

Press Release:
Message to the European Council by
Eurochild and its 92 national members

[17 June 2009]

Don't fail our children!

An effective response to the crisis needs to consider children's rights and welfare

Impact of Crisis on Children & Families

Behind the daily reports of job losses is a much deeper and longer-lasting social crisis affecting millions of families and children across the European Union. Children were already more vulnerable to poverty, with almost one in five children living in poverty before the crisis struck. Now a growing number of families face a fall in their standard of living, with inevitable impacts on children's well-being, and on parents' decision to have the number of children they want.

Against this backdrop, Eurochild members are concerned that crucial services aimed at supporting families and children are facing budget cuts. The most vulnerable children – children with disabilities, migrant and separated children, Roma children and children at risk or in care – more than ever need more and better quality services that respect children's rights. The current crisis jeopardizes the little progress made in recent years.

Towards a lasting economic recovery

The unprecedented public debt resulting from government bail outs has its price. How will governments deal with over-indebtedness in 10 to 15 years time, especially factoring in the health and pension costs associated with an ageing population?

It is a burden that our children will inherit. We need to ensure every child has the chance to fulfill their full potential. And we need to ensure parents have the resources and support they need to have as many children as they want and to raise them in a positive environment.

We know that poverty experienced in childhood has long-term consequences on education, health and ultimately employment outcomes. We know as well that family stress can provoke mental health problems among children and increasing levels of domestic violence. The protection and promotion of children's rights may seem like a luxury, but it is a moral and economic imperative.

Call to EU Heads of State

Tomorrow's European Council takes place at a turning point for the EU. A new European Parliament has just been elected and a new European Commission will be appointed by the end of the year. Last week's preparatory Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) highlighted the need to invest in green and social jobs as fundamental aspects for the recovery of the crisis*. The recent European Communication on employment also emphasises the need to upgrade skills and match labour market needs**.

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Eurochild calls on governments to invest in services that promote children's well-being and provide much needed support to families. The development of high quality early years education and care services, for example, meets a growing demand from parents, contributes to job creation, and enables a more highly skilled and productive workforce in the longer term. There is also a need to strengthen early intervention, prevention and child protection and care services and to continue to improve teaching and the school environment.

Jana Hainsworth, Secretary General of Eurochild, comments:

"Intervening early to protect children's rights and promote their well-being saves money in the long-term. It is always easier to address problems before they become too serious, but it requires bold investment in high quality, affordable and universally accessible services."

To date Europe's economic recovery plans have largely ignored the impact of the crisis on children. There is little or no acknowledgement of the burden they will inherit, nor analysis of how governments will shoulder this responsibility to children and families. Now is not the time to save money on services that are needed more than ever, if we are to ensure that children are equipped to deal with the future challenges.

Appeal by Eurochild and its national members

The seeds of a sustainable, equitable society need to be sown now! The post-Lisbon strategy is a golden opportunity to ensure that choices of today bring a better outcome for today's children and tomorrow's adults. Eurochild and its 92 member organisations from across Europe urge EU leaders to build a long term vision based on children's rights.

SIGNED BY EUROCHILD AND ALL ITS 92 MEMBERS FROM ACROSS EUROPE

See full list below!

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Notes for editors:

- Eurochild is a network of organisations and individuals working in and across Europe to improve the quality of life of children and young people. Our work is underpinned by the principles enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Eurochild is funded by the European Commission within the PROGRESS Programme. Eurochild has currently 92 members in 33 countries all over Europe (both within and outside of the EU).
- **Eurochild's General Assembly and Policy Forum** is taking place on **17 and 18 June** in Brussels. Thematic focus is on a "Vision for Children in Europe". Venue: The Progress Hotel, 9 Rue du Progres, 1210 Brussels.
- * : Council Conclusions on Social services as a tool for active inclusion, strengthening social cohesion and an area for job opportunities, 8 June 2009
- ** : See European Commission communication "A Shared Commitment for Employment": The employment communication mentions the need to help the most disadvantaged back into jobs, i.a., through the promotion of low-skilled job opportunities in household and care services. In this regard, we should stress that low-skilled cannot be synonymous of low quality and therefore training should be associated to the promotion of low-skilled work in behalf of both employees and beneficiaries, also in informal care settings
- **More information:** Björn Becker, bjoern.becker@eurochild.org , +32 (0)498 53 00 53

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Logo	Member	City	Country
	Eurochild	Brussels	Belgium
	Children Today Center	Tirana	Albania
	Children's Human Rights Centre of Albania	Tirana	Albania
	SOS Kinderdorf International - International Continental Office for Western Europe	Innsbruck	Austria
	Vorarlberger Kinderdorf GmbH	Bregenz	Austria
	Daycare Centre "Children of Street"	Baku	Azerbaijan
	Dyslexia International	Brussels	Belgium
	Europe's Children - Our Concern	Brussels	Belgium
	Mr Eugeen Verhellen	Gent	Belgium
	Ms Dale Kabasinskaite	Brussels	Belgium
	Bulgarian Child Development Initiatives	Sofia	Bulgaria
	For Our Children	Sofia	Bulgaria
	Social Activities and Practices Institute - SAPI	Sofia	Bulgaria
	Sto Koluri Split, Association for Health Protection, Social Care and Children's Rights	Split	Croatia
	Union of Societies "Our Children"	Zagreb	Croatia
	Center for the Study of Childhood and Adolescence	Nicosia	Cyprus
	The Pancyprian Coordinating Committee for The Protection and Welfare of Children	Nicosia	Cyprus
	In the Interest of the Child, the Civic Association	Prague	Czech Republic



