

Brussels, 15th February 2011 - Eurochild gives a cautious welcome to yesterday's Communication spelling out the "EU agenda for the rights of the child", but regrets its overall lack of ambition and substance.

The Communication is the long-awaited follow-up to the Commission's 2006 commitment "to develop a comprehensive strategy to ensure that the European Union contributes to promoting and safeguarding children's rights in all its internal and external actions and supports the efforts of the Member States in this field

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"The Agenda contains important elements", states **Jana Hainsworth, Secretary General of Eurochild**, "but it misses the chance to set an overarching vision for how the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child can be effectively implemented across EU policies in a consistent way

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Eurochild, a network of over 90 children's rights organisations from across Europe, anticipated stronger EU coordination through which children's rights would be integrated in all EU policies and programmes through sharing of responsibilities across the Commission alongside the "fundamental rights check" and internal training proposed in the Communication. We also hoped to see greater EU support for member states in their efforts to implement the UNCRC at national level - missing from this latest Communication.

According to **Maria Herczog, Eurochild President** and **member of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child**

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This agenda unfortunately reflects the EU's very piece-meal approach to children's rights. It's a compilation of on-going actions rather than a coherent vision. I would ultimately like the UNCRC to be integrated into the legal framework of the EU – similar to what has been achieved with the UN Convention on the rights of people with disabilities - but we seem to be a long-way from that goal. Also the over-riding emphasis on child protection misses the two other very important groups of rights set out in the UNCRC: provision and protection

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In themselves, the actions proposed are important and useful – notably we welcome efforts to promote the use of the Council of Europe Guidelines on child-friendly justice - guidelines that are based on wide consultation with children and other stakeholders in 2010. Nonetheless it seems that most of what is included in the Communication is existing planned actions and there is little evidence of the added-value of a child rights approach.

Importantly the Communication recognizes the importance of "*greater participation of children in the development and implementation of actions and policies that affect them*". However, it falls short of proposing any on-going action to support and promote wider participation of children at EU or member state level. We are concerned that recent efforts to consult directly with children and the forthcoming child-friendly website will have little overall impact on changing attitudes towards children and their right to be heard.

Source: [Euro Child](#)