

Find attached our third
Newsletter



October 2007 – April 2008

European Foundation for Street Children

Issue 3, April 2008

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Children in PROGRESS

EFSC and PROGRESS

EFSC is pleased to announce that it has been chosen by the European Commission for the establishment of a 3-year partnership together with other EU-Networks active in the field of combating social exclusion and discrimination, promoting gender equality and the integration of disabled people and representing Roma people.

In the framework of this partnership EFSC has agreed with the Commission on a work programme for 2008 (hyper link to report on website), which foresees a number of activities to implement the objectives of PROGRESS in close cooperation with its member organisations and with a special focus on the improvement of the living situation of street children. The work plan covers a number of key activities such as co-ordination of actions between members, gathering of opinions and information from member organisations, an annual meeting, information measures (newsletter etc.), preparation of reports and publications as well as conferences, seminars and workshops to enhance a critical discourse on the EU social inclusion policy with special regard to street children.

EFSC expects that its implementation of Progress goals in alignment with its networking efforts will contribute significantly to its overall goals of heightening awareness of the problem of street children and other socially excluded children as well as contributing significantly on a national and European level to effect meaningful policy changes.

Below is a list of the upcoming EFSC events:

Event: Workshop: *Social exclusion and extreme poverty as major reasons for the life situation of street children in the Central and Eastern European Member States – National analyses, reports and strategic concepts to prepare the new National Strategies 2008 – 2011*

Target group: Representatives from EFSC member organisations, national governments, EU institutions, NGOs, welfare associations, universities, national, regional and local authorities from Central and Eastern European Member States (Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia)

Participants: 25

Date: 5-6 May 2008

Location: Brussels

Event: Training seminar for Focal Officers on Progress and EU social inclusion issues

Target group: Progress Focal Officers in EFSC Member organisations.

Participants: 18

Date: Last week of June 2008

Location: Brussels

Event: EFSC General Assembly

Target group: Delegates from the EFSC member organisations

Participants: 35

Date: Last week of June 2008

Location: Brussels

Event: **European Forum on Street Children: *Street children as a social challenge to the renewed Lisbon Strategy: The role of the civil society as a catalyst for the social inclusion process for strongly excluded children and street children***

Target group: Representatives and decision-makers from Child protection NGOs and welfare associations, local governments, child and youth authorities, EU institutions, social and street workers, experts from research institutes, EFSC member organisations

Participants: 45

Date: September 2008

Location: Lisbon

Event: **Conference: *Promote integration of marginalized children and youth from a migration background through social inclusion: schooling, vocational training and participation***

Target group: Representatives and decision-makers from Child protection NGOs and welfare associations, local governments, child and youth authorities, EU institutions, social and street workers, experts from research institutes, EFSC member organisations in particular from the Southern European Member States

Number of participants: 40

Date: November 2008

Location: Verona (Italy)

Event: **Awareness day: *Children in the Streets of Europe***

Type: Press and Media Campaigning Event

Target group: Journalists from TV and print media from European and national levels, MEPs, large public audience

Date: December 2008

Location: European Parliament, Brussels

EFSC Comments on 2 New EU Communications Relevant for the Social Inclusion of Street Children in the Context of Progress

EFSC, as a contribution to the current EC's consultation processes leading to the preparation of a renewed Social Agenda, has made comments on 2 new EU Communications titled, "*Opportunities, access and solidarity: towards a new social vision for 21st century for Europe*" (EC COMM (2007) 726 final) and "*Modernising social protection for greater social justice and economic cohesion: taking forward the active inclusion of people furthest from the labour market*" (EC COMM(2007) 620 final). EFSC while welcoming the commitment of the EU to these issues, makes recommendations on specific areas that ought to be taken into particular consideration. EFSC calls on the Commission to mainstream the needs of extremely marginalized children, and street children in particular, in active inclusion strategies, as well as in the key areas of action for the new social Agenda, both from a rights-based perspective and from the point of view of socio-economic convenience in the light of the Lisbon strategy. While welcoming the willingness of the European Commission to consult the civil society actors about its Communication, EFSC recommends that the EU put more emphasis on the actual implementation

of the actions, takes all possible measures to actually reach the most marginalized groups, and take into consideration the contribution of the civil society, with its diverse and grassroots-grounded perspective, not only in the process of raising awareness but also, as a valuable source of qualitative data and information on specific issues. EFSC is keen to support the EU in this process. EFSC comments on the Communication are available at: www.enscw.org

Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008

On 29 February 2008 the EPSCO (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs) Council and the Commission jointly adopted the 2008 Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion on the basis of the Commission proposal for Joint Report presented on 30th January 2008 ([COM/2008/0042final](#)), and adopted with some changes at the 5 February meeting of the Social Protection Committee.

This fourth Report examines more in depth a set of themes identified in last year's edition: child poverty; health inequalities, access to health care and evolving long-term care needs; longer working lives and privately managed pensions.

The report also outlines envisaged improvements of the working methods of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) on social protection and social inclusion, which should further reinforce the efficiency of the process.

