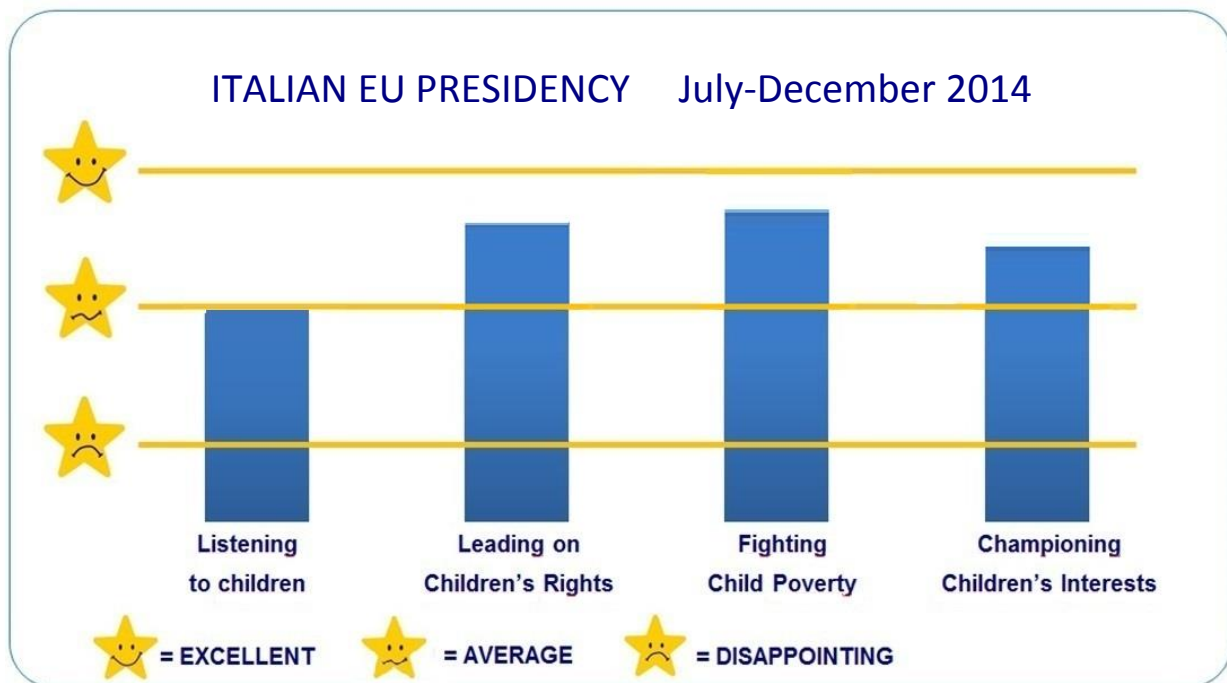




# EU PRESIDENCY SCORECARD

## Performance assessment of the Italian EU Presidency from a Child Rights perspective

The Italian Presidency accorded a particular attention to the mid-term review of the Europe 2020 Strategy focusing on the poverty and social exclusion target. The Presidency raised the utmost importance of striking a balance between the economic and social dimensions within the governance process. They also promoted investing in human capital as one of the strategies to achieve the targets. The Council of the European Union encouraged Member States to step up efforts in investing in children by focusing on the implementation of the [Investing in Children Recommendation](#), and invited the Commission to develop a renewed EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child. In addition, the Council itself committed to a fundamental rights approach, as well as raising political visibility of the respect for children’s rights.



During their 6 month tenure of the EU Presidency, Member States have an important responsibility to ensure that the rights and well-being of children remain high on the EU political agenda. Children represent 20% of our present, but 100% of the future. Strong, genuine commitment to children’s rights and well-being is an investment in the future; it is also an obligation to which all Member States have signed up under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This is the eighth in a series of assessments of EU Presidencies. It assesses performance on four criteria: listening to children, vision and leadership for strong children’s rights strategy, action and cooperation at EU level to fight child poverty, and children’s interests in the Presidency programme.

This scorecard evaluates the extent to which a Member State promotes children’s rights during their tenure of the 6-month EU Presidency. It does not reflect how well the country fares in its overall treatment of and investment in children and young people.

Find this and all other EU Presidency Scorecards at <http://www.eurochild.org/policy/eu-watch/eu-presidencies-scorecards/>

## DID THEY LISTEN TO CHILDREN?

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From 13 to 15 October 2014, the Italian Presidency, together with youth stakeholders, hosted the [EU Youth Conference in Rome](#). Young people and policy makers discussed **youth empowerment for political participation, and the promotion of young people's access to rights** with the view to enhance young people's autonomy and participation in social life. The [Joint Conclusions on "Young People's access to rights"](#) recommend that the EU and Member States appoint an independent ombudsperson for youth rights, raise awareness about rights and participation through citizenship education, support to youth organisations and NGOs, and outreach to disadvantaged young people.

