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It is an exciting time to be promoting the rights and welfare of children in Europe. Established in July 2004, Eurochild has grown into an active network of almost 40 organisations from 19 countries in under 3 years. All our member organisations (which include several national umbrella organisations), are working to improve the lives of children and young people in their own constituencies, whether that is at European, national, regional or local level. They believe that being part of this European network brings many benefits to their work whether through the information provided by Eurochild, the access to networking opportunities, or the leverage Eurochild provides in influencing policy at a European, national or regional level.

Certainly there is a growing awareness that what happens in Europe has a direct impact on the lives of children and young people. Even though the European Union has no direct legal competence in the field of children’s rights, Member States are ceding responsibility to the EU to promote better coordination of policies and exchange of best practice. The adoption of the EC’s Communication “Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child” in July 2006 was an important step in this direction. It proposes several actions leading towards the adoption of a comprehensive strategy that will promote and safeguard children’s rights in all the EU’s internal and external policies. It also aims to support the efforts of Member States in this field. Eurochild, alongside several other child rights NGOs, has been actively involved in the lead up to the Communication and its subsequent implementation.

Eurochild’s efforts to highlight the extent and impact of child poverty within the EU appear to be paying off. At the Spring Council meeting in March 2006, Member States committed “to take the necessary measures to rapidly and significantly reduce child poverty, giving all children equal opportunities, regardless of their social background.” Some 20 of the 25 Member States (plus Bulgaria and Romania) identified tackling child and/or family poverty as a particular priority in their national report on strategies for social inclusion and social protection (2006-2008). In its detailed review of these reports, Eurochild identified much room for improvement in the way policies are designed and implemented. However, we are pleased that child poverty is now on the agenda and receiving the attention it deserves.

Eurochild has a key role in bringing the views of children’s organisations and children and young people themselves into the EU arena. We are very grateful to the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities for their continued support for the network, as well as to the small Secretariat in Brussels, headed by a new Secretary General, Jana Hainsworth. Together with Anja Hartwig (Policy and Information Officer) and Marie Dubit (part-time Office Manager), they have enabled the network to continue to go from strength to strength.

Catriona Williams, President
Child Rights

Eurochild’s work is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). As a result, a key focus of its work is to promote and defend child rights within EU legislation, policy and programmes. The publication by the European Commission of the Communication “Towards a European Strategy on the Rights on the Child” in July 2006 was a major step forward in this regard.

Together with other child rights NGOs, Eurochild lobbied to ensure that the Communication takes a broad approach to children's rights. Originally an initiative of Franco Frattini, Commissioner for Justice, Freedom and Security, the Communication was finally published by the College of Commissioners for Fundamental Rights. It is an important step to ensuring child rights are taken seriously across all areas of EU legislation and policy.

NGO Action Group on the EU’s Child Rights Strategy

The NGO Action Group on the EU's Child Rights Strategy represents several hundred NGOs promoting children’s rights inside and outside the EU. It is an informal grouping of NGOs who are committed to working together towards an EU strategy on the Rights of the Child and for the purpose of information sharing. This group is also committed to monitoring the follow-up and implementation of the Communication.

Throughout the year, Eurochild organised and participated in meetings with key EU officials involved drafting or influencing the Communication. In addition to creating its own position paper, Eurochild contributed to a collective response from Brussels NGOs on the Communication. Alongside mainstreaming of children’s rights, the effective participation of children is a key point of common concern to Eurochild and other child rights NGOs.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted in 1989-after more than eighty years of advocacy. Since then, it has been ratified more quickly and by more governments (all except Somalia and the US) than any other human rights instrument. This Convention is also the only international human rights treaty that expressly gives NGOs a role in monitoring its implementation (under Article 45a). The basic premise of the Convention is that children (all human beings below the age of 18) are born with the fundamental freedoms and rights inherent to all human beings. According to the Convention, each national government must provide the Committee on the Rights of the Child with regular updates that detail the state of children’s rights in their country.
Child Poverty

The fight against child poverty and social exclusion is at the core of Eurochild’s work programme. A key element of this is the monitoring of the National Action Plans on Social Inclusion (NAPs/Inclusion) from a children’s rights perspective as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC).

Ending Child Poverty within the EU?
A review of the 2006-2008 national reports on strategies for social protection and social inclusion

This is the title of a report Eurochild produced in 2006. It includes a synthesis report and 23 country reports that analyse the national strategies for social inclusion and social protection (2006-2008) from a child rights perspective. The reviews of the four remaining member states – Italy, Slovakia, Romania & Bulgaria – will follow in early 2007.

