



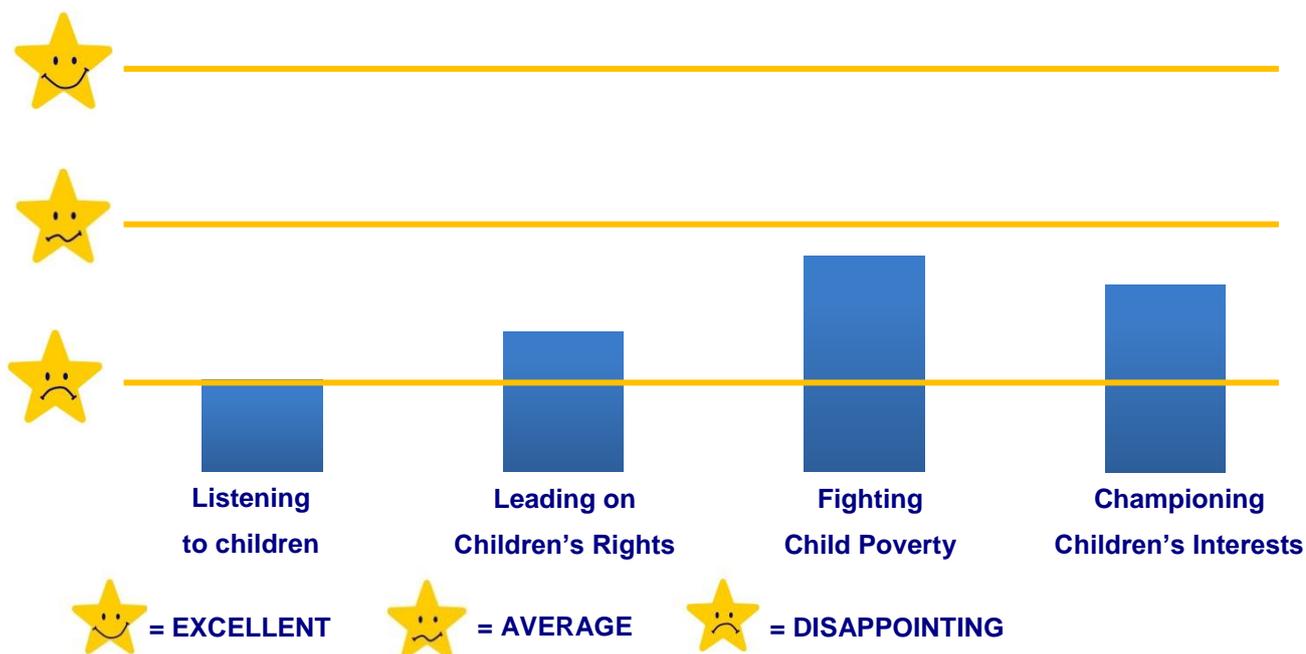
## Assessment of the EU Presidency Performance from a Child Rights perspective

During their 6 month tenure of the EU Presidency, member states have an important responsibility to ensure the rights and welfare of children remain high on EU political agenda. Children represent 20% of our present but 100% of the future. Strong, genuine commitment to children’s rights and welfare is an investment in the future; it is also an obligation to which all member states have signed up through their ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This is the third in a series of assessments of EU Presidencies. It assesses performance on 4 criteria:

- The extent to which they listened to, and involved children and young people themselves;
- Their vision and leadership for a strong children’s rights strategy at EU level;
- Their support for stronger action and cooperation at EU level to fight child poverty;
- The extent to which children’s interests are reflected in the broad Presidency programme.

### POLISH EU PRESIDENCY July - December 2011



#### DID THEY LISTEN TO CHILDREN?

 In the Warsaw EU Youth Conference<sup>1</sup> youth delegates and directors general from member states agreed on joint recommendations for the mobility of and cooperation between young people from the EU and EU neighboring countries. Additional funding was requested for programmes and grant schemes to support mobility and participation.

 Plans of the Polish President’s Office to organise a EU Presidency event on the right of the child to be heard did not succeed due to limited time and lack of financial resources.

<sup>1</sup> [EU-Youth Conference of the Polish Presidency - Joint Recommendations](#), 5-7 September 2011

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

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-  Poland did not organise the bi-annual meeting of the intergovernmental group Europe de l'Enfance leading to an increasing gap in the follow-up of national policies and EU cooperation on childhood policies.
-  Member states agreed<sup>2</sup> to step up efforts to combat sexual exploitation of children and child pornography in the internet recalling that protecting children against the danger of sexual abuse is an important element in the strategy of children's rights.
-  Children rights were profiled at a conference on missing persons relating to on-going work on European hotlines for missing children and on trafficking in human beings.

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

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-  In the first Annual Convention of the European Platform against Poverty tackling child poverty was once more recognized key to reach the Europe 2020 target of lifting 20 million people off poverty. The reiterated commitment towards a Commission Recommendation on child poverty and well-being in 2012 was welcome. However, overall the Convention had little political impact or follow-up and limited meaningful participation of stakeholders.
-  A conference on the Innovative Responses to the Social Impact of the crisis draw attention to examples of implemented social policy experimentations related to children<sup>3</sup>. Nonetheless an over-reliance on social experimentation in Europe's exit strategy to the crisis, risks diverting attention away from structural measures to address social inequalities.

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

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-  Recommendations<sup>4</sup> adopted on the reconciliation of work and family life called for better coordination of employment and family friendly policies and recognised that investing in early education and care contribute to lay the foundation of children's future learning, and to combat child and family poverty. However, the overriding focus is on access to the labour market and gender equality; children's well-being is not considered.
-  Children's health was on the spotlight with Council Conclusions adopted on the prevention, early diagnosis and treatment of chronic respiratory diseases in children and on early detection and treatment of communication disorders in children<sup>5</sup>. The emphasis is on the need to further develop preventive action and support research. However, the selection of a few priority diseases and disorders undermines a more holistic approach to addressing health inequalities among children.
-  The Presidency encouraged member states and stakeholders to adopt measures and enhance cooperation to ensure a higher level of protection for children using online and digital media<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> [Council conclusions on combating sexual exploitation of children and child pornography in the Internet - strengthening the effectiveness of police activities in Member States and Third countries](#), 13-14 December 2011

<sup>3</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=88&langId=en&furtherEvents=yes&eventsId=358>

<sup>4</sup> [Trio presidency \(PL/DK/CY\) Declaration, informal meeting of Gender Equality and Family Affairs Ministers](#), 21 October 2011

[Council Conclusions on Reconciliation of work and family life as a precondition for equal participation in the labour market](#), 1-2 December 2011

[Council conclusions on Managing demographic challenges: Institutional cooperation of the Member States on demographic issues and reconciliation of work and family life – towards compatibility of career and family](#), 3 October 2011

<sup>5</sup> [Council conclusions on prevention, early diagnosis and treatment of chronic respiratory diseases in children](#), 1- 2 December 2011

[Council conclusions on early detection and treatment of communication disorders in children, including the use of e-Health tools and innovative solutions](#), 1 & 2 December 2011

<sup>6</sup> [Council conclusions on the protection of children in the digital world](#), 28 & 29 November 2011