The outcome of the conference fed into the Council [Conclusions on promoting young's people's access to rights in order to foster their autonomy and participation in civil society](#). Even though the conclusions called on the EU and Member States to promote measures to support young people's autonomy and well-being, and tackling and preventing all forms of discrimination, they lack real ambition and specific ways how to meaningfully deliver those goals.

## DID THEY LEAD ON THE EU CHILD RIGHTS AGENDA?

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In November 2014, at the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the adoption of the UNCRC, the Council [adopted Conclusions on the promotion and protection of the rights of the child](#). The Ministers committed themselves to apply a fundamental rights approach to proposals related to children's rights and increase political visibility of the respect for the rights of the child. The Conclusions invited the Commission to develop a **renewed EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child**, and support Member States in the development of an integrated approach to child protection systems, as well as prioritise policy measures that prevent and combat child poverty and social exclusion. To effectively tackle child poverty in the context of the Europe 2020, they called on Member States to step up efforts, in particular, by implementing the Recommendation on Investing in Children. They also encouraged Member States to consider signing and ratifying the three Optional Protocols to the UNCRC.



Between 6 and 7 November, the Italian Presidency and the European Commission jointly organised a [High level event 'Non-discrimination and Equality, Shaping the future of equality policies in the EU'](#). The conference looked at the Review of Europe 2020, arguing for better streamlining of equality, diversity, and non-discrimination within the Strategy and its related documents.



Between 10 and 11 November 2014, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), together with the Italian Presidency, held the annual [Fundamental Rights Conference](#), this time on the **fundamental rights and migration to the EU**. With regards to children, the participants highlighted the need for a thorough observance of the core principles of the UNCRC, as well as the provisions of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU.

## DID THEY STRENGTHEN EU COOPERATION TO FIGHT AGAINST CHILD POVERTY

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On 20 November, the Italian Presidency contributed as speaker to the side event 'Investing In Children: Breaking The Cycle Of Disadvantage' organised by the [EU Alliance for Investing In Children](#) within the [Fourth Annual Convention of the European Platform Against Poverty and Social Exclusion](#). The Presidency representative reiterated the need for effective implementation of the Recommendation on Investing in Children at national level, including through the use of the European Social Fund. For its monitoring at EU level the development of further child well-being indicators and closer cooperation between civil society and government representatives were encouraged.



On 16 October, [the Council](#) held a policy debate on the **mid-term review of the Europe 2020 Strategy** and the European Semester. It was agreed that the Strategy, as well as its goals, were the right long-term framework needed for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The Ministers called for a better coordination and balance between economic, fiscal and social policies, this, however had little impact on the launch of the 2015 European Semester.



In its report the **Social Protection Committee** recommended that Member States step up their investment in children, so that human capital can develop to its full potential. Member States shall do that by adopting a preventative and integrated approach which encompasses policies that support the employment of parents, reduce in-work poverty and ensure a minimum income which protects families and children against poverty and social exclusion. Access to high quality, affordable and inclusive Early Childhood Education and Care services, health care, education, adequate and affordable housing and other social services is essential, especially for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.



On 11 December, the Council also adopted Conclusions on the 20-year review of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the **Beijing Platform for Action**, raising the issue of increasing overall poverty affecting women and girls in vulnerable situations, as well as the need to ensure empowerment of women and girls, and to prevent and fight against violence against women and girls. Unfortunately delivering on the agreed actions has reached a disappointing halt over the last years.



On 17 and 18 October, in the context of the Italian Presidency, the Council of Europe held a high-level conference on social rights, with the focus on the **European Social Charter** (ESC). Among issues discussed were austerity measures in times of crisis, especially the impact on social rights, citizen's participation, and the ESC's contribution to overcoming the crisis.



Even though not directly mentioning child poverty, the Presidency organised an online public consultation and an international event, with the aim to advance the definition of the European agenda in the field of the Social Economy, highlighting its role in enhancing economic growth, social cohesion and social innovation.

#### **DID THEY CHAMPION CHILDREN'S INTERESTS THROUGHOUT THEIR PROGRAMME?**

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On 14 and 15 October the Presidency organised a conference 'Youth Guarantee first results: Support of the European Social Fund and the Youth Employment Initiative to the Youth Guarantee Schemes', aimed at comparing the first Member States experiences and the international perspectives of the Youth Guarantee. The workshops examined the areas of intervention of the Youth Guarantee and how the European Social Fund and the Youth Employment Initiative support it.



In November, the Council also discussed specific measures to promote **sport and physical activity** at school age. It was concluded that, in general, physical activity not only contributes to good health, but also develops principles and concepts such as fair play and respect, as well as social awareness and better academic results.



Under the auspices of the Italian Ministry of Health and in the context of the Italian Presidency, European Conference on Youth Mental Health: from continuity of psychopathology to continuity of care (STraMeHS), took place in Venice between 16 and 18 December. It aimed at raising awareness on youth mental health and promoting the development of integrated and continuous models of care and functioning of mental health services targeted to the specific needs of youth.

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*Eurochild is a network of organisations and individuals working in and across Europe to promote the rights and well-being of children and young people. Our work is guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and work in respect of its underlying principles.*



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