Wherever possible, the reviews were carried out by experts, practitioners and/or NGOs in the country being considered. Reviewers focus on the situation of children in each country as well as the existing or planned services for children and families. As a child rights network, Eurochild also explores how the national reports address key challenges identified in the concluding observations of the Committee of the UN CRC.

Most of the national reports on strategies for social protection and social inclusion identify child poverty as a priority. Unfortunately, few member states have referenced children’s rights within the context of the NAPs/Inclusion. There was also a demonstrated lack of commitment shown to including children and young people in the policy development of the national plans as a ‘relevant actor’ or active participant. Even those member states with young people’s rights enshrined by law and policy memorandums on children’s rights didn’t consult with children and young people on the NAPs/Inclusion.

Single parent families, large families and children with special needs were identified in almost all cases as being at an increased risk of poverty and in need of targeted action. Children in care, disabled, Roma and unaccompanied immigrant children were noted in several reports as being particularly vulnerable groups in need of special attention.

"The European Council asks the Member States to take necessary measures to rapidly and significantly reduce child poverty, giving all children equal opportunities, regardless of their social background."

Conclusions of the Spring Summit of the European Council, March 2006

There was a strong focus in many of the reports on early years’ care and education, particularly in the context of encouraging parents to return back to work and the promotion of gender equality in employment policies. The reports also strongly focus on education policies. Reducing school drop-outs and youth unemployment are key policy objectives of nearly all member states. There is a clear emphasis on the need for training and employment-related education and several member states promote non-formal education that focuses on social empowerment of young people.

ANNUAL REPORT 2006 • P5
Social Inclusion & Social Protection

Conference “Policy and practice for social inclusion of children and young people - the role of non-formal and informal learning”

Berlin 14-16 November 2006

Non-formal and informal learning opportunities, provided through child and youth welfare services, make an important contribution to the overall development of a child’s personality. When confronted with poverty and social exclusion, support services that empower children and build self-esteem can prevent the inter-generational inheritance of poverty and help to build successful life strategies. Non-formal and informal learning can help children and young people gain access to, and make better use of, formal education opportunities.

“Non-formal and informal learning activities within the youth field are complementary to the formal education and training system (...) such activities are particularity relevant to young people with fewer opportunities.”

EU Council Resolution on non-formal and informal learning, April 2006

The European conference “Policy and practice for social inclusion of children and young people - the role of non-formal and informal learning“, organised jointly by Eurochild AISBL and its member organisation Arbeitgemeinschaft für Kinder- und Jugendhilfe - AGJ, took place in Berlin on 14-16 November 2006. The event brought together over 120 practitioners, academics, government representatives and policy makers from across the EU. The conference linked three key issues from the EU political agenda that concern children and young people: cooperation on youth policy, the European Youth Pact and the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

Round Table on poverty & social exclusion
16-17th October 2006, Tampere, Finland

“We need to break the chain of inherited poverty … more targeted support for families with children, is needed.”

Commissioner Vladimir Špidla, concluding speech of 5th European Round Table on poverty and social exclusion
The Round Tables are key events in the EU social inclusion calendar. This year’s round table was an opportunity to take stock of the recent national reports on strategies for social inclusion 2006-2008 and highlight some of the emerging key issues. In Finland, six Eurochild representatives were present. These representatives made an important contribution to the workshop on mainstreaming social inclusion. They used the occasion to reinforce the need for a holistic approach to tackling social exclusion among children and young people – insisting that such a framework already exists in the form of the UN CRC.

“Participation is not only a necessary tool to ensure effective policy-making, it is also a means of empowering children and young people and strengthening equal opportunities.”

Jana Hainsworth, Secretary General of Eurochild

Overall, the Tampere Round Table can be considered successful for raising the profile and visibility of children in the EU’s social inclusion agenda. The Portuguese Minister for Labour and Social Solidarity has committed to continuing the cycle of Round Tables in 2007 when Portugal takes over the EU Presidency. The Portuguese Minister has also indicated that the prevention of poverty is a priority that will be addressed especially carefully among the younger generations in an attempt to avoid the reproduction of poverty.