Logo	Member	City	Country
	Mr Chris Gardiner	Prague	Czech Republic
	Ms Tereza Tesarova	Prague	Czech Republic
	Joint Council for Child Issues	Copenhagen	Denmark
	Villum Kann Rasmussen Foundation	Soborg	Denmark
	Estonian Union for Child Welfare	Talinn	Estonia
	Tallinn Children Support Centre	Talinn	Estonia
	Central Union for Child Welfare	Helsinki	Finland
	Mannerheim League for Child Welfare	Helsinki	Finland
	Ms Maarit Kuikka	Espoo	Finland
	Pesäpuu Ry - Centre of Expertise in Child Welfare	Jyväskylä	Finland
	The Finnish Children's Parliament Association	Helsinki	Finland
	Association Samuel Vincent	Nîmes	France
	Fondation des Orphelins Apprentis d'Auteuil	Paris	France
	Mr John Bennet	Paris	France
	Mrs Anne Williams	Montreuil	France
	First Children's Embassy in the World - Megjashi	Skopje	FYR Macedonia
	Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kinder- und Jugendhilfe	Berlin	Germany
	European Network of Masters in Children's Rights	Berlin	Germany
	European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation - Youth	Berlin	Germany



Logo	Member	City	Country
	Iliachtida Association for Children and Family	Athens	Greece
	Association for the psycho-social health of children and adolescents	Athens	Greece
	European Network of Women - Greece	Athens	Greece
	Panhellenic Association of Members of One Parent Families	Athens	Greece
	PRAKSIS - Programs for the development of Social Support and Medical Cooperation	Athens	Greece
	Roots Research Center NGO	Athens	Greece
	Social and Education Action	Athens	Greece
	Family, Child, Youth Non-Profit Association	Budapest	Hungary
	KEK Kev Konal Gyermekkrizis Alapitvany	Budapest	Hungary
	National Association of Large Families	Budapest	Hungary
	Parliamentary Commissioner for Civil Rights and Ombudsperson for Children - Prof Dr Máté Szabó	Budapest	Hungary
	Center for Children and Family Research	Reykjavík	Iceland
	Arts for Peace Foundation Ballynure	Wicklow	Ireland
	Barretstown	Kildare	Ireland
	Children's Rights Alliance	Dublin	Ireland
	Mr Hugh Frazer	Dublin	Ireland
	One Family	Dublin	Ireland
	Amici dei Bambini	San Giuliano Milanese	Italy
	Fondazione l'Albero della Vita	Milano	Italy



Logo	Member	City	Country
	Istituto Degli Innocenti	Firenze	Italy
	Latvian Save the Children	Riga	Latvia
	Low and Management Solutions	Anyksciai	Lithuania
	Ombuds - Comité for the Rights of the Child	Luxembourg	Luxembourg
	Commissioner for Children of Malta Ms Carmen Zammit	Venera	Malta
	Foundation for Social Welfare Services	Venera	Malta
	Every Child Moldova	Chisinau	Moldova
	Aflatoun, Child Savings International	Amsterdam	Netherlands
	Eigen Kracht Centrale	Amsterdam	Netherlands
	International Step by Step Association	Amsterdam	Netherlands
	Netherlands Youth Institute	Utrecht	Netherlands
	Department of General Sociology University of Lodz	Lodz	Poland
	Nobody's Children Foundation	Warsaw	Poland
	CEBI - Foundation to Communitarian Development	Alverca	Portugal
	Association P.A.V.E.L.	Bucharest	Romania
	Federation of NGOs for Children	Bucharest	Romania
	National Centre for Equal Opportunities	Bratislava	Slovakia
	Association for Children and Parents SEZAM	Ljubljana	Slovenia
	Ecological-Cultural Association for Better World	Maribor	Slovenia



Logo	Member	City	Country
	Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia - Child Observatory	Ljubljana	Slovenia
	FEDAIA - Federació d'Entitas d'Atenció a la Infancia i a l'Adolescència	Barcelona	Spain
	Globetree	Stockholm	Sweden
	Örebro Regional Development Council	Örebro	Sweden
	Action for Children	London	UK
	Barnardo's Northern Ireland	Belfast	UK
	Children England	London	UK
	Children in Northern Ireland	Belfast	UK
	Children in Scotland	Edinburgh	UK
	Children in Wales	Cardiff	UK
	European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education	Sussex	UK
	Home-Start International	London	UK
	International Social Services UK	London	UK
	Mr Emmanuel Sherwin	London	UK
	National Children's Bureau	London	UK
	Newcastle City Council - Children's Services	Newcastle Upon Tyne	UK
	Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People	Fermanagh	UK
	The Early Years Organisation Northern Ireland	Belfast	UK

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