The Joint Report will now be submitted to the Spring European Council to inform Heads of State and Government on progress and challenges in the area of social protection and social inclusion. http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/joint_reports_en.htm#2008

Child Poverty and Well-Being in the EU - Current status and way forward

Using commonly agreed indicators, the EC report on "Child Poverty and Well being in the EU" identifies the predominant factors affecting child poverty in each country. Indicators have been used to group countries according to the common challenges they face: joblessness, in-work poverty, insufficient support to families.

The report also reviews the national monitoring and evaluation systems in place and draws 15 recommendations to better assess and monitor child poverty and the multiple dimensions of child well-being across the EU.

The report underpinned the key policy messages on social inclusion of the 2008 Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion.

A copy of this report can be downloaded at:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/publications_en.htm

Social protection reforms and active inclusion policies in Member States: State of affairs and way forward

Social protection reforms and active inclusion policies have visibly contributed to higher growth and more jobs in Europe over the past year. Still, more needs to be done to ensure that these benefits reach those at the margins of society and improve social cohesion, says a Commission report discussed by Employment and Social Affairs Ministers on 29 February. The 2008 '[Joint Report on Social Protection and Inclusion](#)' focuses on priorities and progress made in the areas of child poverty, working longer, private pension provision, health inequalities and long-term care.

Out of the 78 million Europeans living at risk of poverty, 19 million are children. Ensuring equal opportunities for all through well-designed social policies, and strengthening educational outcomes for each child, are needed to break the cycle of poverty and exclusion. The report talks about what is needed to break the cycle of child poverty

Once adopted by the Council, the report went to the Spring European Council on 13-14 March to highlight the social dimension of the jobs and growth package.

The Presidency Conclusions of the Council, when launching the second three-year cycle of the renewed Lisbon Strategy, stressed the aspect of investing in people and modernising labour markets and mentioned the issue of child poverty. Nevertheless, the issue is not specifically addressed where the Council urges member states to take specific actions. In light of the urgency of the matter and of its prioritisation in the OMC on Social Protection and Social Inclusion, this can be considered as a missed opportunity to bring a significant step forward in the fight of child poverty.

2010 to be European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion

The European Commission officially proposed on 12 December 2007 that 2010 be designated as the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. The emphasis will be on four objectives:

- *Recognizing* the right of people in poverty and social exclusion to live in dignity and to play a full part in society;
- *Increasing* public ownership of social inclusion policies and emphasizing everyone's responsibility in tackling poverty and marginalization;
- *Promoting* a more cohesive society where no one doubts that society as a whole benefits from the eradication of poverty;
- *Encouraging* commitment by all the actors, because real progress requires a long-term effort that involves all levels of governance.

'The European Year will take the fight against poverty and social exclusion even further', by raising public awareness of the way poverty continues to blight the daily lives of so many Europeans." said Social Affairs Commissioner Vladimír Špidla. Building a more inclusive Europe is vital to achieving the European Union's goals of sustained economic growth, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.

For more details: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/emplweb/news/news_en.cfm?id=326

Ending Child Poverty in Europe

Almost one in five children in the EU - nearly 20 million youngsters - are at risk of poverty. A new video report from the European Commission's Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG exposes the scandal of child poverty in Europe and shows what two very different member states - Britain and Lithuania - are doing to combat it.

http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/video_prod_en.cfm?type=detail&prodid=5299&src=



Latest Developments from EFSC

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe adopts EFSC's Recommendations on the social reintegration of street children in Municipalities

In the framework of its Participatory Status to the Council of Europe, and in close cooperation with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and the CoE program *"Building a Europe for and with children"*, EFSC elaborated a report about *"European good practices regarding successful initiatives carried out by municipalities in Europe and aimed at the social reintegration of street children"*. This report was presented officially at the last Meeting of the Committee for Social Cohesion of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe held in Genoa on the first of April. The Congress Rapporteur together with a representative of an EFSC member organization and a representative of the regional authorities addressed the theme of social reintegration of street children from different perspectives.

The report has been developed in close cooperation with EFSC's member organisations ([Pupil Parent Partnership](#), [Istituto Don Calabria](#), [Association Jeunes Errants](#), [Romanian Foundation for Children, Community & Family](#)) whose pool of experience and good practices has constituted the basis for the compilation of various case studies of cooperation between the local and regional authorities, the social services and grassroots-based organisations aiming at the social reintegration of street children. On the basis of the case studies, a series of recommendations were drawn. The recommendations are addressed to local, regional, national and European authorities and more specifically, the recommendations suggest some policy areas for the authorities to focus on:

The Committee has adopted the recommendations in a resolution, which will be submitted to the Council of Europe plenary on the 27-28th of May. EFSC considers the adoption of these recommendations by the Committee of Social Cohesion as an important political step towards addressing street children as a specific target group in social inclusion policies and to set the basis for a qualitative upgrading of the social intervention strategies. For full details of the reports along with the recommendations, please see: www.enscw.org

EFSC changes its status from a Foundation to an Association

EFSC is currently undergoing a process of changing its legal status from a foundation to one of an association under Dutch law in order to achieve a higher degree, not merely of transparency, but also of participation and democratic co-decision of its member organisations than is at present possible under its existing legal status as a Foundation. Under the new legal form this will be ensured by the fact that the members will have statutory rights to decide at a yearly General Assembly on crucial issues such as the board composition or the adoption of the yearly accounts as well as the amendments of the articles. Upon the request of EFSC the administrative procedure of this change have been enhanced. Under this new status, EFSC will host its first General Assembly by the end of June 2008.

