The European and international context

The conference will reflect on implementation of the 2013 European Commission Recommendation ‘Investing in Children: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage’ and the broader Social Investment Package. It will look at how EU structural and investment funds can be better deployed in the next programming period to stimulate reforms and develop innovative practice.

The event is also set within the context of States obligations to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which celebrates 25 years in 2014. According to Article 4, all States Parties ‘shall undertake measures [to implement the UNCRC] to the maximum extent of their available resources.’ The UN-CRC Committee has agreed to develop a General Comment on ‘Public Spending to Realize Children’s Rights’ to which this conference can provide valuable input.

ORGANISERS

Eurochild is a network of organisations and individuals that promote the rights and well-being of children and young people in Europe. Their work is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children’s Rights and well-being, as well as child & youth participation are amongst their key priorities. www.eurochild.org

Hope and Homes for Children Romania focuses on transforming a child protection system based on institutional care, by preventing child separation from families, and developing family-based alternatives. They believe that attachment, love, individual care and stimulation are essential for every child. www.hhc.ro

PROGRAMME ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The organisers are supported by the Programme Advisory Committee who support the development of the conference content: Hope and Homes for Children (UK), FONPC (Romania), ChildPact, UNESCO Chair, Child and Family Research Centre (Ireland), Universal Education Foundation (Belgium) and UNICEF Romania.

REGISTRATION FEES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Normal fee</th>
<th>Early bird fee (until 17 Oct.)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eurochild members / contributors</td>
<td>220 €</td>
<td>180 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-members</td>
<td>250 €</td>
<td>210 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special rate for Romanian delegates</td>
<td>75 €</td>
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</tbody>
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The fee covers for lunches, Welcome reception & Conference Dinner.

REGISTRATION FORM


2 weeks prior the Annual Conference participants will receive an e-mail giving the opportunity to indicate their workshop, focus group, poster session, study visit of preference.

MORE INFORMATION

Conference hashtag #EurochildConf

CONTACT

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info@eurochild.org

This event is supported under the European Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (2007-2013). This programme is managed by the Directorate-General for Employment, social affairs and equal opportunities of the European Commission. The views expressed by Eurochild do not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.

Children First

Better Public Spending for Better Outcomes for Children & Families

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Three cross-cutting themes

EVALUATION METHODOLOGIES

We will explore what is happening across Europe in relation to ‘evidence-based’ practice and explain its role in social policy. We will look at approaches to understanding evaluation evidence, the hierarchy of evidence and the role of Randomized Controlled Trials in programme evaluation. Invited experts will bring their insights and experience to the table. We aim to build the case for a more pluralist approach to evaluation, and a shift from evidence-based practice to practice-based evidence, from what works to why it works.

SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT (SROI)

We will zoom in on the pressure, in times of austerity, to demonstrate returns on investment in children’s rights and well-being. While there are plenty of cost-effectiveness studies calculating the economic value of return of specific interventions for children in specific contexts, there are few studies which calculate the broader social return on investing in systemic changes towards child-centred policies. The discussion will focus on how to quantify long-term outcomes related to investment in child and family services that prevent family breakdown and separation and ensure high quality alternative care options. Invited experts will give an overview of existing SROI studies in adjacent areas, mapping current knowledge gaps, as well as demonstrate the power and added value of SROI arguments in achieving deinstitutionalization reforms.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Achieving better outcomes for children and families is a common responsibility across all sectors of society. Nonetheless the public, private and voluntary sectors have different roles to play. Clarity on the different respective roles and responsibilities and ensuring effective cooperation is key. Under this theme we will address important questions around the role of social innovation, social entrepreneurship and social enterprise and the opportunities and threats this trend poses to improving outcomes for children and families. We will address questions around the role of business and the private sector and issues around procurement and commissioning of children’s services.
The conference journey

WEDNESDAY, 26 NOVEMBER, 15:00 - 18:30
INSPIRING
Following the welcome, our keynote speakers will share their formidable political and/or academic leadership in field of investment in children. Our focus is on inspiring participants through sharing their knowledge and vision for children and young people in their country, in Europe and in the world.

WELCOME
- Jana Hainsworth, Eurochild Secretary General
- Stefan Darabus, Director of Hope and Homes for Children Romania

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:
- Prof. Frank Vandenburg, Former Minister of Social Affairs Belgium, Professor at Leuven and Amsterdam
- Jorge Cardona Llorens, Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and Rapporteur for the upcoming General Comment on Best Use of Resources
- Norah Gibbons, Chairperson, Child and Family Agency, Ireland

THURSDAY, 27 NOVEMBER, 10:00 - 13:00
DEEPENING
On Day 2, our 3 ‘resource persons’ will start the day by introducing the three cross-cutting themes of the conference: evaluation methodologies, social return on investment (SROI) and public-private partnership. Each is an expert in his/her own right and will guide the conversation in the following mini-plenaries. The speakers are selected to help deepening participants understanding of each theme.

RESOURCE PERSONS
- Pat Dolan, UNESCO Chair and Director Child and Family Research Centre School of Political Science and Sociology NUI Galway, Ireland
- Representative of Public Finance and Local Governance, Social Inclusion, Policy and Budgeting section Policy and Strategy, UNICEF New York

THURSDAY, 27 NOVEMBER, 14:00 - 16:00
DEBATING
The expert speakers are invited to guide focus group discussions with participants who want to know more about what they heard in the mini-plenaries. We encourage debating around the key issues and questions arising.

THURSDAY, 27 NOVEMBER, 16:30 - 18:00
BUILDING
Day 3 starts with a panel debate bringing together child rights activists, civil society network leaders, funders and government representatives. Our focus is on building more effective advocacy for children’s rights to influence and monitor public spending. We will address questions around the added-value of child rights networks, the role of civil dialogue, if and how public money should support networks, and how to evaluate their work and impact.

PANELISTS
- Tanya Ward, Children’s Rights Alliance, Ireland
- George Bogdanov, Bulgarian National Network for Children
- Mirela Oprea, Child Pact
- Valeriu Nicolaie, Child Rights and Roma activist
- Joost Van Haelst, Children’s Rights Coordinator of the Flemish government
- Bjørn Bredesen, Former Deputy Director General in the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion in Norway

THURSDAY, 27 NOVEMBER, 20:00 - 22:30
SPEAKERS
Three ‘resource persons’ on the cross-cutting themes – SROI, evaluation methodologies, public-private partnership
- Mark Waddington, CEO Hope and Homes for Children
- Representative of DG Employment
- Maria Herczog, Eurochild President, Member of the UN Committee of the Rights of the Child

FRIDAY, 28 NOVEMBER, 09:00 - 11:00
VISONING
Our final session is dedicated to visioning. From what we’ve learnt, what can we do together to ensure public spending improves outcomes for children and families in Europe? What are the opportunities and threats offered through the European Union or the United Nations that will help or hinder the changes we want to see? From our three cross-cutting themes, what is the direction of travel we want to see and how can we influence that?

SPEAKERS
Three ‘resource persons’ on the cross-cutting themes – SROI, evaluation methodologies, public-private partnership
- Mark Waddington, CEO Hope and Homes for Children
- Representative of DG Employment
- Maria Herczog, Eurochild President, Member of the UN Committee of the Rights of the Child

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