In almost all EU member states the at-risk-of-poverty rate is highest for families with children and young people. For children aged 0-16, the at-risk-of-poverty rate was 20% in 2004; for young people aged 17-24 that figure was 21%. Single-parent and large families represent two populations at greatest risk for poverty.

Figures: Eurostat 2004

Children’s Participation

“State parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.”

Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The right for children to express their own views and to be heard (Article 12) is one of the most challenging articles of the UN CRC, but it is fundamental to the implementation of all the other articles within the Convention.

As part of its work to promote the implementation of the UN CRC in Europe, Eurochild supports the direct involvement and participation of children and young people. It believes that the views and expectations held by children are expressions of the child’s rights as fully-fledged European citizens. Eurochild also believes that enabling children to express their own beliefs is preferable to adults articulating their perceptions of a child’s needs. This is particularly crucial for children at risk of social exclusion, who are among the least likely to have their voices heard.
Why involve us? - Children’s participation in the policy-making process
Eurochild Reception in the European Parliament in Brussels, 7 June 2006

To increase children’s participation and make their voices heard by the decision makers on a European level, Eurochild organised a reception in the European Parliament in June 2006, hosted by Lissy Gröner, MEP (Members of European Parliament). On this occasion, young people from several different European countries presented their views on participation to an audience of some hundred people, including MEPs, representatives of other European Institutions, NGOs and other stakeholders.

The children came from several different projects and organisations:

- the National Children & Youth Board, UK;
- the Youth Migration Service in Lübben, Germany;
- a youth out-reach project in Göppingen, Germany;
- the Children’s Parliament, Cyprus;
- “Funky Dragon”, the Children and Young People’s Assembly, Wales, UK,
- Latvian Save the Children, who participated in Children’s report to UN CRC committee;
- CEBI Foundation, Portugal;
- a centre for unaccompanied minors, Minor Ndako vzw, Belgium.

This event represented a unique opportunity for the children and young people to present their views and concerns at the European level. The children and young people also worked out a “Manifesto”, in which they explain the reasons why they should be involved, the advantages for society, as well as the conditions needed for them to participate. It can be downloaded from the Eurochild website www.eurochild.org.

Eurochild background paper on Children’s participation

Did you know that organisations in several European countries are giving 0-18 year olds an opportunity to get their views heard on issues that affect them and facilitate the participation of children and young people in decision-making at national level?

Eurochild has investigated these processes within its network by talking to:

1. Funky Dragon, the Children and Youth Parliament of Wales, United Kingdom
2. National Children’s Bureau (NCB), England
3. The Pancyprian Coordinating Committee for the Protection and Welfare of Children (PCCPWC), Cyprus
4. Children’s Human Rights Centre of Albania (CRCA)
5. ToeKan /ChangeTout ASBL, Belgium
At the end of 2006 Eurochild drafted and disseminated a short background paper illustrating these core principles of the UN CRC and how they are being implemented in practice within the Eurochild network. The paper aims to give some concrete examples of how our members work with the UN CRC in their daily work. It can be downloaded from Eurochild’s website www.eurochild.org.

Child Care

Work Shop “Who Cares?” at Social Platform Annual Conference
6 December 2006, Brussels

Who Cares about our dependents, be they children, disabled people or the elderly? This question and those of who?, how? and where? – cares – were debated during a workshop which took place during the annual conference of the Platform of Social NGOs in December 2006 in Brussels. It was co-organised by the European Women’s Lobby (EWL), the European Federation of Unpaid Parents and Carers at Home (FEFAF) and Eurochild. The workshop was attended by almost 50 participants of the Social Platform conference.

On this occasion Eurochild presented some main points relating to care which are important to its members. These points include, the quality of services (whether public or private), the training and recognition of professionals and, of course, the rights of the child. The animated discussion that took place amongst the panellists, including input by the audience, added important points to the issues that were initially brought up by the presenting organisations. An outline of the workshops’ main points, as well as a list of suggestions deemed necessary for progress was presented at the afternoon “Ideas café,” organised by the Social Platform, but can also be found on www.eurochild.org.

Children in Europe is a network of 11 national children’s magazines that have joined to produce one magazine which is published in 11 European countries and 10 languages. It writes about services for children, their families and all people and organisations concerned with these services and children’s issues. Children in Europe has drafted a discussion paper on “Young children and their services: developing a European approach”. Join the discussion until 30 June 2007 on: http://www.childrenineurope.org/eng_discuss.php
Demographic Change

In the face of unprecedented demographic changes in Europe, the European Commission launched a consultation in 2005 on how to build inter-generational solidarity and approach existing challenges.

