



European Children's Network

EURONET

NEWSLETTER

Issue 36, Winter 2009

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Editorial by EURONET MANAGER, ELIZABETH NILAND

Dear Readers,

Firstly I would like to introduce myself as the new Manager of the European Children's Network, having taken over from outgoing Secretary General Mieke Schuurman in January of this year. I am very happy to begin my work with EURONET in this capacity and hope to continue to build upon the strong work of the organization.

2009 is a very exciting and important year for children's rights, not least as we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the birth of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in November. In addition, continuing work at the EU level towards a strategy on the rights of the child will be a priority area for EURONET's work throughout 2009. As well as taking part in the EU Forum on Children's Rights in December 2008, EURONET is happy to announce that it has been selected as one of the 13 permanent members of the EU Forum child rights civil society group. More information on this can be found in the newsletter.

2009 will see the election of new Members of European Parliament (MEPs) in June, as well as the formation of a new Commission in the autumn. Amidst all these changes it is imperative that children's rights be kept high on the agenda and that MEPs be committed to advancing children's rights in their work mandates. The time to act is now – advocacy work in this area is of great importance. To this end EURONET is organizing a European Parliament election training for its members on 3 & 4 March to provide them with the tools necessary to carry out effective advocacy work on children's rights towards MEP candidates in their countries. In the coming weeks a joint EURONET and Eurochild manifesto towards European Parliament Member candidates will be finalized, calling upon future MEPs to commit themselves to ensuring and advancing children's rights at the EU level. This will be made available on our website.

On top of all these activities, EURONET is committed to following up its 2008 activities, particularly its recently launched campaign to ban corporal punishment in the home. An update of the launch event, held on the 10 December in the European Parliament, can be found in the newsletter. Our work here has just begun and we encourage you all to continue promoting the stop corporal punishment campaign and to make use of the many resources we have on the website www.stopcorporalpunishment.org in your advocacy work on this issue.

I look forward to working with you on these and many other issues.

Elizabeth Niland
Manager
European Children's Network

Welcome to the European Children's Network quarterly newsletter.

To read the newsletter on our website, [click here](#).

Please click on the links to view more information.

Feel free to [email your questions and comments](#).



EURONET Activities

Campaign to ban Corporal Punishment Against Children in the Home



On the 10th of December the European Children's Network launched its campaign to ban corporal punishment in the home across Europe, in the European Parliament under the patronage of MEP Lissy Groner.

Guests included MEP Patrizia Toia (Italy), MEP Marusya Lyubcheva (Bulgaria), MEP Cornelis Visser (Netherlands), representatives from EURONET's members and others. Vice President of the European Commission Margot Wallstrom, who fully supports the campaign, sent a video message aired at the launch, stating that the "Campaign to ban corporal punishment is a very important step to promote and protect children's rights now." She also referred to the fact that "violence against children is happening all around us."



EURONET's Campaign to ban Corporal Punishment in the home is financed by the EU's Daphne III programme

referred to the fact that violence against children is happening all around... violence in the family and school is worryingly on the increase.' With this she stressed that the "Commission is committed to fighting violence against children and to promoting and protecting their rights."



The launch included the active participation of 6 children from NSPCC UK, Children are Unbeatable Alliance UK and Save the Children Romania giving their opinions and views on the issue of corporal punishment and violence against children, via visual presentations and stories. Their participation added much weight to the event and they raised many interesting points during the panel discussions. The children also had the chance to meet with MEP Jill Evans (UK) and MEP Richard Corbett (UK) earlier in the day to discuss the issue.

Secretary General of the European Children's Network Mieke Schuurman stated: "Home needs to be a safe place for children: corporal punishment against children in the home must stop now! The EU's 100 million children have a right to be protected from all forms of corporal punishment, EU institutions have to add their support to this call and ensure that all EU Member States review their legislation and practice."

The EURONET position paper "Ending Corporal Punishment against Children within the Home" can be downloaded [here](#).

For more information check out the campaign website: www.stopcorporalpunishment.org, where you can sign up to the EURONET statement of support!

European Forum on the Rights of the Child

The third European Forum on the rights of the child took place on 9th December 2008 and focused on the question of child participation in the EU Strategy drafting and implementation as well as on the issue of combating violence against children.

Thirteen permanent seats, among which EURONET, were officially allocated to civil society after a selection process.

EURONET welcomes the European Commission's endorsement of the Steering Group's proposals to have child participation and violence against children as priority issues in the EU Forum's agenda. EURONET will be submitting further recommendations for the EU Strategy on Children's Rights on the basis of two studies ([link to the EURONET website](#)) to be completed by January 2009: a study on the relevance of the General Measures of Implementation as a framework for the EU Strategy, which will enable the EU to develop children's rights-based policies, and a comparative analysis of the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child for the 27 Member States.

The workshop on child participation put forward ideas on how to develop a clear process for child participation in the EU Strategy drafting and implementation, based on the experience of the participants. The workshop on violence against children aimed at collecting participants' expertise on the subject at the National, European (Council of Europe) and international (United Nations) levels. It was concluded that expert meetings on specific violence areas should be held so as to develop a greater understanding of the work that the EU could do to implement the 2006 UN Study recommendations on violence against children. EURONET called for more data collection and the development of specific indicators to comprehend the situation in each European country regarding violence.

Finally, the Commission presented a website on the EU and Children's Rights to a group of children from across the EU who participated in a poster competition on the "Children's Right to protection." The website is to be finalized before going online.

European Parliament 2009 Elections

The upcoming European Parliament elections, to be held 4-7 June of this year, are an important opportunity to strengthen the place of children's rights on the EU's agenda. To this aim, EURONET and EUROCHILD are preparing a joint manifesto, urging the candidate European Parliament Member's to commit to further working on children's rights at the EU level. Once finalized, this will be available on the EURONET website. Furthermore, EURONET will be holding a training day for its members in March, providing tools for advocating to the candidate MEPs in the run up to the election.

