



**Brussels Office
Newsletter**
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Introduction

Welcome to the February issue of the Save the Children Brussels Office Newsletter which provides information on the activities of the Brussels office as well as on the latest EU policy developments on children's rights.

This Newsletter is written by Charlotta Odling (new, temporary Information and Administration Officer), Olivia Lind Haldorsson (Head of Office) and Hans Lind (Policy Officer). The Newsletter is free and can be received by E-mail or by post. Articles can be reproduced provided the source is acknowledged. Please distribute this newsletter widely within your organisation and let Charlotta know if you would like to be placed on the mailing list, email: savechildbru@skynet.be or sign up for subscription on our website at: http://www.savethechildren.net/alliance/where_we_work/europegrp_pubs.html

Rosa Maria Ortiz, member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child visits Brussels

Rosa Maria Ortiz, of Paraguay from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, visited Save the Children Brussels the 9th of February. Discussions were held with UNICEF, NGOs and staff from the European Commission on how the UN committee's concluding observations can best be implemented by the reporting States, and be supported by donor States and international organisations. Mrs Ortiz referred to the experience from the South American continent where the UN committee has met with governments and civil society, discussing the situation for children's rights in the region. A similar exercise will soon be held for Central American and Asian countries.

Save the Children would support a similar European event, based on the concluding observations for European countries from the UN committee on the Rights of the Child. Save the Children would also welcome a general comment from the committee on how donor countries should take note of the Committees' concluding observations when designing aid strategies for developing countries.

Information on General comments, see <http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/comments.htm>

For more information, contact Hans Lind hans-savechildbru@skynet.be

Children's Rights in the Austrian/Finnish Presidency Work Plan

The Austrian and Finnish presidencies have presented their operational programme for 2006. It attaches a special value to 'families, family policy and the reconciliation of work and family life as well as gender equality.' The presidencies will make every effort to finalise the 'Youth in Action' programme. Tackling illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings is also a priority for the Council.

The Austrian Presidency will organise a Europe de l'Enfance meeting on 2nd May. The focus of the meeting will be on best practice in coordinating children's policies and ways of mainstreaming children's rights. The European Children's Network, which Save the Children is a member of, has been invited to attend the meeting.

For more information on the presidencies work plan, please go to:
http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/fc/87874.pdf

News on the Child Rights Communication – a Meeting with Commissioner Frattini

The European Commission's Directorate General Justice, Freedom and Security (JLS) presented a draft Communication on the Rights of the Child on 22nd of February, covering

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internal and external affairs. International and non governmental organisations are invited to comment on the draft until 15th of March. The Commission plans to adopt the Communication by June and then present it to the Council and the European Parliament.

At a recent meeting with NGO's, Commissioner Frattini confirmed the Commission's commitment to promoting and protecting the rights of the child. The Commissioner showed special interest in children's participation.

Save the Children urges the Commission to extend the consultation period so that meaningful consultation with children can be held. Save the Children has also proposed that a child friendly version of the Communication is made and insists that adequate resources are provided for the implementation of the Communication.

For more information, contact Hans Lind hans-savechildbru@skynet.be

The EU Constitution – Reflection Period

On the 19th of January, the European Parliament adopted the text 'Structure, subjects and context for an assessment of the debate on the European Union', which outlines thoughts and actions on how to proceed with the European Constitution, following the negative results of last year. The European Parliament recognises that the reasons for the no votes in France and the Netherlands need to be carefully analysed and that meaningful and regular public debate needs to take place across Europe within the next two years.

The resolution proposes that a number of debates, conferences and parliamentary forums be held in Europe to 'clarify, deepen and democratise the consensus around the Constitution' and suggests that the period of reflection last until the second half of 2007. It states that every effort should be made to ensure that the Constitution enters into force during 2009. The Austrian Presidency of the Council has offered to present a roadmap for this reflection period, as well as for the ratification process in general.

