notice it, hear it, say it**. Subsequently, the intention is to influence the creation of better parenthood and to raise awareness for the need of support and help for the children who are victims of abuse.

A press conference to this effect was held on the 7th of November at the offices of the First Children's Embassy in the World where journalists were presented with several cases of physical abuse upon children from the SOS phone line for children and youth, and from the Free Legal Service.

The campaign is a part of the international project "Childhood without violence – towards a better system of child protection in Eastern Europe", which in Macedonia was implemented by the First Children's Embassy in the World, in partnership with the Nobody's Children Foundation.

For further information, please visit the [website](#)

Humanitarian telethon "Have a Peaceful Dream"

The First Children's Embassy in the World – Megjashi and The Centre for Institutional Development organized a humanitarian telethon "Have a Peaceful Dream" on the first Macedonian National TV Channel, November 23 in Skopje.

The event also included a promotion of the song 'Dream', performed by 15 Macedonian artists and a TV auction. By each dialing of the number 143-404 citizens donated Denar 100.

The event with an aim to raise funds in aid to sexually abused children brought together over 100 artists, as well as the Dutch Ambassador H.E. Simone Filippini.

According to The First Children's Embassy in the World about one million children are victims of sexual abuse on an annual basis. In Macedonia each year about 1,000 children (11-18 years of age) become victims of such abuse, imposed by their parents, friends or neighbors.

According to The First Children's Embassy in the World Megjashi 18,500 children (7-18 years of age) are not included in educational process in Macedonia. They as well as homeless children are usually victims of various forms of sexual abuse.

For further information, please visit the [website](#)

Childhood/ Congress of Rio de Janeiro: Telefono Azzurro in the Italian Delegation

Telefono Azzurro has taken part in Interministerial Delegation at the Rio Congress on sexual exploitation of children and adolescents (Rio de Janeiro, November 25th-28th 2008). The presence of the Association that for more than 20 years has been dealing with the protection of the rights of children, is important to voice Italian civil society that are involved in these issues.

The Italian Delegation has put the focus on the increasing problem of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents through transnational traffic, pedopornography, infantile pornography and sexual tourism together with more than 3,000 people coming from all over the world. Professor Ernesto Caffo, President of Telefono Azzurro, is a member of this Delegation.

"With our participation we expect to voice the civil society that has childhood and adolescence as primary sector of action", declared Professor Ernesto Caffo, President of Telefono Azzurro. "In the International Scenario there are new systems, as e.g. "alert systems" for missing children, besides traditional police operations, that take inspiration from Amber Alert (a system created in the United States in 1996 that aims at involving the whole social community in the searches of a missing child). The Hot lines institutions devoted to missing children or sexual exploitation of victims are also part of these institutional initiatives: in 2007 the European Commission introduced harmonized European numbers with the initial numeration in common "116", with the aim of facilitate the emergency calls for both parents and children. Of course it's necessary a real investment from Governments to support these services; from this point of view I will try to be the spokesman of all the instances and needs of all the associations that deal with protection of rights of children and adolescents every day, and that need to find out a concrete support by Institutions to pursue their goals".

For more information: www.azzurro.it

News from the EU Institutions and Council of Europe

EFSC Attends Third European Forum on the Rights of the Child

The third European Forum on the Rights of the Child which was held on the 9th of December in Brussels explored the question of children's participation in the making of the policies that affect them and the issue of violence against children.

Mrs. Barroso and Vice-President of the European Commission Mr. Barrot expressed sensitivity and concern to the living situation of street children.

Children were also present at the forum to share their views on the presentation of the prototype of a EU website on children's rights.

In order to take account of recent developments and to bring child protection in the EU up to the highest international standards, the Commission will present a proposal in March 2009 to improve and tighten up the Council Framework Decision on combating the sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, the EU's main legal instrument in this field.

[Background information](#)

[Speech of Maud De Boer-Buquicchio at the Forum](#)

European Commission Adopts Green Paper Addressing the Issue of Migrant Children and Education

With its Green Paper "**Migration & Mobility: challenges and opportunities for EU education systems**", adopted on 3 July 2008, the Commission wants to open the debate on how education policies may better address the challenges posed by immigration and internal EU mobility flows.

