Children’s Rights in the EU Budget 2014 – 2020: Making Children Visible

The Children’s Rights Action Group (CRAG) is a partnership of International NGOs, including Eurochild, European Juvenile Justice Observatory, Plan International, Save the Children, SOS Children’s Villages and World Vision, signatories to this statement. Our aim is to ensure that the rights of the child are protected, respected and fulfilled in EU policy and legislation. We strongly believe that the EU can have a substantial and positive impact on the lives of children. We have therefore warmly welcomed EU commitments towards children’s rights and urge the EU to translate its commitments into the next Multiannual Financial Framework for the period 2014–2020.

From commitment to allocation
Article 3 of the Lisbon Treaty explicitly recognises the promotion of children’s rights in internal and external affairs as an objective of the EU. Article 24 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights reaffirms the EU’s commitment to the rights of the child, providing a political mandate for action. The EU’s dedication to promote children’s rights is further shown in the EC Communications ‘Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child’ and the ‘EU Agenda on the Rights of the Child’, which note that children’s rights must be fully taken into account in all actions of the EU.

CRAG urges the EU to demonstrate its commitment towards children’s rights in the EU budget 2014-2020 by ensuring both mainstreaming and allocation of sufficient funding to child rights programming. Moreover, expenditure on children must not be hindered by the impact of the financial crisis.

The General Comment 5 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child recognises that Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) play a significant role in safeguarding, promoting and implementing children’s rights, both within the EU and in developing countries. Child rights organisations and children’s networks need to be supported to help implement the EU’s commitment to children and to ensure that they can continue their work in safeguarding, promoting and implementing children’s rights and thus help achieve the EU’s objectives with respect to children’s rights. CSOs can bring added value in terms of building capacity of duty-bearers to meet their child rights obligations. CRAG therefore urges the EU to provide adequate funding in the EU budget 2014–2020 to support CSOs.

From allocation to monitoring
At present it is not possible to monitor EU spending on children and children’s right, since it is unclear how much money is allocated and disbursed, and on which policies it is spent. Evidently, expenditure on children’s rights should be monitored, so that money is spent wisely and has a maximum positive effect on the lives of children in Europe and in developing countries; for this the implementation of a monitoring mechanism is required that is specifically designed to assess the impact of EU expenditure on children’s rights. CRAG asks the EC for disaggregated, timely and comparable data on child specific spending, so that the effectiveness of EU’s policies and expenditure can be assessed.