

16th July 2010 - Nothing for children without listening to children. Children themselves are part of the solution not part of the problem. And they proved to have very clear insights of what they want during the Eurochild children's meeting, which has taken place from 11 to 16 July in Brussels.

Three priority areas were identified by the 33 children and young people aged 10 to 18 from nine different countries who, from 11 to 16 July, gathered in Brussels to discuss how children experience poverty and social exclusion. They spoke about possible ways out and what can be done to ensure that children have a stake in their future and can influence decisions affecting them. The three key messages agreed upon are: listen to children, social inclusion and equality in access to education, transport, health and other services.

"Adults cannot decide what is in the best interest of children without also asking children themselves what they think", says Jana Hainsworth, Eurochild Secretary General. "Eurochild's children's meeting in Brussels is a small but significant step in bringing their voices to the table", she added.

All the children were selected from Eurochild membership working with thousands of children at risk of marginalization or living in poverty. In all organizations, a core principle applies: children have to be respected for who they are and what they have to bring.

The highlight of the event took place in the Atomium, where participants met Belgian Secretary of State for the Fight against Poverty Philippe Courard, sharing with him their views on child poverty and social exclusion in their respective countries.

Philippe Courard said "The meeting with the 33 children from different European countries was very interesting and I will take their ideas and inspiration with me to the European Council. During this presidency, I will explain to all European Member States that the fight against child poverty should also be part of their priorities. I will try to guarantee, whether a child is living in Belgium, Bulgaria or Germany, to give them the same opportunities to succeed in life. The following 6 months the European children can count on me to be their voice at European level."

"Governments who attempt to cut costs by reducing public spending on children and families are deluding themselves. They will just pay later – and a much higher price", added Jana Hainsworth at this occasion. "Participation work such as that carried out by the organisations represented here this week, is not a luxury, it is vital work that will help these and other children create a better future for themselves and for their communities".

Eurochild is organizing this event in the context of the European Year 2010 against poverty and social exclusion. Eurochild is leading a campaign to end child poverty and has developed 9 accompanying key policy messages. The first key message is precisely 'empowering children'.

Source: [EuroChild](#)