It raises issues such as how to prevent the creation of segregated school settings, so as to improve equity in education; how to accommodate the increased diversity of mother tongues and cultural perspectives and build intercultural skills in the EU; and how to adapt teaching skills and build bridges with migrant families and communities.

According to both international and national data, many migrant children in the European Union suffer from educational disadvantage in comparison to their native peers: early school leaving is more common among them and enrolment in higher education lower.

The Green Paper forms part of the Renewed Social Agenda, the Commission's package of measures, adopted on 2 July 2008, to reinforce Access, Opportunities and Solidarity among all EU citizens.

With this Green Paper, the Commission launches a public consultation on the issues at stake. Interested parties are invited to make their views known about the policy challenge, policy responses, and the possible role of the European Union in supporting Member States, before

31 December 2008. EFSC contribution to the consultation is to be found at <http://www.efsc-eu.org/index.php?pid=112>. The European Commission will analyse the results of this consultation and publish its conclusions in early 2009.

Green paper. http://ec.europa.eu/education/school21/com423_en.pdf
[Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Green Paper – SEC\(2008\) 2173](#)
More information on the [Public Consultation](#)

EU Report – Parents Face Shortage of Childcare Services

Childcare services in EU countries are failing to respond to the needs of parents, despite some progress, according to a report issued by the European Commission.

The report finds that most countries have missed the targets for childcare provision – for 90% of children between three and school age and 33% of children under three – that EU leaders set themselves at Barcelona in 2002. The 'Barcelona targets' are an integral part of the EU's strategy for growth and jobs and aim to help young parents – and in particular women – into work. This report forms part of a broader package of measures by the Commission to improve work-life balance for Europeans.

"Childcare is a vital ingredient in facing up to demographic ageing: without proper support services, parents are less likely to have children. The current provision remains inadequate. National governments need to address the challenge and the EU will support their efforts with half a billion euros of EU funding up until 2013 to help develop childcare facilities." said Vladimír Špidla, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

Please read [more information](#) on this report and particularly how the Commission intends to support progress towards the Barcelona targets

Renewed social agenda: European Parliament takes a closer look

On 2nd September, the European Parliament organised a first debate around the [Renewed Social Agenda](#) adopted by the European Commission at the beginning of July.

The package of 18 legislative and non-legislative initiatives around employment, social protection, health, migration and integration, and anti-discrimination was presented by Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Commissioner Vladimir Spidla.

Members of the European Parliament were divided in their reactions. While some MEPs speaking in the plenary debate welcomed the package of measures, others said they were insufficiently specific and substantial.

There will be a vote on a resolution on the whole package at the next plenary session.

[summary of the European Parliament's debate on the renewed social agenda](#)

Second Annual European Equality Summit

At the second annual European Equality Summit in Paris on the 29th of September, 400 high-ranking delegates met to discuss the next steps in the EU's strategy to tackle discrimination. A

key element of the discussions centred on the European Commission's proposal from July 2008 to extend existing EU protection from discrimination to areas like access to goods and services, education and healthcare. Equality ministers and stakeholders – NGOs, social partners, companies and independent equality bodies from around Europe were present to give their views on the proposal, and also follow up on the commitments made by EU countries as part of the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All in 2007.

The Summit, co-organised by the French EU Presidency and the Commission, follows a similar event held in January 2007 in Berlin. It aims to follow up on the commitments undertaken during the European Year of Equal Opportunities, in particular a [resolution](#) adopted by national ministers in November 2007. It will also give fresh impetus to anti-discrimination efforts by creating a longer term perspective, including the next summit under the Swedish Presidency in 2009.

The French Presidency of the EU has placed equal opportunities and the fight against discrimination at the centre of the debate on the Social Agenda. The Commission's July 2008 proposal to extend existing EU protection from discrimination was discussed by national ministers meeting in the Employment and Social Affairs Council on 2 October, with a view to moving forward with the negotiations of the text.

[Further information](#)

[Summit puts equality at heart of EU's agenda](#)

European Parliament Acts Against Child Trafficking

The European Parliament declared on 9th of October that the European Union needs to develop a programme against child trafficking.

Between two and four million people - most of them children - are estimated to fall victim to forced labour and other forms of trafficking each year.