Save the Children welcomed the references to children's rights in the draft Constitution, but is concerned that these may not be safeguarded. Save the Children will monitor developments closely with a view to ensuring that children's rights are included in debates and new drafts.

For the full text, please go to: <http://www.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade3?PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2006-0027+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&L=EN&LEVEL=2&NAV=S&LSTDOC=Y&LSTDOC=N>

‘Promoting Inclusion for Unaccompanied Young Asylum Seekers and Immigrants – A Duty of Justice and Care’ Launch of Report

The European Social Network (ESN) has launched the project report ‘Promoting Inclusion for Unaccompanied Young Asylum Seekers and Immigrants – A Duty of Justice and Care,’ written by Terry Smith.

The report identifies six deficiencies in the way unaccompanied young asylum seekers are currently being identified, received, and integrated; it states that there is a lack of accurate statistics relating to unaccompanied minors and that they effectively enter an adult asylum determination procedure. Models for delivering guardianship services vary greatly throughout the EU and there is a lack of clarity regarding their role. Furthermore, there are gaps in the depth and quality of initial and ongoing welfare assessments and few unaccompanied children are reunited with their families. Finally, there is a lack of in-depth training for professionals working with unaccompanied asylum seekers.

The report highlights that policies across the project partner countries are extremely varied, and are mostly reactive, fragmented and inconsistent. There is little evidence on an EU level of strategic or long-term planning, and there is little or no involvement of children either in the design of reception and integration services or in the decision making process which affects them. The report also underlines that it is unclear how the ‘best interest’ principle is perceived or applied in practice.

For a copy of the report, please go to:

<http://www.socialeurope.com/asylum/reports/Asylum%20report%20EN.pdf>

Save the Children is concerned that the rights and needs of separated children seeking asylum in Europe are not provided for within the framework of the common asylum procedures. Save the Children works in close collaboration with the Separated Children in Europe Programme (SCEP) to ensure that the rights and needs of separated children seeking asylum are protected.

Please see http://www.savethechildren.net/alliance/where_we_work/europegrp_pubs.html.

EU Guidelines on Children in Armed Conflict - 2 Years On

The EU guidelines on Children in Armed Conflict adopted in 2003 by the Council, included an obligation to review the implementation after 2 years. The UK presidency presented a review in December, stating that “although first steps have been taken, the potential of these Guidelines as a tool for mainstreaming children and armed conflict through all parts of the EU system has not yet been realised”. The Council adopted the review including a list of recommendations:

- ▶ All heads of EU delegations are to include thorough reporting on children in armed conflict in their EU Human Rights Fact sheets.

- ▶ The Presidency is to continuously monitor the reporting and ask for further inputs where necessary. The EU should co-operate closely with UN bodies in their implementation of the monitoring and reporting mechanism based on Security Council Resolution 1612. In particular, they should be involved in the local Child Protection Networks to ensure EU reporting complements existing efforts.
- ▶ Relevant EU working groups should consider whether it would be helpful to produce a paper on EU implementation of Resolution 1612, similar to the one produced on implementation of Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (doc 13566/05).
- ▶ Children and armed conflict should be included in the mandates of all EU Special Representatives in countries affected by armed conflict when they come up for renewal.
- ▶ Training on child protection should be provided. The European Group on Training should consider inviting UN or Save the Children to provide information on the training manual on child protection. Member States should ensure that child protection issues are adequately covered in their national training programmes.

The review can be seen on http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/hr/news39.pdf

Save the Children has together with other NGOs and UNICEF provided input for both the review and the Action plan the Austrian presidency is preparing as a follow up to the review. It has also campaigned for a wider dissemination and a better implementation of the Guidelines.

The mandates of the EU Special representatives have recently been renewed without children in armed conflict being included, despite the Council's recommendation that they be included. Save the Children calls on the EU institutions to fully respect the Council recommendations, ensuring enhanced protection of children in armed conflict.

