CHILDREN’S RIGHTS AND THE EU BUDGET REVIEW
RECOMMENDATIONS

The European Children’s Network (EURONET) is pleased to contribute to the European Commission’s public consultation paper on the reform of the European Union’s (EU) budget and welcomes the European Commission’s initiative to open up the mid term review to all sectors of society.

One of the aims of the EU budget review 2008-2009 is to review the EU spending priorities to make financial resources available for new and cross-cutting EU policy areas and to identify which EU spending policies offer the best EU added value and most effective results. In this respect, EURONET would like to draw the European Commission’s attention on a policy objective to which the EU has committed and thus should be properly reflected in the EU spending: the promotion and protection of children’s rights in all EU policies affecting children directly or indirectly.

EURONET considers the EU multi-annual financial frameworks and the EU annual budgets as crucial tools which reflect the value that the EU places on children’s rights. Children’s rights should be taken into account in relevant EU

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3 For the purposes of this paper, the definition of the child is the same as the one in Art.1 of the UN convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). A child means every human being below the age of 18 years old. GA 44/25 of 20 November 1989. For the complete text of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child can be viewed at http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm
budgetary spending, as one important contribution to realising children’s rights in Europe and beyond.

The mid term review is therefore an important opportunity to ensure that EU commitments towards children’s rights, as outlined in the European Commission Communication “Towards an EU Strategy on the rights of the Child,” are supported by financial resources and therefore effectively implemented.

**The added value of the European Union’s action in the promotion and protection of children’s rights**

The European Union has committed to protecting and promoting children’s rights, as formally acknowledged in the objectives of its renewed Treaty (Article 3(3) and Article 3 (5) Treaty of Lisbon). Many EU policies have a direct or indirect impact on children, including consumer protection, environment and trade policies, or cooperation to combat crime, and therefore children’s rights should be taken into account.

In its Communication on Strategic Objectives 2005-2009, the Commission identified children’s rights as a particular priority for the EU. Moreover, in its Communication “Towards an EU Strategy on the rights of the Child” the Commission recognizes that the EU should add value and complementary measures “to the efforts of the Member States to strengthen recognition of and respect for the principles of the UNCRC both within the Union and beyond.” It has also committed “to allocating the necessary human and financial resources to implement this (future) strategy. Efforts will be made to secure the financial resources necessary to fund the actions proposed in this Communication and the future strategy.”

Recently, the European Parliament (EP) as budgetary authority has called for a specific budget line for children’s rights, in order to finance work to implement the above-mentioned Commission Communication.

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All the EU’s member states have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Child (UNCRC).\(^{12}\) Given the impacts of EU actions on children in the member states and in the wider world, the EU should take children’s rights into account across its policy making and spending which affect children directly and indirectly. Art.4 of the UNCRC could be used as a guideline for all budgetary authorities, including supranational, intergovernmental and multilateral bodies in the regard of the implementation of children’s rights.\(^{13}\)

**Children and the EU Budget: a cross-cutting policy priority?**

In the EU Budget, a few programmes are specifically targeting children and young people. EURONET welcomes the Daphne Programme to combat violence against children, young people and women, which has done some important work in this area and we recommend that the programme is maintained, as well as other existing or proposed programmes specifically designed for the benefit of children and young people.\(^{14}\) Besides, EURONET urges the European Commission to ensure that sufficient finance and resources are allocated for the future EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child.

However, children are also impacted on by more generalised EU expenditure, which is often not recognised\(^{15}\). Children may be affected differently from other groups. For instance, this may be the case for environment, transport or development policies and spending. EURONET therefore calls on the European Commission to systematically mainstream and integrate children’s rights, as entrenched in the normative framework and principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), into all EU actions, programme and budget lines directly and indirectly affecting them. EURONET recommend developing child-impact assessment tools of EU expenditures to avoid child blind budgeting when considering EU spending priorities.

**EURONET Recommendations for the EU budget review**

EURONET calls for the European Union to take into account the following recommendations and related actions in the future multiannual financial perspective 2013 and future EU budgets.

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\(^{13}\) Art.4 of the UNCRC: States parties shall undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the Present Convention. With regard to economic, social and cultural rights, States Parties shall undertake such measures to the maximum extent of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international cooperation. For the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child’s recommendations on implementation of Art.4, see: Day of General Discussion on “Resources for the Rights of the Child- Responsibility of States”, 27 September 2007, 46\(^{th}\) Session, [http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/discussion/recommendations2007.doc](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/discussion/recommendations2007.doc)

\(^{14}\) Children, Economics and the EU- towards child-friendly policies, Save the Children Sweden, 2000, p.59.

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<th>Recommendations</th>
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<td>Ensure relevant children’s rights-specific actions are sufficiently resourced</td>
<td>Ensure sufficient and appropriate resources for the implementation of the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child.</td>
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<td>Maintain the Daphne Programme to combat violence against children, young people and women, and other targeted programmes.</td>
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<td>Ensure children are not negatively impacted, and that there is a positive impact</td>
<td>Take child rights into consideration in all actions and policies and legislation that affect children, based on the UNCRC, and mainstream child rights in the EU multiannual framework and EU annual budgets, including budget lines not directly targeting them.</td>
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<td>on children, through all relevant areas of EU expenditure</td>
<td>Allocate resources for capacity building of Commission officials on mainstreaming children’s rights.</td>
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<td>Fund effective EU institutional structures to ensure a coherent approach on mainstreaming children’s rights and budgeting for children.</td>
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<td>Assess the amount of money that is benefiting children and produce a comprehensive overview of all projects reaching them. This must include budget lines where children are not the principal target group.</td>
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<td>Ensure financial resources are available to enable the participation of children</td>
<td>The EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child should include concrete proposals and mechanisms to ensure child participation in EU decision making. Sufficient resources should be allocated for their implementation.</td>
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<td>Support activities related to the European networking of NGOs promoting children’s</td>
<td>It is important that the expertise and views of children’s rights organisations from across the EU is expressed and heard within the EU policy making process on matters affecting children. Budgetary support from the EU is key to ensure this can happen, in particular to achieve a balanced representation of NGOs from across EU Member States.</td>
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EURONET REFERENCE DOCUMENTS