Since the Amsterdam Treaty came into effect in 1999, trafficking in human beings has been named as an area of responsibility for the EU as a whole. Yet even though the European Commission drew up a strategy on the rights of the child in 2006, anti-exploitation campaigners feel that it does not grapple properly with the problems associated with trafficking.

The European Parliament has adopted, with 430 signatures, a written declaration urging that the situation be remedied by setting up a specific EU-funded scheme to address this scourge.

[Further information](#)

[UN: Toolkit to Combat Trafficking in Persons](#)

MEP Arlene McCarthy wins backing for compulsory provision of the 116000 Missing Child Hotline across all EU countries

Labour's Chair of the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee and one of the European Parliament's key children's rights campaigners, Arlene McCarthy MEP has amended a law which will determine users' rights in telecoms to mandate Member States to implement the 116000 missing child hotline.

Arlene said: "One year after its introduction as a Europe-wide number only four member states have established the European 116000 hotline number for missing children."

"The voluntary approach is not working and that is why my amendment incorporates the 116000 number into law, establishing a right across all 27 EU Member States for citizens to access the missing child hotline."

"I welcome the Committee's strong support for my approach which will put an end to the foot dragging we have seen from Member States. I hope the Commission and Council will respond positively to this unanimous vote and join us in making provision of the 116000 missing child hotline legally binding."

Some months back, the MEP had met with the European Commission to discuss progress on an EU Amber Alert system, a child sex offender's register and the operation and functioning of the EU missing children Hotline, following concerns raised with her by parents and families and children's rights group.

[Further information](#), [Background reading](#)

Agenda 2020: European Ministers adopt a blueprint on future of youth policy

Strasbourg, 13.10.2008 – A blueprint for the Council of Europe activities in the youth field for the next decade was agreed by youth ministers and high-level policy makers from the the 49 signatory countries of the European Cultural Convention at the the 8th Conference of European ministers responsible for youth affairs which ended on Saturday, 11 October in Kyiv.

Ukrainian Minister for Family, Youth and Sports Yuriy Pavlenko said that the "adopted policy document will be an excellent thesaurus of the Council of Europe youth policy achievements."

"We have plenty of time to put it into practice both at the national and European levels. I am sure with common efforts we will fulfill this task as Europe's future belongs to youth," he underlined.

The final declaration – [the "Agenda 2020"](#) – spells out what youth policy needs to do now and in the next decade in three main directions: human rights and democracy, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, and social inclusion of young people.

The next [Council of Europe conference of ministers of youth](#) will be held in 2012.

[For more information on the conference](#)

[For more information on the Council of Europe activities in the youth sector](#)

Seminar: Children and Young People in Care: What do the Youth Think?

An increasing number of children in Europe grow up without parental care. Despite the attention the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child directed to the situation of children without parental care, their rights are still frequently not respected.

To this effect, the Council of Europe is organising a joint seminar with SOS- Kinderdorf International on the 6th – 9th of December 2008 called Children and Young People in Care – What do Youth Think?

The participants will include fifteen children and/or young people from alternative care in Europe and five representatives of youth led organisations. The objectives of the seminar are to promote and ensure the rights of children and young people in alternative care in Europe by setting the basis for cooperation between youth representatives and the Council of Europe

[Download](#) further information

UK must improve children’s protection and ban corporal punishment” reports Commissioner Hammarberg

Strasbourg, 09.10.2008 – The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, presented to the government of the United Kingdom a memorandum on corporal punishment. Pointing to deficiencies in UK legislation with regard to respect for children’s rights, the Commissioner expresses serious concern about the large number of children across the UK who suffer physical chastisement.

Criticising the specific national legislative provisions on corporal punishment, he emphasises that “laws allowing the definition of ‘justifiable assaults’ and ‘reasonable punishments’ on children are not compliant with international human rights standards. Moreover, the fact that children, uniquely, should have less protection under the criminal law from assault is additionally discriminatory and unimaginable,” he says.

The Commissioner therefore recommends that the ‘reasonable punishment’ defence and the concept of ‘justifiable assault’ be removed completely from all relevant legislative provisions and that authorities throughout the UK develop an awareness and education programme on children’s rights to protect and promote positive parenting without violence. He also calls for child-friendly policies to be adopted so as to inform children about their right to protection from all forms of violence and the services and assistance that are available to them.