EFSC Project: Protecting street children from violence in urban areas of three European capitals (Lisbon, Marseille, Naples): development of a sustainable methodology (September 2007 – September 2009)

At the beginning of September 2007, EFSC in partnership with three of its membership organisations, started work on a project which focuses on detecting violence against street children in three European metropolises (Lisbon, Marseille and Naples) of Southern European EU Member States. The project aims to develop a methodology to systematically conduct research and collect data on violence against street children including more significant indicators for violence to be used in other EU regional contexts as well as analyse the causes and consequences of violence as part of their social exclusion.

The first phase of the project, September 2007 to December 2007, focused on the critical analysis of the current situation present in the three pilot local areas with regard to violence against street children. On the basis of the expertise of the project partners, a questionnaire has been developed in order to collect more information on the types of violence, the most vulnerable categories of children, the perpetrators and the environmental conditions which are most conducive to violence. The implementation of this phase has been very successful, the results of which have received commendations from some high level representatives and experts in the field of child protection. The second phase of the project, consisting in the submission of the questionnaire to the most concerned institutions and in the critical assessment of the results in view of the development of a methodology, is now underway. At the end of the second project phase and at the conclusion of the first project year (August 2008), a network workshop will be organized in Brussels with the purpose of presenting the new methodology developed which will start to be tested at the local level from September 2008. The success of this project is as a result of the continued support and trust guaranteed by Mr. Edgardo Iozia, President of the Italian donor *"Fondo Nazionale del Settore Credito per Progetti di Solidarietà"* whose personal commitment to the cause of street children is of crucial importance for the future development of the project. For more details, please see: www.enscw.org

EFSC Comments on the Proposed Programme of the Round Table on Poverty and Social Exclusion following the first preparatory meeting on the 13th of March 2008

EFSC participated in the first preparatory meeting of the Round Table on Poverty and Social Exclusion organised by the French Government and has prepared comments in relation to this meeting on issues which it feels should be taken into consideration. EFSC very much welcomed the French Government's decision to invite responsible Member States' ministers to the Round Table, as it perceives this decision as a necessary step towards increasing the concreteness of the outcomes of the Round Table. On the issue of active inclusion, EFSC is of the opinion that child poverty issues can only be solved by focusing on the specific problems of children and by individualising the action on them. EFSC has observed a tendency to overlook issues related to child poverty within the Active Inclusion approach and would like to make sure that the French Government does not fall into this error. EFSC remarks on the importance of having adequate representation at the Round Table of the rights and needs of extremely marginalized children and more generally vulnerable groups, and notes that this should not be overlooked when selecting the participants. For more details of EFSC's comments, please see: www.enscw.org

Support Unit "Friends of EFSC – Business Supports Street Children" Constituent Meeting – Brussels, October 25, 2007

On 25 October 2007, EFSC hosted its second constituent meeting for European Business Leaders Committed to Social Corporate Responsibility. This is a follow-up to the campaign: "Friends of EFSC – Business Supports Street Children." The first constituent meeting was held on 10 May 2007, under the patronage of Mrs. Margarida Barroso and was attended by business leaders from various fields.

Two representatives from two EFSC member organisations gave very interesting presentations on concrete relief work conducted on the field: Mrs Maria Grazia Mastrangelo from Istituto Don Calabria (Verona, Italy) and Mrs Paula Paço from Instituto de Apoio à Criança (Lisbon, Portugal). Several business representatives made comments in view of their partnership within the Unit.

Referring to the concrete approach mentioned by the business representatives, EFSC Director Reinhold Müller illustrated the European project of establishing a European Report on Street Children. Furthermore, he recalled that the initiative of the Support Unit, a project in progress, will give continuity to all these actions. A follow up constituent meeting is planned later this year.

EFSC Welcomes Three New Staff Members

EFSC is pleased to welcome the addition of three new staff members to its organization: Anna D'Ambrosio, Advocacy, Lobbying & Fundraising Officer; Elena Vitturo, Accounts, Office and Sponsorship Manager and Mayen Enodien, Information, Communication & Fundraising Officer. EFSC wishes them great success at their respective posts.

News from EFSC Member Organisations

The First Children's Embassy Reacts to the Removal of the Improvised Houses of Roma People that Live Under the Bridge

The First Children's Embassy- Megjashi reacted to the action taken by the Municipality of Aerodrom regarding the removal of the improvised houses of Roma people that live under the bridge Bliznak.

The Children's Embassy emphasized that with this constant demolishing, the development of the child is disabled and children's rights are nullified. Thus, the problem will not be solved this way, but will only create new problems with demolition. The condition of the houses in the so-called Cardboard Settlement should be solved in accordance with the Strategy for Roma people which was put in place in 2005 by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs for the improvement of their living conditions through inclusion in the urbanity plans for the settlements. Part of the priorities that were put in place by the Ministry allow for removal only where it is ameliorated with other subsidiary measures: such as establishing legal guarantees for rights' protection, as well as enabling choices for other alternative accommodation.

First Children's Embassy - Daily Centre for children on street

The Daily Centre for Children on Street has been active in the past few months (October 2007 – January 2008). During this period, the number of children at the Centre increased by 20. These children, aged between 5-14 years come from the "Carton Neighbourhood" in Novo Lisice and Klanica in the suburb Aerodrom. At the Daily Centre the children receive snacks, clean clothes, take baths and visit workshops.