In January 2006, Eurochild participated in the First Forum on the demographic future of Europe, which took place in Brussels. After considering the input of contributing organisations, the European Commission published a Communication on "The demographic future of Europe - from challenge to opportunity" in October 2006. The publication focuses on the importance of quality child care services, the case of child carers at home, the issue of flexicurity, social inclusion and participation as well as the necessity of consultation with civil society. Eurochild has also reacted to this Communication with a Position Paper.

During recent years fertility rates in all EU member states have fallen below those needed to maintain population levels. This means that by 2030 there will be 10 million fewer young people than there are today. At the same time Europeans are living longer, so by 2050 the over-65s are expected to make up over 30% of Europe’s total population. This would give a dependency ratio of 50% - meaning only two people of working age (15-64) for every older person or child.
There are several ways through which Eurochild disseminates information on current events and developments in the area of child’s rights at the European level.

Firstly Eurochild sends out a weekly Info-Flash to all its member organisations. This includes the latest news of what is happening at the European level in the area of children, poverty and social affairs, funding opportunities, as well as upcoming Eurochild activities. This electronic news-flash is reserved for our member organisations and is also available on the members’ only pages of the website www.eurochild.org.

The monthly e-News Bulletin reports on policy developments related to children’s issues and child poverty and social exclusion in particular, at the international, national and regional levels. The publication also gives information about relevant research, publications, conferences and other activities. The e-News Bulletin is more widely distributed. Its recipients include Commission officials, MEPs, representatives of other NGOs, national governments, etc. Anybody can sign up to this e-bulletin via the Eurochild website.

The Eurochild website www.eurochild.org is now available in both English and French. Interested public can find information about Eurochild, its policy areas, areas of activity and other publications. Documents available online include the bi-annual Newsletter (published in electronic and paper format) which is also sent to Eurochild’s member organisations and other subscribers.

During 2006, Eurochild also contributed Articles to several publications, including magazines such as Children in Europe, Social Voices and EAPN Network News. They can all be found on our website, as well as all the Policy Papers issued by Eurochild.

Eurochild’s mailing database currently contains over 1200 contacts, including politicians, MEPs and officials in the European Commission. The database is used to spread information about specific activities, events and position papers. The database is also used to distribute our monthly e-News Bulletins and bi-annual Newsletters.
Eurochild’s membership grew from 32 member organisations in 16 European countries in the beginning of 2006 to 39 members in 19 countries by the end of the year.

Members have the opportunity to meet at least twice a year through the annual General Assembly and Annual Conference.

Eurochild is an active member of the European Anti-Poverty Network and the Platform of Social NGO’s. At the national level, many of our members lead the anti-child poverty alliances/campaigns and child policy advocacy strategies which bring together a wide range of agencies from the NGO and statutory sectors within their countries. The diverse experiences and roles of our members allows us contact with a wide range of people, thus spreading our message farther and increasing our ability to influence policy both at the national and European levels.

Because child poverty and social exclusion of children is a “horizontal” issue (one whose importance spans innumerable social issues) Eurochild has close contacts with the other European networks dealing with young people, the homeless, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, bilingualism, etc. Eurochild plans to intensify and expand its network of links and contacts. Eurochild will also continue to work in partnership with other organisations active in the field of children’s issues, especially in view of the Commission’s activities in the field of children’s rights (see page 5).

On a European level, Eurochild monitors the work of the Council of Europe, especially concerning its programme “Building a Europe for & with children”. Maintaining the links it formed when known as the “European Forum for Child Welfare,” Eurochild re-applied and was granted membership to the International Forum for Child Welfare. Also at the International level, Eurochild has actively participated in several meetings organised by UNICEF.
About Eurochild

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

Our aims are to promote the welfare and rights of children and young people by:

• producing, developing and sharing information on policy and practice;
• monitoring and influencing policy development at the European level;
• developing interest groups and partnerships between members in European countries;
• developing partnerships with other European associations that share common goals;
• influencing and making recommendations to international institutions such as the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council of Europe and the United Nations;
• supporting and developing the capacity of members; empowering children and young people to make their views heard.

