Call for Tender

Looking for researcher/expert to prepare the background report to Eurochild’s 2018 conference provisionally titled: “Building inclusive participatory democracies: Why start in childhood?”

Deadline for applicants: 19th January 2018

1. Background to the conference

Eurochild’s 2018 conference will be hosted by Society “Our Children” Opatija in Opatija, Croatia on 29-31 October 2018. It will be organised under the high patronage of the President of the Republic of Croatia, in partnership with the city of Opatija.

The aims of the conference are to:-

- Bring positive examples of how public decision-makers at different levels (local, national and European) are respecting the right of children to participate in decisions affecting them, guided by Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular emphasising how these processes engage children who traditionally are less likely to have their voices heard, for example children in public care, children with disabilities, children of migrant background or ethnic minorities.
- Demonstrate and document why involvement of children in decision-making processes brings positive outcomes, both for the children and young people involved, for communities and for society at large, for example by promoting social inclusion and community engagement.
- Develop recommendations for policy makers and practitioners on why and how to strengthen child participation in public decision-making. These recommendations should reinforce implementation of the EC’s 2013 Recommendation on Investing in Children and the 2017 European Pillar of Social Rights2, as well as the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers’ Recommendation 2012 on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18 and the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021)3.
- Be a positive example of child participation in practice, by involving under 18s in the planning, preparation and delivery of the conference, as well as ensuring the event’s accessibility and added-value to participants under 18.

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1 Final conference title will be defined in consultation with the Youth Advisory Group, the Programme Advisory Group (Croatian members) and Eurochild’s Child Participation Reference Group
2 The staff working document accompanying the European Pillar of Social Rights recommends that EU Member States “develop national strategies on children and young people’s participation”. The outcomes of this conference will contribute to elaborating how and why countries should act on this recommendation.
3 The Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021) includes as one of its five priorities the ‘participation of all children’.
The provisional programme outline includes:

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<th>Monday 29 October</th>
<th>Tuesday 30 October</th>
<th>Wednesday 31 October</th>
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<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Arrival (pre-programme for conference children’s advisory group)</td>
<td>Study visits in &amp; around Opatija</td>
<td>Conference plenary including presentations &amp; debate on policy &amp; practice recommendations</td>
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<td>PM</td>
<td>Conference official opening &amp; framing of content &amp; objectives</td>
<td>Workshops selected on basis of abstracts submitted from Eurochild members &amp; partners</td>
<td>Departures</td>
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<td>Evening</td>
<td>Welcome reception</td>
<td>Conference dinner</td>
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**Target audience:** We aim to attract between 250 to 300 participants, including representatives from local authorities, national or international policy makers, academics specialised in children’s rights and child participation, NGOs working with children and families from disadvantaged backgrounds, child rights advocates. We expect that around one third of participants will themselves be young people aged between 10 and 18 years, brought from local projects or organisations where they have already an involvement in decision-making. The conference language is English however we are trying to secure funding to cover costs of interpretation, thereby increasing its accessibility.

**Organisers:** The event is coordinated by Eurochild Secretariat in close collaboration with the hosting partner Society “Our Children” Opatija. The programme is developed in consultation with Eurochild’s child participation reference group, and a ‘programme advisory group’ set up in Croatia by the host partner. A ‘children and young people’s advisory group’ involving 10 young people selected from the Eurochild membership will work in collaboration with Eurochild to co-design, prepare and plan the event programme.

**Practices under the spotlight:** There will be a call for abstracts in Spring 2018 to offer Eurochild members and partners the opportunity to profile positive examples and co-organise workshops on Tuesday afternoon. Nonetheless we already anticipate profiling 3 examples of children’s participation in public decision-making at different levels:

- **(Local)** Children’s city councils are organised regularly throughout Croatia. Eurochild’s conference is organised in parallel to an annual meeting of children’s representatives from across the country. They will be given the opportunity to present highlights from their work during the conference.
- **(City)** Opatija is a recognised ‘child-friendly city’ – we will profile how ‘child-friendly cities’ involve children in decision-making.
- **(Europe-wide)** Together with UNICEF, Eurochild plans to facilitate a Europe-wide consultation with children on ‘The Europe Kids Want’ in 2018, with input from the Eurochild Children’s Council, as a contribution to on-going debates on the future of Europe and as input to the election campaign for European elections in 2019. Whilst the outcomes of this consultation will be formally launched in Brussels on 20th November 2018, the Eurochild conference offers an opportunity to give a pre-view of this work, and discuss how meaningful children’s participation can feed into European policy making.