The centre organised during this period, a few events for the children. On 3th November in cooperation with Open Fun Football School, a sporting event was organized on the playground in the Children's home "11 October" for the children from the Daily Center and the workshops.

The Center also organised a NGO Fair, where the children were part of the socio- cultural activities where they presented the worst forms of child labour abuse. The end of 2007 was celebrated with a New Year's party with a magician in attendance, in cooperation with Cosmofon, where the children received New Year's packets. For further information on First Children's Embassy's activities, please see: www.childrensembassy.org.mk

Gavroche Foundation – Resource Center

The Gavroche Foundation continues to provide assistance programs and child protection services for children on the streets through its different centers. One of its innovative measures is the establishment of the Resource Center through a project financed by the OAK Foundation-Switzerland for the promotion of best practices for child protection in north-eastern Bulgaria. An important part of this service is the publication of a Manual for child abuse prevention. Gavroche Association offers and provides series of trainings to students, pedagogues and psychologists based on the Manual. In order to make up for the lack of sufficient information on violence issues in Varna and the region, they established a resource center "Gavroche" Home for promoting the methods, forms, institutions and organizations for protecting children from violence. "Gavroche" Resource Center gathers information from numerous sources, so that it can provide resources concerning the problems of preventing violence of children. At the same time the "Gavroche" Resource center is going to be a focal point for students, social workers, psychologists and citizens who are interested. For more information, please see: www.gavroche-bg.org

Multicultural Youth Camp Trainings in Cyprus - International Child Development Initiatives (ICDI)

In order to address the reintegration problems in the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities which have deteriorated in many ways during the last decades of years, the International Child Development Initiatives (ICDI) in collaboration with various other organisations, put together the "multicultural youth camps". This project aims to contribute to the creation of more sustainable and effective forms of multicultural youth camps in Cyprus. This goal will be achieved by implementing four different components, via various, interlinked activities. These four components are:

- I- Multicultural youth camp training workshops;
- II- Establishment of a network of organizations implementing multicultural activities with children and youth;
- III- Organization of integrative events;
- IV- Multicultural youth camp models.

Main achievements of the project so far:

In July, a first round of training for camp coordinators, camp instructors and youth leaders (in total about 100 people). During three days trainers from the Greek Cypriot, Turkish Cypriot and international community (England, the Netherlands and Kosovo) led workshops on different topics, such as conflict resolution, facilitation skills, communication skills, use of sport, drama and music for creating mutual trust, etcetera. Overall, the training was evaluated very positively by the participants.

In November, first meeting for the "Cyprus network for multicultural activities for and with children and youth". A total of 13 organizations (eight from the Greek Cypriot community, four from the Turkish Cypriot community, and one international) have expressed their willingness to take part in this network.

Development of a website (www.multiculturalcyprus.org) and drafting four different youth camp models.

More information on ICDI can be found at: www.icdi.nl

News from the EU Institutions and the Council of Europe

2nd European Forum on the Rights of the Child

The European Forum on the Rights of the Child, bringing together experts and representatives of the European Institutions, as well as from Member States and civil society organizations active in the protection of children's rights, met in Brussels on 4 March with the aim of developing more effective tools to protect children's rights.

The European Commission's Vice-President Frattini, the EP Rapporteur on the EU Strategy for the rights of the Child Roberta Angelilli, and other high level representatives expressed commitment to children's rights and expressed concern about the low number of Member States implementing a child helpline. The French Child Alert System was presented and discussed; a call was made for an interconnected EU-wide system of Child Alert.

Margarida Barroso, EFSC Advisory Board member, made an intervention where she stressed the phenomena of street children and missing children. She asked for specific and targeted measures for street children within a holistic and European approach to overcome the insufficiency of normal social intervention methods. Reinhold Mueller, Director of EFSC, also drew attention to the specific problems involved in managing disappearance of street children, who are most vulnerable but to a large extent invisible and fall out of the reach of administrative registers, and suggested cooperation of the alert system with NGOs as a preventive measure as well as an increased cross-border co-operation within Europe.

The morning session was closed with a symbolic planting of a tree in the Berlaymont esplanade, which should serve as a meeting point between children and their policy-makers. In the afternoon session, child poverty in Europe was analyzed, with particular focus on Roma children, and policy responses to this issue were presented. The NGO Action Group on the EU Strategy for the Rights of the Child (CRAG), of which EFSC is a member, found lacking the involvement of the civil society in the organisation of the forum. On this issue, the Commission committed itself to seriously start involving the Steering Committee on children's rights in the organisation of the Forum, which is likely to bring a more pragmatic approach to the meeting and to contribute to increase NGO and children's participation. Moreover, The Forum renewed its commitment to develop tools to ensure the effective participation by children, including those who do not, or cannot, go to school or who are socially excluded. For more details on the forum, please see: www.enscw.org

European Parliament own initiative report on the situation of fundamental rights in the EU for the period of 2004-2007

Euronet, a European network of child rights organizations that work to improve the lives of children of which the EFSC is a member, on the basis of contributions from EFSC and its member organizations, has put forward some specific concerns regarding children's rights violations as the basis for the forthcoming EP report on the situation of fundamental rights in the EU, and in particular its chapter on "social rights". As a result of these contributions, Euronet has put forward several recommendations. Along with its member organizations it welcomes the fact that the LIBE Committee is committed to consult with civil society, and more specifically with children's rights NGOs, in the preparation of the report of the European Parliament (EP report). In putting forward its concerns, EFSC relied on contributions from its member organizations on specific child rights violations which they are confronted with in their work with street children as a basis for its report.

