

Children's well-being ignored in Europe's 2020 strategy

Commission's proposal for a 2020 strategy ignores the population group that has arguably the most to gain (or to lose) from the Europe's 10-year vision

While recognizing that 19 million children are at risk of poverty in the EU, the proposed flagship initiative of a European platform against poverty fails to identify children among the at-risk groups.

"The target to reduce the number of Europeans living below the national poverty lines by 25% is welcome. But reducing overall poverty levels does not automatically mean child poverty will fall. A sensible target for poverty needs to be broken down by age groups," affirmed Jana Hainsworth, Secretary General of Eurochild

In this week's meeting of Employment and Social Affairs Ministers, several pointed out the need for "more explicit sub-targets could better address the specific national situation". But attention to children was scant, despite the repeated commitment to fight child poverty in past Council Conclusions and the fact that child poverty has actually increased according to the most recent (pre-crisis) data.

"One in five children living at risk of poverty is unacceptable," continued Ms Hainsworth. *"It's a denial of children's rights, and a waste of human potential. Breaking the inter-generational inheritance of poverty must be a number one priority, not an after-thought."*

Children are at higher risk of poverty than the population as a whole (20% compared to 16%). Poverty in childhood has a long-term impact on Europe's economic prosperity. Investment in children is therefore essential to break the cycle of deprivation and to give every child full chances in life. Eurochild calls on Heads of State to adopt a specific target to reduce child poverty by 50% by 2020, as a first step towards its full eradication.

However poverty is not just economic. It is a multi-dimensional phenomenon affecting housing, health, education, safety, environment and participation in society. To boost member states action to ensure equal opportunities for all children we are also calling on the European Commission to adopt a Recommendation on child poverty and well-being. Such a Recommendation will set a clear framework for integrated policy-making taking account of the best interest of all children.

Eurochild and its members are collecting 100,000 signatures during the European Year 2010 against Poverty and Social Exclusion to demand for action to fight child poverty and to promote child well-being. More at ► www.endchildpoverty.eu

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More information

Jana Hainsworth, Secretary General
Björn Becker, Information and Communication Officer

Eurochild

Avenue des Arts 1-2, B-1210 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32 (0)2 211 05 53 - Fax: +32 (0)2 511 72 98
bjorn.becker@eurochild.org - www.eurochild.org

Eurochild is a network of organisations and individuals working in and across Europe to promote children's rights and improve the quality of life of children and young people. Eurochild's work is underpinned by the principles enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.



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