Structure

Management Board
The members of Eurochild’s Management Board are elected every 2 years by the General Assembly. It meets 4-5 times a year and currently consists of 5 people:

• President: Catriona Williams, Chief Executive, Children in Wales, UK
• Secretary: Ene Tomberg, President, Estonian Union for Child Welfare, Estonia
• Treasurer: Ninetta Kazantzis, International Relations Secretary, Pan-cyprian Coordinating Committee for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Cyprus
• Members: Ulrike Wisser, Project Officer, Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kinder- und Jugendhilfe-AGJ, Germany; Maarit Kuikka, International Officer, Central Union for Child Welfare, Finland

Secretariat
The Eurochild Secretariat is based in Brussels and employed 4 people in 2006: Jana Hainsworth, Secretary General; Anja Härtwig, Information & Policy Development Officer; Marie Dubit, Office Manager (part time 3/5); Ariane Zeba, Finance Officer (part time 1/5 during 3 months).

General Assembly
The General Assembly of Eurochild meets at least once a year. On this occasion representatives of all Eurochild member organisations come together and decide about statutory questions concerning the organisation.

Policy Working Group
The policy working group met twice in 2006. These meetings were informal advising sessions held by Eurochild members that contributed to the development of Eurochild policies.
A. Full members

Austria: Vorarlberger Kinderdorf GmbH - (www.kinderdorf.cc)
Belgium: Minor Ndako; Young Lives/Toekan (www.toekan.be);
Cyprus: Pancyprian Coordinating Committee for the Protection and Welfare of Children
Denmark: Joint Council for Child Issues (Bornesagens Faellesrad) (www.boernesagen.dk)
Estonia: Estonian Union for Child Welfare (www.lastekaitselliit.ee); Tallinn Children Support Centre (www.lastetugi.ee)
EU wide: Dyslexia International - Tools and Technologies (www.ditt-online.org); Europe’s Children Our concern (www.ecoc.be); SOS Kinderdorf International — International Continental Office for Western Europe (www.sos-childrensvillages.org)
Germany: Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kinder - und Jugendhilfe - AGJ (www.agj.de)
Greece: Association for the Psychosocial Health of Children and Adolescents – Connect Helpline; Panhellenic Association of members of one parent families
Hungary: Family, Child, Youth Non-Profit Association (www.csagyi.ngo.hu); KEK Kev Konal Gyermekkrizis Alapítvány (www.kek-vonal.hu); National Association of Large Families (www.noe.hu)
Ireland: Arts for Peace Foundation (Ltd) (www.artsforpeace.ie); Barretstown (www.barretstown.org); Children’s Rights Alliance (www.childrensrights.ie); One Family (www.onefamily.ie)
Latvia: Latvian Save the Children (www.glabietbernus.lv)
Luxemburg: Ombuds - Comité for the Rights of the Child (www.ork.lu)
Portugal: CEBI - Foundation to Communitarian Development (www.fcebi.org)
Romania: Association P.A.V.E.L. (www.associatiapavel.home.ro)
Slovenia: Ecological-Cultural Association for a Better World (www.forbetterworld.com)
The Netherlands: National Youth Institute (www.nizw.nl)
United Kingdom: Children in Northern Ireland (www.ci-ni.org.uk); Children in Scotland (www.childreninscotland.org.uk); Children in Wales (www.childreninwales.org.uk); National Children’s Bureau (www.ncb.org.uk); National Council of Voluntary Child Care Organisations (www.ncvcco.org); NIPPA - The Early Years Organisation (www.nippa.org)

B. Honorary members

Belgium: Mr Eugeen Verhellen - Faculteit Psychologische en Pedagogische Wetenschappen
# BALANCE SHEET

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| **LIABILITIES** |       |       |
| **Equity**      |       |       |
| Own funds       | 4.008 | 5.564 |

| **Grants**      |       |       |
| EC              | 67.701 | 29.855 |

| **Current Liabilities** |       |       |
| Trade Account payables | 30.218 | 36.421 |
| Trade accruals        | 1.551  | 6.532 |
| Other payables        | 17.181 | 14.385 |
| Social liabilities    | 23.488 | 7.320 |
| **Sub-total**         | 72.438 | 64.658 |
| **Total**             | 144.146 | 100.077 |

# Income & expenditure statement

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<td>12.501</td>
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Eurochild AISBL is an international non-profit making association, which aims to promote the rights and welfare of children and young people at European and national level. The work of Eurochild AISBL is underpinned by the principles enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This Annual Report has been produced with the financial support of the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Commission.