

Brussels, 21/11/2008

Dear President Barroso,  
Dear Catherine Day,

**Re: Eurochild concerns for the European Recovery plan**

Eurochild represents over 60 organisations engaged in promoting the rights and welfare of children in Europe.

We welcome the European Commission's draft recovery plan that will be adopted on 26 November. Nonetheless, we urge you to take on board the proposals of the Social Platform – of which Eurochild is an active member.

Europe's future generation should not be held hostage of the current economic down-turn. We strongly believe that strong public investment in children and families, especially in early childhood, is *the* most effective way of securing sustainable social, economic and political progress in the Union.

We therefore call on the European Commission and Member States to take account of the following action points:

**1-No backtracking on social, health and education investments**

The global economic crisis has already started to affect the lives of vulnerable children and families in Europe. Many member states have introduced serious cuts to budgets in areas affecting directly children such as education and early child care. Budgets for essential social services affecting families and children such as education and health must be ring-fenced. Social services and protection systems provide a crucial safety net in times of crisis, and will protect against very costly, long-term effects of social hardship – especially when they occur during childhood.

**2-Invest in service economy to create sustainable and decent jobs**

Universal early years services are the best way to ensure that *all* children have a fair start in life, promoting inclusion and diversity from an earliest age. We call on all member states to increase public investment in this crucial period of a child's development, ensuring all children over one year have access to high quality, accessible care and education services regardless of their parents' employment status.

This will not only be an important source of job creation, it will also facilitate parents' labour market participation. Properly formulated early years services can also contribute to better parenting, community cohesion, as well as better health and educational outcomes for children.

There is no short-term solution to the current crisis. Hardship experienced by children today will have very long-term social and economic consequences. We need visionary and bold leaders that put the best interest of children at the heart of the recovery plan. We are confident that you will use this opportunity to change our direction wisely.

Best regards,

Jana Hainsworth  
Secretary General - Eurochild