Positive Parenting Campaign Continues in Macedonia

EURONET Member "First Children's Embassy in the World Megjashi" has launched the third part of their campaign concerning positive parenting. The first two involved the slogan's "Did you hug your child today?" and "Did you tell your child how much you love him/her?". This most recent campaign has as message "Did you talk to your child today?", and is being promoted through a number of billboards throughout the capital and other cities in the country. For more information on the Children's Embassy, [click here](#).

Staffing Changes at EURONET Secretariat

The EURONET Secretariat bid farewell to two members of staff at the end of 2008. Mieke Schuurman has left her position as EURONET Secretary General after 10 years in the role. Sara Sighinolfi, Policy and Communications Officer, has also left the office. Elizabeth Niland, previous Senior Policy Officer, has stepped in as Manager.

Internship Opening

EURONET is looking for a new intern to work in the Brussels Secretariat starting early March. For more information,

EURONET is looking for a new intern to work in the Brussels Secretariat starting early March. For more information, visit our [website](#). **Deadline for applications: February 18th!**

PLEASE NOTE that EURONET can now also be contacted at the following email address: info@europeanchildrensnetwork.org. The former email address, europeanchildrennetwork@skynet.be, will remain valid.



In the News

Presentation of the Rio Declaration at the World Congress III

The World Congress III against the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, held in Rio de Janeiro, concluded on November 28th with the presentation of the “Rio de Janeiro Declaration and Plan of Action”. The “Rio Declaration” formulates a pact about integrated and systemic actions aiming to fight sexual violence against children. Read the declaration [here](#).

Report on Fundamental Rights in the European Union Adopted

The “Report on the Situation of Fundamental Rights in the European Union”, drafted by MEP Giusto Catania, was adopted at the European Parliament on January 14th, 2009. Various aspects of fundamental rights are addressed, including a substantial section on children’s rights, encompassing issues of violence, poverty and work, discrimination, justice for young people, assistance for children, and participation. EURONET had previously been invited to submit a position paper on the report, while Mieke Schuurman, previous Secretary General of EURONET, had been invited as a speaker at a hearing on the report. For more information on EURONET’s activities concerning the Report on Fundamental Rights, [click here](#). To see the adopted report, [click here](#).

Lisbon Treaty– Further Developments

The yet to be fully ratified Lisbon Treaty is continuing to experience setbacks. In the Czech Republic, where almost two thirds of citizens are in favour of ratifying, the vote has once again been postponed pending further examination of the text by the parliamentary committee. The vote is now set to take place on February 15th. In Ireland however no date has been set for the second referendum on the Treaty ([more information](#)). However a national poll has shown most Irish citizens expect a second referendum on the Lisbon Treaty to pass ([more information](#)).

50th Session of Committee on the Rights of the Child held in January

The 50th Session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child was held in Geneva from January 12th-30th, 2009. Amongst other reports, the [third periodic report](#) of the Netherlands on the Convention on the Rights of the Child was examined, as well as the countries’ initial report on the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. To see the Concluding Observations of the Committee, [click here](#).

Next European Commission to include many new faces

As many of the current Commissioners plan to leave their posts after their term comes to an end later this year, the new Commission may count up to 20 newcomers. Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso intends to stay in his post, for which there seems to be no serious alternative as replacement. A further 5 Commissioners have indicated their desire to renew their terms. Meanwhile, 5 Commissioners have indicated their intention to run in June’s elections of the European Parliament ([more information](#)).

Criminalizing Sexual Abuse of Children

A European Parliament recommendation on combating the sexual exploitation of children and child pornography was adopted in Strasbourg on February 3rd. In the report MEPs called for the criminalization of “all types of sexual abuse of children”, including “grooming” (the action of soliciting children for sexual purposes). The European Parliament also called on the European Commission to fund prevention programmes to minimise the risk of repeated offenses. MEPs also highlight the fact that seven Member States have yet to sign the Council of Europe Convention on this issue, and eight have yet to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. To read the report, click [here](#).



Publications

EURONET Position Paper “Ending Corporal Punishment against Children within the Home” (2008), EURONET

State of the World's Children 2009 - Maternal and Newborn Health, UNICEF

[The Right to Education Project](#)– new website

[Human Rights Watch World Report 2009](#)

[International justice for children](#) (2009), Council of Europe

[Undocumented Children in Europe: Invisible Victims of Immigration Restrictions](#) (2009), PICUM

[Viewpoint: “Children should not be treated as criminals”](#) (2009), Thomas Hammarberg, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights

[Report from the 5th European NGO Forum for national child rights coalitions](#) (2008), Save the Children Sweden

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Events 2009

12 February 2009– Brussels (Belgium), [Eradicating Child Poverty– The Role of the European Union](#), EUROCHILD

3-4 March 2009– Brussels (Belgium), [European Parliament Elections 2009 Training for EURONET Members](#)

27 March 2009– London (UK), [Understanding Irregular Migration in Northern Europe](#), PICUM

6-7 April 2009– Prague (Czech Republic), [Children Friendly Europe Conference](#), Czech Presidency

20-22 April 2009- Liverpool (UK), **Conference: 'Children and the European Union: Legal, Political and Research Perspectives'**, EURONET and University of Liverpool.

25-26 June 2009– The Hague (Netherlands), [Seminar: ILO C182 and Girl Child Labour](#), IREWOC

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European Children's Network (EURONET) Newsletter, Issue 36, Winter 2009

This newsletter was written by Elizabeth Niland and Elke Holderbeke.

For questions on the newsletter, or removal from the mailing list,

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