[Link to the memorandum together with the authorities’ response](#)

[COE report](#)

Council of Europe: Safer Internet for Children

The Council of Europe has launched 15 new language versions of its online game, “Through the Wild Web Woods,” a world in which children can play in a fun and friendly fairy-tale environment while learning about their human rights and how to stay safe on the internet

According to Ms. Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, Deputy Secretary General, Council of Europe, “Children cannot be left alone on the Internet without the assistance of responsible teachers, parents and carers. Their confidence, safety and well-being on the Internet is a shared responsibility for all stakeholders – parents, teachers, companies, civil society and governments. In this framework, there are important responsibilities for our governments to effectively secure our human rights on the Internet. But there are also important responsibilities

for private companies who design and make available the information and communication technologies for the Internet.”

Safer Internet [website](#)

2009-11 Strategy for Building a Europe for and with Children

Under the joint chairmanship of Carl Bildt, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden and Miguel Angel Moratinos, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain, who is taking over from him, the Ministers' Deputies adopted at the Council of Europe the 2009-2011 Strategy for "Building a Europe for and with children". This constitutes a long-term undertaking for the Council of Europe and was the basis of a conference organised by the Council of Europe and the Swedish Government in Stockholm (8-10 September 2008) on the theme of “**Building a Europe for and with children – Towards a Strategy for 2009-2011**” As a contribution to the development of this important strategy, the Spanish Chairmanship will organise a conference in the spring of 2009 in Toledo on the theme of children in the justice system.

[Information on the Stockholm conference](#)
[2009-2011 Strategy](#)

News from International Institutions

World Congress III Against the Sexual Exploitation of Children opens in Brazil

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil, 26 November 2008 – Some 3,000 participants from more than 125 countries gathered in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for last night's opening ceremony of World Congress III Against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents.

The event, which runs from 25-28 November, is focusing on how to protect children from various types of sexual exploitation such as child marriage, the commercial sex industry, child pornography and the sexual exploitation of children on the internet. Among the opening night speakers were Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and UNICEF Executive Director Ann M. Veneman.

Veneman reminded those in attendance that sexual exploitation is a way to assert control over others, often by men against women and children. She also noted that men need to be a big part of the solution.

Earlier in the day, Veneman met with children from Brazil who are fighting sexual exploitation in their own country. Later, she met a group of children from all over the world, and listened to their stories of sexual exploitation in their home countries.

For more information, http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/brazil_46520.html

United Kingdom Government removes crucial reservations to CRC

The UK government has indicated it will move reservations to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The UK has for the past 17 years retained an opt-out allowing child migrants and asylum seekers to be locked up without judicial scrutiny.

The convention obliges nations to put the best interests of a child first. The opt-out has meant the "best interest" rule does not apply to immigrant children in the UK and makes it easier for officials to lock them up, sometimes for weeks or months, pending planned deportation.

Human rights groups have heaped scorn on the UK opt-out for years. The change will force the UK Border Agency to put migrant children's welfare first in deciding whether to detain or deport them. Still, human rights organisations keep raising concerns about the retaining of children in the UK.

[Further information](#)

New High Commissioner Opens the 49th Session of the CRC

The Committee on the Rights of the Child on the 15th of September opened its forty-ninth session, hearing an address by Navanethem Pillay, High Commissioner for Human Rights, and adopting its agenda.

In her opening remarks, Ms. Pillay said that, having taken office two weeks ago, she appreciated the opportunity to engage with the treaty bodies, and with this Committee in particular, at this early stage in her mandate. She valued hearing the views, comments and suggestions of the Committee and pledged the support of her Office in the Committee's activities. The Committee was the custodian of human rights norms, and nothing gave her more satisfaction than supporting the Committee in that task, as well as in the progressive development of human rights norms and standards. The work of the Committees was one of the main pillars of the human rights system, and in her opening address to the Human Rights Council's ninth regular session, she had highlighted the important role the Committees' work played in the efforts to create a global culture of human rights.

