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Media Release

You are where you're born

Supporting a sense of place can make children's services more effective

Rooting services in what is local can make them more relevant to families and support the community as a whole, promoting social and economic regeneration, according to the latest magazine from Children in Europe.

A Sense of Place: environments, community and services for young children, published on 1 March, looks at the role of place-based, family and intergenerational learning in tackling problems of service delivery in scattered rural communities, and reduced access to natural environments in urban areas.

How services are delivered more effectively when they identify with the communities they serve is described in a range of international settings, including:

- farm kindergartens in Italy and Norway
- family and intergenerational learning in England
- Roma children in Croatia and
- growing up in rural Poland

while in an exclusive interview that illustrates the importance of place in shaping children's lives, Scottish artist **John Bellany** talks about the permanent influence of his east coast upbringing on his life and work.

One of the contributors is the new European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth **Androulla Vassiliou**, who believes effective early childhood education and care is vital in helping the European Union meet its strategic goals over the next 10 years.

Androulla Vassiliou said:

“Early childhood education and care have a vital contribution to make to the European Union's strategic goals over the next decade as part of the ‘Europe 2020’ agenda, which will shape the Europe of the future. They are a core element in promoting economic sustainability and social cohesion. Rural areas in particular can benefit from new and innovative thinking in this area and I encourage Member States to learn from each other through shared experience. I will be working closely with my fellow Commissioners and national authorities to find ways in which we can achieve higher standards of education and care throughout Europe.”

Secretary General of Eurochild **Jana Hainsworth** said:

“At the heart of Europe’s new 2020 vision is the concept of innovation. The examples in Children in Europe show that innovation is not just a domain of industry and science. It is crucial in the children’s sector too. Let’s be inspired and combine our efforts to ensure children’s rights and wellbeing take centre stage in the future of Europe.”

The magazine’s Editor **Bronwen Cohen**, of Children in Scotland, said:

“Solutions need to be local, but service providers can learn from experience and practice in other countries. Funding from the European Union has encouraged innovation in some European countries in tackling the challenges to effective service provision presented by geography and changing social and economic patterns, particularly in rural areas. A more systematic approach is now required across Europe to enable effective cross-learning.”

Notes to Editors

1. Place-based education and services regard the local community, with its unique history, culture, environment and economy, as one of the primary resources for learning, and developing a sense of place in children as the foundation to understanding their own identity and place in the wider world. Place-based learning has been seen as particularly important in rural areas but is also relevant to many urban communities.
2. This edition of **Children in Europe** examines EU policies and calls for the EU to develop an alternative to the so-called PISA (Programme of International Student Assessment) league tables.
3. **Children in Europe** is a magazine for everyone working with and for children from 0 to 10 and those interested in children’s issues. It is published simultaneously in 15 languages and 18 countries by a network of national magazines across Europe. It aims to provide a forum for ideas, practice and information and to contribute to the development of policy and practice at European and national levels. It is published in the UK by Children in Scotland. Children in Europe Issue 18, ***A Sense of Place: environments, community and services for young children***, is published on 1 March. For more information visit www.childrenineurope.org.
4. **Children in Scotland** is the Scottish agency for the whole of the children’s sector, reaching over 250,000 individuals through our extensive membership of more than 450 statutory agencies, voluntary sector organisations, professional associations and community groups. For further information visit www.childreninscotland.org.uk.
5. **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. For further information visit www.eurochild.org

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