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Poverty Policy				10/06/10	

**EUROPEAN CHILD POVERTY CONFERENCE  
2-3 SEPTEMBER 2010**

**DRAFT PAPER 'MARKETPLACE OF GOOD PRACTICES AND EXPERIENCES'**

This draft paper outlines why the organisers of the European Child Poverty Conference have opted to develop a permanent 'meeting place' where the European conference's priority themes (in addition to plenary discussions) can be presented to the conference participants in an informal manner.

**1. GENERAL SITUATION**

The Child Poverty Conference aims to engage Member States in the problem of children living in poverty and provide a solution for reducing the percentage of child poverty in general. The child poverty conference expects to have around 300 participants from the various Member States (competent administrations, representatives of European institutions, academics, representatives of the business world, European and Belgian stakeholders and so on...) The event would like to provide fodder for the European debate surrounding the establishment of a European recommendation on child poverty. The participants will consider all studies and initiatives realised so far in order to form a consensus in relation to the objectives and criteria regarding child poverty.

The conference will be organised in a participative manner, using the Town Hall concept. Participants will be split into groups of about ten and will conduct discussions at tables under the supervision of a professional facilitator. Each participant will be asked for their opinion and this will enrich the debate. General conclusions will, therefore, be formed on the basis of input from each participant. This offers added value in comparison to the traditional conference.

The three priority themes of the conference refer to ensure that children grow up in families with adequate resources to meet their essential needs; making sure children, while growing up, have access to the services and opportunities that will enhance their present and future well-being and enable them to reach their full potential and promoting the active participation of children and young people in decision-making.


The conclusions, recommendations and definitions of quantified objectives and criteria in the fight against child poverty that come out of the conference will:

stimulate the political process to come up with a recommendation from the European Commission.

## 2. **OBJECTIVE**

The marketplace focuses on the conference's three priority themes. In addition to guaranteeing adequate resources to ensure the basic needs of all children are met and providing access to good quality services to ensure the well-being of children both today and in the future, the primary focus will also be on the third conference theme: promoting the participation of children in the decision-making process surrounding issues that concern them.

The participation of children (and certainly children living in poverty) is still in its infancy. The conference is a perfect opportunity to place this theme under the spotlight and pass on the message:

Participation  added value

Guaranteeing the right of children to participate (ECCR art. 12) means that their access to basic rights is increased. Policy-makers can, therefore, improve the efficiency of their policies. This situation is, however, confronted by many different problems (participation thresholds, absence of participation culture, time dimensions...). More often than not, however, there are solutions to these issues even if they are not particularly easy. The marketplace offers a forum where solutions based on good practices and the exchange of experiences can be presented. Various stakeholders (project coordinators, representatives of various European exemplary projects, study project commissioning parties...) will be invited to present their project, provide arguments which justify tackling non-participation, demonstrate that the 'participation gap' can be closed,...

Without doubt, the language of art, the theatre, the circus... is a comprehensible and universal language. This perspective will be used to enable children living in poverty to express (directly or indirectly) their views and expectations.

In order to put the conference participants on the right track in terms of the various conference themes as effectively as possible, they will be offered the opportunity to get to know these stakeholders in an informal manner.

The conference's priority themes will be brought to the conference hall and this makes site visits unnecessary.

## 3. **INPUT (stakeholders and material)**

The success of the marketplace is largely influenced by:

- The input and experiences and good practices of various stakeholders;
- The visual presentation of these good practices.

It will principally be the conference participants who will present these good practices and experiences. This will also increase the interactive nature of the conference.

How an interesting presentation can be created will be discussed with the event agency.

#### **4. OUTPUT**

Efforts will be made to achieve the set objectives via:

- Speed dates/exchange tables
- Video messages
- Connecting existing initiatives in order to arrive at a stronger result
- Proposals of artistic projects
- Exhibitions
- Interviews with experts
- ...

The link with the conference's priority themes will, of course, be monitored closely.

#### **5. IMPACT**

The marketplace places 'participation' at the fore and helps strengthen the process by providing good practices which lower thresholds. The marketplace will also informally bring the themes 'access to high-quality services' and 'guaranteeing adequate resources' to the attention of the conference participants.

The marketplace aims to ultimately:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Stimulate the exchange of good practices and experiences;</li> <li>➤ Nurture discussions among the experts present;</li> <li>➤ Demonstrate the importance and the reasons behind demanding participation;</li> <li>➤ Demonstrate the added value of participation and eliminate the ambivalent attitude to participation (e.g. by policy-makers);</li> <li>➤ Eliminate thresholds which hinder participation as a result of exchanging knowledge;</li> <li>➤ Enable transverse connections between various sectors;</li> <li>➤ ...</li> </ul> |
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## **6. TIMING**

During the conference, the marketplace will be accessible to all conference participants. In addition to the informal moments (coffee breaks, lunches...) which may be used to visit the marketplace and in addition to two discussion sessions (Town Hall), the conference participants will also be able to visit the marketplace during a third session. The marketplace can welcome up to 100 visitors for the duration of the conference.

## **7. BUDGET**

The conference organisers will provide the technical and material support for setting up the stands and will pay for travel and accommodation costs (only 1 project coordinator),...

All costs associated with the proposed input to the marketplace are to be borne by the project developers.