[Press release](#)

Childs Rights Advocacy in the EU

EURONET launches campaign to stop corporal punishment

On the 10th of December in the European Parliament, the European Children's network launched its campaign to stop corporal punishment. The event was attended by Elda Moreno of the Council of Europe, several MEPs and representatives from child rights NGOs in Europe, and child activists to stop corporal punishment. EFSC was present and fully supports the EURONET's statement to ban corporal punishment in all settings, including the home.

For more information on the campaign, <http://www.stopcorporalpunishment.org/>

New Report Critiques EU Human Rights Based Approaches and Developmental Aid Policies - a joint initiative by Amnesty International, Terre des Hommes, Action Aid and International Human Rights Network

A review of EU development policies launched in Brussels on 7 October 2008 finds that core EU development policies, including the European Consensus on Development, fail to coherently reflect the applicable international human rights framework and other core legal principles required of human rights based development, as outlined in 2003 in the UN Common Understanding regarding human rights based approaches (HRBA).

The review of key development policy documents, which was carried out in conjunction with consultation with a range of stakeholders, notes an increased use of human rights language in many EU development policies and welcomes some recent policy documents (eg regarding children) that coherently reflect the applicable international human rights framework.

However, deficiencies in other policies include failure to use human rights terminology with legal precision; misrepresentation of the relationship between policy commitments and legal obligations; failure to identify core development challenges, such as poverty as a denial of human rights. In particular, the EU overarching development policy framework, the European Consensus on Development fails to provide a clear and accurate policy commitment to human rights based development, or to acknowledge human rights as both the means and the goal of EU development assistance.

The briefing paper seeks to inform those responsible for formulating, applying and reviewing EU development policies on the internationally agreed legal principles which underpin HRBA and to ensure that they are clearly reflected in the development policies of the world's largest development donor

Amongst the recommendations of the participating organisations is that future formulation processes and content of development policies should be subject to scrutiny for human rights based approaches, including legal accuracy. In addition, existing development policies should be interpreted so as not to undermine international human rights law obligations.

The full report Human Rights-Based Approaches and European Union Development Aid Policies 2008 is available at: www.terredeshommes.org - www.actionaid.org - www.ihrnetwork.org - www.amnesty-eu.org

Social Platform calls for a structured civil dialogue with the Parliament

Tuesday, 04 November 2008

Following the last Citizens' Agora in June, the European Parliament is deciding whether to continue this experiment and how to structure dialogue with NGOs. The decision will be taken mid-November but evaluation is taking place now.

Social Platform, of which EAPN is a member, has written a letter expressing strong support for the renewal of a structured form of dialogue between Members of the European Parliament and civil society at large.

In the letter, Social Platform also evaluates the Citizens' Agora against the principles of an effective civil dialogue that were defined in its reference paper '[Shaping an effective civil dialogue at national and European levels](#)'.

Upcoming Events

20 – 24 April 2009, Liverpool: [Children and the European Union: Legal, Political and Research Perspectives](#)

5-6 February 2009, Hyères les Palmiers, France : [New families identity, New myths, New rites, Birth, Adolescence, Generational passages. Challenge for family therapy and institutions](#)

30 January 2009, Geneva: [50th Session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child](#)

29 January 2009, Florence: [European Seminar on Child Well-being Indicators](#)

22-23 January 2009, Brussels: [Picum International Conference on “Undocumented Children in Europe: Invisible Victims of Immigration Restriction”, Brussels](#)

Publications

A new Terre des Hommes publication:

Kids abroad : ignore them, abuse them or protect them ? Lessons on how to protect children on the move from being exploited

In a new report, “Kids Abroad” Terre des Hommes reviews a wide range of initiatives to support children who leave home without being accompanied by any other family member, discussing the situation in Western and South Eastern Europe and also in West Africa, Central America, South Asia and South East Asia.

“There are too many missed opportunities to protect children, particularly foreign children”, says Raffaele K. Salinari, Chair of Terre des Hommes International Federation. “In particular, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have developed effective and imaginative ways of protecting children who are on the move. But governments, instead of helping, often impede efforts to protect such children – and in the worst cases are the ones responsible for abusing children’s rights.”