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4 Eurochild’s Child Participation Reference Group includes NGO and academic members with expertise in child participation and has been set up to support the implementation of Eurochild’s [Child Participation Strategy](https://www.eurochild.org/).
2. Tender specification

The contracted expert is expected to prepare a background paper which will frame the conference debate. The scope and contents of the report will be agreed after selection of the expert based on our combined expertise. However it is envisaged to contain the following elements:-

- **What is the current state-of-the-art in children’s participation in public decision-making?** This will include a meta-analysis of the latest academic and ‘grey’ literature documenting children’s participation in public decision making. The primary focus will be on Europe, including EU, accession and neighbourhood countries, but examples can be brought from outside Europe if they contribute to moving the debate forward. A particular emphasis should be given to how children from disadvantaged backgrounds are supported in voicing their opinions in public decision making processes.

- **How do we convince policy and decision-makers of the value of children’s participation in public decision making?** This will document evidence around the positive impact of children’s participation in public decision-making, both for the children and young people involved, for communities and society as a whole. It will look at ways of monitoring impact, and the value of using indicators to monitor children’s participation.

- **What are the success factors or the barriers to enabling meaningful child participation in public decision making?** This should try to draw out what needs to be in place for child participation to be accessible, inclusive and meaningful, and what are the challenges to scaling up positive practices and allowing children to be active citizens.

- **What are some preliminary recommendations for decision-makers, policy-makers and practitioners?** These recommendations should enable us to guide the content of the conference towards conclusions that can later be used in the collective advocacy of the Eurochild network.

It is very important that the background report is **interesting and easy-to-read**. It is not expected to be an academic paper, but rather an accessible resource which all participants read prior to the event, so that they have a common understanding of the issues to be discussed. Nonetheless it should include references and links to other background reading for those interested to go to the original sources.

The study should also help attract a relevant audience for the conference. A reader-friendly summary of the research study will be included.

3. Timeline

Deadline for applications from experts: 19th January 2018
Selection of expert: 25th January 2018
Finalisation of brief in consultation with the expert: 15th February 2018
Deadline for submission of draft report: 19th April 2018
Review / finalisation: 19-30th April 2018
Expected launch date: May 2018

4. Expertise required

The applicants will be expected to demonstrate they have:-
• Expert knowledge and experience of children’s participation in public decision-making processes and how this is meaningful, inclusive and accessible to children from disadvantaged backgrounds
• Excellent writing skills as evidenced by examples of past reports which are accessible to a wide audience
• Capacity to conduct research and access academic and grey literature – ideally in a number of different languages
• Good understanding of the advocacy goals of the Eurochild network

NB. Only candidates from EU Member States are eligible to participate in this tender.

5. Selection & award criteria

The applicant should submit the following documents by 19th January 2018 to Mieke Schuurman, Senior Policy and Advocacy Coordinator: mieke.schuurman@eurochild.org
• A motivation letter explaining why you are the right candidate for the assignment (no more than 1 page)
• A work plan proposal, including a timeline, outlining how you plan to conduct the assignment
• A CV

The candidate will be selected by the Eurochild secretariat according to the quality of the proposal and individual expertise. We expect the candidate to be notified by 25th January 2018.

6. Price, payment & contract

The maximum award is 4,000 Euro (all taxes included). A contract will be drawn up between Eurochild and the selected candidate. 50% payment can be invoiced on signature of the contract and 50% after approval of the final report.

7. Background documents

• Council of Europe, Aoife Daly, e.o. “Challenges to Children’s Rights Today: What do Children Think? A desktop study on children’s views and priorities to inform the next Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child”, Strasbourg, 2016. Providing an overview of a broad range of research of children’s views from across Europe highlighting the key themes which are identified by the children as important to them. These include 8 themes, of which child participation (in decision making) is one of them.
• Council of Europe, “Child Participation Assessment Tool, Indicators for measuring progress in promoting the right of children and young people under the age of 18 to participate in matters that concern them”. The Tool has been implemented by 3 countries and is currently implemented by another 3 countries.
• Council of Europe Child and Youth Participation Reviews in Finland, Slovakia and Moldova.
• Council of Europe tools on democracy.
• Declaration developed by children and young people for the 2016 Eurochild conference.
• Example of good practices where underprivileged children participate in children’s councils (*Cath Larkins*)
• Anne Crowley and Dan Moxon, background study on youth participation (*Cath Larkins*)