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Don't forget about Child Poverty now!

On the occasion of the Spring Summit of EU leaders on 13-14 March, Eurochild urges EU heads of state & government to keep fighting child poverty beyond the 'light year' on the OMC

Successive Council Conclusions have called on EU member states to fight child poverty¹. As a consequence, this issue was chosen as the thematic focus for the 2007 'light year' within the EU's Open Method of Coordination (OMC) on social inclusion and social protection. This process raised hopes for Eurochild and other concerned actors in Europe, that the ambition to "**rapidly and significantly reduce child poverty**" will stay on the agenda and become a key focus of the renewed Lisbon Strategy.

"However, the conclusions of the Spring Council 2008 do not seem to have responded to the strong messages from previous Council conclusions", said Catriona Williams, President of Eurochild. Therefore **Eurochild and its member organisations call on EU heads of state and government to endorse the commitments made in previous Council conclusions and to demonstrate that the EU and member states continue to work together to fight child poverty** in the framework of the OMC. Eurochild expects the fight against child poverty to be a high priority in the renewed Social Agenda, especially regarding the conclusions of the Employment Council of 29 February, which explicitly talk about '*efforts to reduce child poverty*' as being an integral part of the interaction between the OMC and the Lisbon Strategy.

The OMC process, which has enabled a number of actions at EU level designed to make possible an in-depth analysis of child poverty and facilitate exchange of policy and practice between member states, should not lose momentum beyond the thematic focus of 2007. Despite increased economic growth, the numbers² of people still experiencing poverty in the EU, of which many are children³, have for the most part remained stable, or have even increased in recent years.

The fight against child poverty should not only be seen in the framework of 'growth and jobs', but rather in the context of children's rights and well-being - as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights on the Child (UNCRC). Eurochild welcomes the work done by the task force on child wellbeing indicators of the Social Protection Committee (SPC) in 2007, whose report was published in February⁴. Member states should base their national strategy reports on social protection and social inclusion 2008-2010 on this important document, as suggested in the Guidance Note⁵.

Eurochild, together with its member organisations, will continue to closely monitor those strategy reports from the point of view of child poverty and children's rights.



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Eurochild^{AISBL} is an international network of organisations and individuals working in and across Europe to improve the quality of life of children and young people. Its work is underpinned by the principles enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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¹ the European Council in March 2006 concluded that EU member states should “take necessary measures to rapidly and significantly reduce child poverty”; the Council Conclusions of March 2007, stressed “the need to fight poverty, especially child poverty”.

² 78 million people are experiencing poverty in the EU

³ Across the EU, families with children under 16 are more likely to be at risk of poverty than the overall population (19% compared to 16%), one child in five lives under the poverty threshold

⁴ “Child Poverty and Well-Being in the EU - Current status and way forward”, report on Child Poverty and Well-Being adopted by the Social Protection Committee on 17 January 2008:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/docs/social_inclusion/2008/child_poverty_en.pdf

⁵ Guidance Note for preparing National Strategy Reports on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008-2010:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/docs/social_inclusion/2008/080207_guidance_note_nsrs_cln_en.pdf (see page 5)