For more information, contact Hans Lind hans-savechildbru@skynet.be

European Commission presents White paper on Communication

Commissioner Margot Wallström has presented the Commission's proposal on how a communication strategy could 'close the gap' between the EU and its citizens. The proposal's objective is for the full involvement of all citizens. The communication policy is closely linked with the previously presented *Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate* that aimed at getting the citizens involved in a discussion on the EU – 'what is it for, where is it going and what should it be doing'. The White paper will have a consultation period of 6 months. The end result of the process will be a 'forward looking agenda for better communication to enhance the public debate in Europe'.

Save the Children will participate in the consultation, with the aim of ensuring that children are actively involved and respected as important European citizens. Children's participation in the dialogue should be facilitated by user friendly documents provided by the European

institutions. Officials at the institutions should be trained on when and how to involve children in a dialogue.

For info, see http://europa.eu.int/comm/communication_white_paper/doc/white_paper_en.pdf

For more information, contact Hans Lind hans-savechildbru@skynet.be

ECHO - Operational Strategy 2006

The DG for Humanitarian Aid (ECHO) has published its operational strategy for 2006. Focus will continue to be on developing countries with most urgent humanitarian needs. 31 countries or territories have been identified as priority areas. ECHO has also identified areas of "forgotten crisis"; Chechnya, Myanmar, the Sahrawi refugees in Algeria, Nepal and, to a lesser degree, India for the crisis in Kashmir.

In 2006, DG ECHO will not define new priority themes but will concentrate on the work started before (HIV/AIDS, children) or just completed (water and sanitation). The work on the ECHO guidelines on the protection of children in emergency operations will be finalized during this year.

For further information, please see:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/pdf_files/strategy/2006/strat_2006_en.pdf

Save the Children Italy Profile

Save the Children Italy began its activities in 1998 to bring positive changes to children in Italy and abroad, contributing to the recognition and implementation of their rights. Save the Children Italy has developed a specific commitment to:

- increase access and quality of education
- ensure protection and education to children caught in emergencies and conflicts
- strengthen protection referral systems for the most vulnerable children
- ensure equal rights to all children and eliminate discriminations of all kind

The main areas of work are education, rights of migrant children, child protection and children in emergencies. Save the Children Italy has two areas of excellence:

1. the rights of migrant children, with a specific focus on unaccompanied migrant children, child trafficking and sexual exploitation and children who are involved in illegal activities;
2. child rights monitoring: Save the Children Italy is the coordinator of the national network for the CRC monitoring, which has around 42 association/NGO members.

The budget for 2005 was 8 million Euro. Funding support programmes in Italy for development education, rights of migrant children, child protection and child rights monitoring. Programmes for education, child protection, HIV prevention, emergency and post emergency are run in Albania, Kosovo Bosnia, Palestine, Egypt, Ethiopia, Malawi, Ivory Coast, Brazil, Guatemala, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, China, Afghanistan.

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Save the Children Italy is also involved in activities of fundraising, advocacy, lobbying and campaigning for children rights. For more information on Save the Children Italy, visit www.savethechildren.it, or contact: info@savethechildren.it

Calls for proposals

Youth Programme Action 5 Support Measures: Call for submission of innovative co-operation, training and information projects

All applications submitted have to follow one of the priority themes: Cultural diversity and tolerance; projects aimed at the inclusion of young people who meet multiple obstacles in geographical and socio-economic terms; projects aimed at encouraging the promotion of the Youth programme in Eastern Europe; innovation in European Citizenship education; and co-operation between local or regional authorities and youth NGOs

Projects have to involve partner organisations from at least four different countries (including the applicant). The total amount earmarked for the co-financing of projects in the context of this call for projects is 2.000.000 Euro. The deadline for submitting applications is 1 July 2006.

For further information, please go to: http://europa.eu.int/comm/youth/call/6505/call_action_5_en.html

AENEAS Programme

The purpose of the AENEAS Programme is to bring financial and technical assistance to third countries in the field of migration and asylum. The budget available is 40.35 million Euro and the deadline to apply is 28 March 2006.