For a full consultation of EFSC's specific contribution please see: www.enscw.org. For other EURONET members' contributions, these will be shortly published on the EURONET website under the Policies & Activities section: European Union and Children's Rights.

Euronets summary report as well as its recommendations are available at:
http://www.crin.org/docs/ContributionI_EP_report_children_rights.pdf

Anna Zitto nominated as the new children's rights coordinator in the Commission

EFSC welcomes the new European Commission Coordinator of the Rights of the Child, Anna Zitto, starting her work on the 1st of April 2008. Improving the internal coordination of the child-related activities of the European Commission would significantly increase the effectiveness of the actions carried out both by the Commission itself and by the civil society organisations. We are looking forward to starting a fruitful cooperation with Ms. Zitto to the actual benefit of the most marginalised children in our society.

EP Resolution on EU Strategy on the Rights of a Child

On 16th January 2006, the European Parliament adopted a resolution in response to the Commission's Communication: Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of a Child. Rapporteur was MEP Roberta Angelilli for the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) Committee; the body of the report included the input (in the form of opinions) from six other Committees. This report sets out clear areas of child rights violations, mainstreaming of children's rights and child participation in decisions which affect them. As a result of advocacy action of the EFSC and other child rights organizations, two paragraphs of the report focus on the phenomenon of street children: the European Parliament *"takes the view that the EU should set itself the objective of ensuring that there are no homeless children or street children in the EU; calls for appropriate and targeted measures to be taken to assist homeless children and street children, since most of them are badly traumatised and socially excluded, do not receive formal education or health care, are particularly vulnerable to becoming the victims of human trafficking (including prostitution, organ trafficking and illegal adoption), drug addiction and crime or are often forced to beg"* (paragraph 106). Furthermore, the European Parliament *"Asks the Commission and the Member States to recognise the thousands of street children and children forced to beg as a serious social and human rights issue which infringes the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and also calls on the Member States to introduce sanctions against those responsible for the degradation of children forced to beg"* (paragraph 107).

For a detailed summary of the report, please:

http://www.crin.org/docs/EURONET_Summary_EPreport_TowardsanEUStrategyonchildrights_18.02.08.pdf

For the Resolution, please see: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2008-0012+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) gets its first Multi-annual Framework and Agreement with CoE

On 28 February 2008, the Justice and Home Affairs Council, after consulting the European Parliament, decided on both the Agency's Multi-Annual Framework (MAF) and the Agreement on cooperation between FRA and the Council of Europe (CoE).

MAF covers the first five years of FRA's existence (2007-2012) and determines the thematic areas of the Agency's work of which the rights of the child, including the protection of children is one of these areas.

The Justice and Home Affairs Council also approved the **Agreement between the European Community and the Council of Europe** on cooperation between FRA and the CoE. The agreement establishes regular meetings between both bodies, arranges the exchange of information, and provides for coordination of activities in order to avoid duplication of work.

Signing of the Treaty of Lisbon

On 13 December 2007, the Treaty of Lisbon, amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community, was signed by European leaders in Lisbon. This has been welcomed by children's rights NGO's as a significant step in the protection of children's rights as it includes the protection of the rights of the 100 million children living in the EU.

The Treaty of Lisbon will come into force only after ratification by all 27 Member States before coming into force in mid-2009. For more details, please see:

<http://www.europeanchildrensnetwork.org/euronet/resources/infodetail.asp?id=15721>

Promoting the participation of young people with fewer opportunities in the society

Slovenian Office for Youth, Ministry of Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia has announced on Monday, March 3rd, that Presidency Youth Event will take place within the frame of the Slovenian EU-Presidency from 18 to 21 April 2008 in Ljubljana and Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia. The overall aim of the event is to provide a valuable opportunity for young people to meet and discuss the need to promote the participation of young people with fewer opportunities in the society. Young people from each Member State of the EU, the EFTA States, Accession Countries and Countries of Western Balkans are invited to the Youth event and participants are chosen by National Youth Councils on the basis of certain criteria. For more details, please see:

http://www.predsedovanje.si/en_gb/nvo/nvo.html

Developing child rights indicators

A set of indicators is being developed to monitor the impact of European Union's activity on

children's rights and welfare. The Centre for Study of the Child, the Family and the Law (Liverpool University), along with the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights in Vienna and the European Children's Network (EURONET), have been commissioned to develop the indicators by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency. They are interested in learning from those with experience of applying, campaigning for or monitoring children's rights, either through direct work with children and young people, or through their work with statutory or non-governmental organisations. These responses will then inform the development of some preliminary indicators across a range of key areas of activity in which the EU is currently engaged, including cross-national family breakdown, poverty and social exclusion, and child protection.

