

A good day for children in Europe? Belgium takes over the EU presidency today

Eurochild holds high hopes for the Belgian EU Presidency to deliver on its commitment to children

1 out of 5 children in Europe is living at the risk of poverty. As poverty is often passed on from generation to generation, the best route to break the poverty cycle is tackling poverty already early in childhood. That would be the foundation of a more equal society.

Belgium has taken up this challenge and put child poverty and well-being at the top of its political agenda for the coming 6 months. To ensure it delivers on its commitment Eurochild is working closely with the current care-taker government and will support the incoming government, still to be established after the 13th June national elections, to stay on track.

In early June the United Nations Committee on the Right of the Child concluded a hearing on the situation of children in Belgium by pointing out that the State should take more action to fight child poverty. Latest figures in Belgium show that 1 in 7 children live in a jobless household. Three quarters of these children are at risk of poverty. Aware of these shortcomings, the Belgian government has already launched important measures to address the problem (see endnotes).

Philippe Courard, Belgium's State Secretary on Social Inclusion and Fight against Poverty, is confident about Belgium's role as President of the European Council:

"It's my priority to put child poverty on top of the European agenda during the Belgian presidency. In my country 17% of all children live in poverty. The average is even higher in Europe. It's imperative that the new Platform on Poverty includes the fight against child poverty. This is not only a moral duty but also an economic necessity. Our society can not accept to waste all that human potential."

With regard to concrete measures to be introduced on European level he adds:

"I will present quantified objectives for the eradication of this problem, supported by quantitative and qualitative indicators and this on all aspects of life. I will also back up a Recommendation made by the European Commission in this respect."

As its contribution to the European Year 2010 against Poverty and Social Exclusion, Eurochild has launched its own a campaign calling for more action to end child poverty www.endchildpoverty.eu. The petition and messages will be delivered to EU leaders in January 2011.

Eurochild's Secretary General Jana Hainsworth stated:

"Over the next 6 months, EU leaders will agree how to work together to fight poverty and social exclusion. With Belgium at the helm, we have an opportunity to ensure the legacy of the 2010 European Year against poverty and social exclusion has real substance and is not just empty words. A commitment to end poverty must start with a commitment to children and families. This is the best way of achieving lasting change."

Eurochild has agreed a scoreboard by which to evaluate the impact of the Belgian EU presidency. We trust with their leadership the rights and welfare of children will take a more central position in the EU's political agenda.

END

Notes for the press

- Website of the Belgian Presidency: www.eutrio.be
- Belgium commits 4million euro to tackle child poverty in Belgium ([Philippe Courard : 4,2 millions pour lutter contre la pauvreté des enfants](#))
- Facts & figures on child poverty in Europe: on Eurochild's "End Child Poverty" campaign [website](#)
- CRC Belgium Hearing: [Concluding Observations – June 2010](#)
- Eurochild's [Scoreboard](#) for the Belgian EU presidency

More information

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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.



www.endchildpoverty.eu



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