The priorities are the development of legal migration, drafting of legislation and development of national practices in relation to asylum, readmission and durable integration of returnees and stemming illegal migration.

In order to apply, to find the documents needed and for further information, please visit the following website: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/cgi/frame12.pl> and then choose "other," tick "open", tick "grants", tick "all regions", tick "all countries" and scroll down to the very end of the webpage.

Publications

- **“Act now!** – *Some highlights from children’s participation in the regional consultations for the UN study on Violence against children*”. More than 260 children and young people participated in the 9 regional consultations for the UN Study on Violence against Children. In all the consultations girls and boys highlighted that they would like to see concrete actions NOW to prevent and deal with violence against children. The

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International Save the Children Alliance has compiled a summary of children's recommendations from these consultations. The publication can be downloaded from <http://se-web-01.rb.se/Shop/Products/Product.aspx?ItemId=1408>

- **“Three billion reasons – Norway’s Development strategy for Children and Young People in the South”**. The Norwegian government’s strategy for promoting the rights and improving the living conditions of children and young people in poor countries in the world. The publication can be downloaded from <http://www.dep.no/ud/english/doc/plans/032181-220018/dok-bn.html>
- **“Thematic Studies on Policy Measures Concerning Disadvantaged Youth”** – Commissioned by the European Commission, DG Employment and Social Affairs. the purpose of this study was to analyse policy measures concerning disadvantaged youth in the age group 16-25, with a particular focus on youth unemployment and early school leaving. The study’s recommendations include changing social policies to enable families to assist their children in achieving skills and qualifications, and placing more responsibility on school systems to cooperate closer with policy and community actors in terms of making education more inclusive. The publication can be downloaded from: http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/social_inclusion/docs/youth_study_en.pdf

Forthcoming Events

12-13 May 2006

**Eurochips Conference - Children of Imprisoned Parents: European Perspectives
Paris, France**

This conference, organised by Eurochips, Federation Des Relais Enfants-Parents and The Bernard Van Leer Foundation, aims to foster the exchange of expertise and 'good' practice, thus providing professionals and volunteers with better tools and resources for working with children of imprisoned parents. The conference will also serve to raise awareness on a national and European level of the situation of this group of children. An estimated 700,000 children are separated from an imprisoned parent each year within the European Union. For further information, please go to: <http://www.eurochips.org/>

7-8 June 2006

EU funding for transnational projects within the EU, Brussels, Belgium

Are your projects eligible for EU funding? Under which programme? How to apply successfully? Through presentations, practical workshops, group and individual work, exchange of practice, you will find an answer to all your questions about EU funding, and be able to apply successfully for EU funding. This training will be mainly focused on transnational projects *inside the European Union*.

Detailed description: <http://www.idseurope.org/en/new02.en.htm>

Programme : <http://www.idseurope.org/en/programme.funding.7-8June2006.htm>

Registration form : <http://www.idseurope.org/en/SubscriptionForm7-8June2006.htm>

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4-6 July 2006

**Childhood and Youth: Choice and Participation International Conference
Sheffield University, Sheffield UK**

Children's rights to participation are now on the agendas of governments, policy makers, schools and community organisations. They are also increasingly central to research with children. The aim of this conference is to explore and question the nature and extent of that participation. Hosted by the Centre for the Study of Childhood and Youth, the conference program will include four plenaries, and themes covered will be Social Inclusion and Exclusion, Children's Everyday Lives and Social Worlds, and Concepts of Childhood and Children's Rights.

For further information, please go to:<http://www.shef.ac.uk/cscy/conference2006/index.htm>

3-6 September 2006

**XVIth ISPCAN International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect - Children in a
Changing World: Getting It Right, York, UK**

This Congress is being organised by the International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect in collaboration with the British Association for the Study and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect. The speed of change in the modern world brings many new challenges for those working to protect children and safeguard their welfare. Sub-themes include Children living with adversity, Children's voices and children's rights and Enhancing professional competence and confidence. For further information, please go: <http://www.ispcan.org/congress2006/>