For further details please see: <http://www.childwatch.uio.no/cwi/projects/indicators/index.html>
<http://www.priority-research.com/childrightssurvey/>

OMBUDSWORK: Standing up for children's rights

A seminar on the development of independent human rights institutions for children took place in Stockholm on 18 February 2008 and was organised by Save the Children Sweden. Participants in the meeting included the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, a number of Children's Ombudsmen from Europe, Government representatives from Sweden and national and international NGO representatives. The objective of the meeting was to share experiences of the work of ombudsmen for children from a number of countries and stakeholders in order to identify how their function and position could be strengthened and further developed.

The seminar takes place in light of recent discussions in Sweden, as well as internationally, about [Children's Ombudsmen](#) as an important part of the follow up of the implementation of the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (CRC). This paper highlights some of the issues that were discussed at the meeting and concludes with a number of recommendations on independence and working relationships with other stakeholders and some points for future discussion and research. For more information: <http://www.crin.org/GMI/Ombudsperson.asp>

An End to Corporal Punishment

On 23 January 2008, a majority of members of state of the Council of Europe committed themselves to putting an end to corporal punishment on children. 18 member states have adopted a full prohibition in law and at least 7 others publicly announced that they will do the same in the near future. This is a step towards achieving a universal prohibition. In a Paper issued by the Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner Thomas Hammerberg, he explains this problem and gives background information on steps already taken by the European Court of Human Rights and other international and European human rights mechanisms. He notes that eliminating corporal punishment requires more than legal reform. Sustained public education and awareness-raising of the law and of children's right to protection is required, together with promotion of positive, non-violent relationships with children. The Council of Europe programme "Building a Europe for and with children" will launch a Europe-wide initiative towards this end through law reform, the promotion of positive parenting and awareness-raising efforts likely to change public attitudes and behaviours. More information on this Paper can be found at: http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/Viewpoints/080121_en.asp

The Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings

This Convention which was open for signature on 16 May 2005, has now been ratified (10 ratifications, 8 of which must be member states) and entered into force on 1 February 2008. Terry Davis, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, made the following statement: "The Convention is deliberately hard on traffickers and makes a clear difference for the victims of this crime. These victims will be offered comprehensive assistance and protection of their human rights.

EFSC sees this Convention as a welcome development in the area of child's rights with children being the most vulnerable target of traffickers. It contains comprehensive measures which take into account the vulnerability of children and their need for special protection and assistance. More details on this treaty can be found at:

http://www.coe.int/t/transversalprojects/children/Default_en.asp

News from International Institutions

Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) : Bid to Remove Reservations from Convention

International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAP) Asia Pacific has been conducting a brief mapping study on efforts to remove reservations to [CEDAW](#) and [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

The study is part of a project with UNICEF: "Promotion of CRC/CEDAW as tools for the realisation of children's and women's rights." This project is intended to enhance the capacity of UNICEF in engaging and working with governments to remove reservations to the conventions, as well as for national NGOs to better participate in the reporting and implementation processes of the CEDAW and CRC Committees' recommendations to State parties. Information from the research will be used in an upcoming paper on the subject.

IWRAP would be grateful for any information you can supply on this matter. If you have in the past activated strategies on removal of reservations, or are currently working on this, they would welcome your information. Additionally, if you already have publications, papers or reports that have captured this information they would be grateful for the references. For more information:

<http://www.iwrap-ap.org/>, <http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=16284>

Communications Procedure for the Convention on the Rights of the Child

On the 6th of March, over sixty participants, including 19 government representatives attended a briefing meeting at the Human Rights Council Session on the need for a communications procedure for the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The campaign was recently established as a Working Group of the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The campaign is calling on Member States to:

- Support and encourage the development of an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child to provide a communications/complaints procedure;

- Support the establishment of an Ad Hoc Working Group to draft the Optional Protocol, ensuring it is an effective instrument for the safeguarding of children's rights;
- Once adopted, sign and ratify the Optional Protocol, promote rapid ratification by other States Parties and work to ensure that adequate resources are provided to support the Committee on the Rights of the Child in responding to communications/complaints.

A [petition calling for the strengthening of the enforcement of the CRC](#) by drafting and adopting an Optional Protocol establishing such a mechanism has so far gathered support from over 360 organisations from almost 100 countries. For further details:

<http://www.crin.org/petitions/petition.asp?petID=1007>

<http://www.crin.org/docs/HRCleafletFINAL.pdf>

Interactive dialogue between children and governments at special session follow up meeting of the UN General Assembly, 10th – 11th

On the 10th -11th of December 2007, there was an informal dialogue with government delegations, members of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and children and young people during the special session follow up meeting at the UN General Assembly.

The interactive dialogue, chaired by children was an opportunity for children to discuss a number of issues and ask questions to representatives of governments and the UN. The Forum was organised so that children's voices can be heard at [the meeting to evaluate](#) the progress made in fulfilling the goals set out in the UN's [World Fit For Children](#) plan of action.

The meeting was divided into four thematic discussions: on participation, on poverty, fighting diseases and education. Each topic was introduced by a young person. For more details on this session, see: <http://crin.org/resources/infodetail.asp?id=15799>

Child Rights Advocacy in the EU

News from the NGO Action Group on Children's Rights (CRAG)

Set up on April, 17th 2007 to monitor the follow-up and implementation of the Communication towards an EU strategy on the Rights of the Child, the CRAG is composed of a number of NGOs: The [International Federation Terre Des Hommes](#), [World Vision](#), the European Foundation for Street Children, [Save the Children](#), [EURONET](#), [Eurochild](#), [Plan International](#) and [SOS-Kinderdorf International](#).