The study criticises the way that children travelling alone are treated in some countries, but focuses primarily on what can be done within the limitations of the law to assist such children and enable them to exercise their human rights. It notes that in countries where immigration

policy (and detaining irregular immigrants) is a government priority, it is difficult for Terre des Hommes or other organisations to give separated children the support that child rights organisations know to be appropriate (and to which the children are often entitled), for fear that they will be accused of infringing the law.

As a matter of public policy, most governments encourage children to attend school and to remain there, at least until they complete their primary education. However, millions do not do so and set out to 'seek their fortune' while still adolescents or even before reaching puberty. While public policy may not want to approve or encourage their actions, thousands of NGOs around the world are engaged in efforts to protect and assist such children, particularly when they are far from home and are vulnerable to abuse because they are cut off from the families or home communities who could help protect them.

For more information and to download the report, click here :

<http://www.terredeshommes.org/index.php?page=res.pre&lang=en#kidsabroad>

Eradicating violence against children – Council of Europe Actions

In spite of a high level of social awareness in Europe, millions of its children are still subjected to violence. Children's rights are violated on a daily basis in all European countries. Corporal punishment, sexual abuse, the exploitation of children and other similar violations are only now emerging into the public eye

This recent publication, "Eradicating violence against children – Council of Europe Actions" references the Council of Europe's work in this field and provides insights into the processes that have led to its many conventions, recommendations, decisions, programmes, reports and publications.

But progress has been timid. Elaborate networks in human trafficking, online child pornography and sexual violence in the home still prevent Europe from fully guaranteeing children's human rights.

[To order the book](#)

Protection of Undocumented Children



The Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM) held its second workshop on the protection of undocumented children in their access to basic social rights on 4 April 2008.

The report of this workshop has now been published and provides an overview of the contributions of the speakers, in addition to the main themes of discussion in the plenary and workshop sessions. The workshop brought together nearly 100 participants to share

experiences and discuss ways to address the problems associated with insufficient access to basic social services for undocumented children.

[Download the report](#)

Prohibiting all corporal punishment and other humiliating punishment of children: Achieving legal reform

Save the Children has published its Report of the first global workshop on “Prohibiting all corporal punishment and other humiliating punishment of children: Achieving legal reform”, held in Bangkok, Thailand, in May 2008. At this occasion, Save the Children, in collaboration with the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children and the Churches’ Network for Non-Violence, held the first global workshop on achieving legal reform to prohibit corporal punishment and other degrading and humiliating punishment of children.

Child rights advocates from almost 30 countries met to grapple with the issues: understanding the absolute necessity of law reform, identifying precisely what is needed in the countries in which they work, and learning from experiences in countries which have successfully achieved full prohibition.

This report – “Towards the universal prohibition of all violent punishment of children” – documents the information exchanged during the workshop and provides an important resource for all those working to achieve law reform

[Download the full report](#)

CRIN Review – Children’s Right to the City

The Child Rights Information Network (CRIN) has just launched the latest edition of its Review '[Children's Right to the City](#)'. This edition of the CRIN Review explores the impact of urbanisation, city size, and growth on children’s rights. Cities can be hubs of risk for children where sprawling slums with inadequate services swallow up green play spaces, where segregation and violence are commonplace and where the world’s millions of street and working children eke out a precarious existence. They can, however, also be forces for good with many parents seeing them as places that will give their children improved opportunities and life chances. Easy access to information means children are better able to learn about their rights whilst basic amenities and support may be more readily available.

“Children’s Right to the City” offers an analysis of the challenges posed to children’s rights in some of the world’s biggest cities. It draws together some creative ways of working, lessons learnt, as well as practical tools, fact files and case studies to advance children’s rights in urban environments.

[Download](#) a copy

Policy Measures Concerning Child Poverty

Written for the general public, this leaflet presents the principal findings of a [report](#) approved by the [Social Protection Committee](#) identifying the predominant factors affecting child poverty in each EU Member State. It summarises the policy implications contained in the report, to give a clearer picture of the child poverty situation in the EU, what is being done, and what still needs to be done to achieve the common aim - eradicating child poverty.

[Download a copy](#)

This publication is supported by the European Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (2007-2013). This programme was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment and social affairs area, as set out in the Social Agenda, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy goals in these fields.

The seven-year Programme targets all stakeholders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-27, EFTA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.

For more information see: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/progress/index_en.html