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Eurochild is a network of organisations working in and across Europe to 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. Eurochild is funded under the Community Action Programme to combat poverty and social exclusion of the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs & Equal Opportunities.

Why involve us?

A children's manifesto



Written by children in the framework of the Reception
« Why involve us? » -Children's participation in the poli-
cy-making process—European Parliament—7th June
2006

Why involve us?

Because :

- We have the right to be heard
- We have abilities and energy to contribute and to express our opinions
- We can make a difference and we want to make a difference
- We want to give help, support and assistance to others (children or adults and elderly people)
- By being involved we have a better understanding of democratic processes
- Being involved creates a base for a positive future
- Being active means to feel useful and recognized (especially for children who come from difficult situations)
- Participation can allow us to get skills that will help us in our future life
- Sharing helps us to understand other cultures
- Young people are the future adults of tomorrow

Advantages for society :

- if young people are involved, then all young people might be more willing to accept changes
- We can support and give a better understanding of children's rights as we are experts in young people's issues and we know the problems that they have
- We think young people can "educate" their peers better than adults
- We come from different cultures, have different perspectives and we can thus contribute, exchange and share our knowledge
- Prevention from aggression because the children and young people are using their time for useful activities
- By sharing our experiences, we can help to prevent other children from experiencing similar problems

What conditions do we need to be able to participate?

Institutions should have an understanding of children's rights and focus more on this subject. The children should be given the chance to help, care and express their opinions.

In this regard, we suggest the structures should be:

- Inclusive – make sure everyone can take part:
 - persons with disabilities
 - persons talking different languages
 - persons from different cultures
 - persons who cannot afford to pay for transports
 - the meetings and events should be organised during the weekends or after school
- Involving the children and young people from the beginning – "get them on board" at an early age
- Young people friendly: the literature should be adapted to children and staff of the structures ready to welcome children.
- Involving **all** schools : it is important not to separate social work from education
- Receiving enough funding to do this work properly and have enough staff
- Providing settings that allow equality
- Providing settings that allow to learn from each other
- Allowing children to have time to be involved and share ideas with others