The activities of the Group have involved the preparation of joint papers on Child Participation and on Civil Society Participation, as well as a monitoring of the EU-level initiatives relevant to the protection of children's rights.

Following the remarkable lack of consultation with the civil society in the 2nd Child Rights' Forum held in Brussels on the 04.03.2008 (see "News from the EU Institutions and the Council of Europe" section), the CRAG has been actively involved in the Steering Group on Children's

Rights and is contributing to the selection process of the civil society representatives in the Steering Group, as well as to identifying the themes of the next Child Rights Forum. Particular emphasis is given in this context to child participation.

On the occasion of the last Steering Group Meeting on 16th April 2008, The Commission informed the participants that it will produce a consultation document on the EU Strategy, which will be largely based on the EP resolution. MEP Roberta Angelilli's priorities for the EU strategy regard increasing the consultation and participation of children.

The first discussion on the draft consultation document should be held in June 2008. This will be send for agreement to the EP, then to the steering group and finally to the third Child Rights Forum to be held in November 2008. After the Forum, children will be consulted on the document.

The new Commission starting its works in 2009 should then adopt a new Communication (2010) on children's rights. In other words, this means that the follow-up to the 2006 Communication "Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child" will not lead to a Green or White Paper procedure.

Caritas Europa encourages inter-institutional dialogue among European Institutions on 2010 - the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion

In December 2007, The European Commission had submitted a proposal for decision to the Council and the European Parliament to proclaim 2010 as the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. The proposal was already announced in the Commission's 2005-2010 Social Agenda. To discuss this initiative further, representatives of the European Commission, the Slovenian EU presidency and the European Parliament met on 6 March 2008 at the European Parliament in Brussels for a roundtable/dinner event, co-organised by Caritas Europa and sponsored by Ms Erna Hennicot-Schoepges, MEP from Luxembourg. For more details: <http://www.caritas-europa.org/code/EN/soci.asp?Page=805>

Upcoming Events

Improving the Well-being of Young Children in Europe: the Role of Early Years Services (Brussels, April 2008)

Organised by Eurochild and the UNICEF *Innocenti* Research Centre, this event is hosted by MEP Catherine Stihler at the European Parliament in Brussels. Further details can be found at: <http://www.eurochild.org/index.php?id=20>

Rethinking Poverty: Making Policies that Work for Children (New York, 21 April 2008)

UNICEF and the Graduate Program in International Affairs (GPIA) at The New School will be jointly hosting a conference at The New School, in New York, on Rethinking Poverty, focusing on Policies that work for Children, on April 21-23, 2008. This is the fourth international conference on

"Children's Rights and Policies" organized in partnership by UNICEF and the GPIA. The aim of the 2008 Conference is to mobilize the agenda on child poverty and disparity. The Conference will also present the opportunity for practitioners, scholars, members of the public and policy makers to meet and examine the impact of ensuring the fulfilment of children's rights, discuss lessons learned for future action, and increase the well-being of children worldwide. Finally, the Conference will provide input and feedback to UNICEF's Global Study on "Child Poverty and Social Disparities," which is currently being carried out in 40 countries. For more details: www.equityforchildren.org

Workshop: Social exclusion and extreme poverty as major reasons for the life situation of street children in the Central and Eastern European Member States – National analyses, reports and strategic concepts to prepare the new National Strategies 2008 – 2011 - (Brussels, 5-6 May 2008) (for more details please refer to Section 1: Children in PROGRESS)

7th European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty (Brussels, May 16 & 17 2008)

The basic purpose of the meeting is to listen to the voices of the people who are experiencing poverty, and to establish a dialogue with those who are forming policies for reduction of poverty and social exclusion on the level of European Union and on national levels. It is also about stimulating activity and including marginal groups into the processes of seeking solutions and forming strategies and measures for improving their position. Further details can be found at: http://64.233.183.104/search?q=cache:8_-GV24bZK0J:ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/events_en.htm+meeting+of+people+experiencing+poverty&hl=fr&ct=clnk&cd=5&gl=be

Imagine Children Imagine (Copenhagen, Denmark, 20 – 22 May 2008)

Three-day international conference on Child Culture with exciting presentations, hands-on workshops, panel discussions and lot of events with children, film, music, dance and theatre! The conference deals with Culture for, with and by children aged 5-13 years. It addresses all professionals working with Child Culture strategically and in practice. For more details, see: <http://www.childculture.dk/002/>

Better Future for Children Today - 60 years of International Cooperation for Children in Care (Helsinki Finland, June 11th - 13th 2008)

Organised by FICE-International (Federation Internationale des Communautés Educatives/International Federation of Educative Communities) and others, this congress will include plenary presentations, working sessions (workshops, discussion groups, mini-seminars) to take the discussion further on various issues related to residential care and especially to a child's best interest in residential care. The following themes will be addressed:

1. Protecting the World's Children
2. Child, Family and Close Relations
3. Child's Experiences, Right to Participate and to be Heard, Quality of Care

More details can be found at: <http://www.congreszon.fi/fice2008/>

UK: Children's rights and participation conference (York, United Kingdom, 1 July 2008)

The conference 'Children's Rights and Participation: What Preconditions? What Rights? What

Outcomes? What Next?' which will be hosted by the Centre for Applied Human Rights and the Social Policy Research Unit at the University of York. The conference will address the issue of child participation in totality. For further information: <http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/cahr/index.html>

International Conference on Child Labour and Child Exploitation (Cairns, Australia, 3 August 2008)

The International Conference will evaluate the progress and achievements made in relation to the eradication of the worst forms of child labour and will explore the challenges ahead in securing rights for children in the 21st century and meeting the UN Millennium Goals by 2015. The voices of children will also be heard, as their wants and needs are often overlooked.

EFSC-European Forum on Street Children: Street children as a social challenge to the renewed Lisbon Strategy: The role of the civil society as a catalyst for the social inclusion process for strongly excluded children and street children (Lisbon, Portugal, September, 2008) (for more details please refer to Section 1: Children in PROGRESS)

IFCW World Forum 2008 on "Early Intervention and Prevention" (Cardiff/Wales, United Kingdom 29 September – 1 October 2008)

This conference will explore and share knowledge and information on promising practices and innovative approaches to Early Intervention and Prevention. Presentations and Workshops will highlight practical and evidence-based solutions. More details can be found at: <http://www.eurochild.org/index.php?id=20>

Publications

A Thematic Guide for Non- governmental Organisations Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of a Child

The guidelines which represent a direct and immediate follow up to the Secretary General's [study](#) are designed to help non-governmental organization's to include comprehensive information on the incidence of violence in their reports to the Committee. The guidelines can be downloaded at: http://www.crin.org/docs/NGO_Guidelines_reporting_VAC_to_CRC_2008.pdf

Abolishing corporal punishment of children: Questions and answers (21/01/2008)

This four part booklet defines corporal punishment of children; gives reasons, based on international law, why corporal punishment should be abolished; discusses how abolition can be achieved; and debunks myths and public fears hovering around the issue. It is premised on the notion that punishing children physically is an act of violence and a violation of children's human rights. For more details: <http://book.coe.int/>

Child Indicators Research

An international, peer-reviewed quarterly that focuses on measurements and indicators of children's well-being, and their usage within multiple domains and in diverse cultures. The Journal will present measures and data resources, analysis of the data, exploration of theoretical issues, and information about the status of children, as well as the implementation of this information in policy and practice. It aims to explore how child indicators can be used to improve the development and well-being of children. For more details, please see: <http://www.springerlink.com/content/1874-897X>

Europeans and their rights - Child rights in Europe (18/01/2008)

This volume analyses the effectiveness of the judicial protection of children's rights within one regional organisation, the Council of Europe. The extent to which common standards have been developed by the courts in implementing children's rights is examined both from the perspective of the European Court of Human Rights and the judgments of the highest national courts within the Member States of the Council of Europe. Further analysis is made of the Council of Europe's Social Charter and the reports of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. For more details:

http://book.coe.int/EN/ficheouvrage.php?PAGEID=36&lang=EN&produit_aliasid=2236

Forced Marriage of the Girl Child

Pursuant to resolution 15/3 of the Commission on the Status of Women, this report at the fifty-second session of the Economic and Social Council gives an overview of the consideration of the issue of forced marriage at the international level, and the evolving approach for addressing it. It provides information on the legal and policy measures of states and the activities undertaken by entities of the UN system to address forced marriage of the girl child. The report concludes with recommendations for future action. This report can be found at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/index.html>

Law Reform and Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, provisional launch date: January 2008

The study reviews the legislation concerning the rights of children adopted by 52 States parties since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Three subjects that deserve further investigation are identified: the process of law reform, its place as part of a broad child rights strategy, and the actual impact of legislation of this kind on children. http://www.unicef-irc.org/article.php?id_article=87

Promoting the rights of children with disabilities

The Innocenti Digest on 'Promoting the Rights of Children with Disabilities' examines the situation of the some 200 million children with disabilities around the world and identifies ways to support the realization of their rights. Children with disabilities constantly face barriers to the enjoyment of their rights and inclusion in society. The digest discusses all aspects of their development, including access to education, health services and rehabilitation, social and legal assistance, play and cultural activities, vocational and life-skills training. For more details: <http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/digest13-disability.pdf>

Embedding Human Rights in Business Practice

The Global Compact Office and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights have

announced the release of the [second edition in the Embedding Human Rights in Business Practice Series](#). The publication has been produced in the context of the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and features 20 case studies from Global Compact signatories around the world outlining policies and practices to implement human rights within their own operations and spheres of influence.

The report includes chapters on [child labour](#), and references to the effects of business practice on women and children. For further information: <http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=16843>

Children as active citizens, a policy and programme guide

Child helplines are viewed as essential within the complaints mechanisms procedures available for children. An Inter-Agency Working Group on Children's Participation, comprised of ECPAT, Knowing Children, Plan, Save the Children, UNICEF and World Vision, recognises that the work undertaken by child helplines is crucial for enabling children to express their views and seek support. To download the publication, please see: www.childhelplineinternational.org

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