Resolution on the 25th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

2014/2919(RSP) - 27/11/2014 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the 25th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The resolution adopted in plenary was tabled on behalf of the EPP, S&D, ECR, ALDE, GUE/NGL, Greens /EFA and EFDD groups.

Parliament welcomed the EU's commitment under the Stockholm programme to develop an integrated EU strategy for effectively promoting and safeguarding the rights of the child in the EU's internal and external policies and to support the Member States' efforts in this area.

It called on the Commission to monitor and report on the implementation of its recommendation entitled ' Investing in Children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage' in the Member States and to ensure access to quality services and participation of children; calls on those Member States with above-average rates of child poverty to set national targets and prioritise investments aimed at reducing poverty and social exclusion among children and young people.

The Commission is invited to:

- integrate an explicit child and youth focus in the European Semester and in the Annual Growth Survey;
- ensure increased coordination within its different services with a view to effectively mainstreaming children's rights in all EU legislative proposals, policies and financial decisions and monitoring their full compliance with the EU acquis on children and with obligations under the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child;
- seize the opportunity afforded by the mid-term review of the multiannual financial framework to ensure that **EU funds benefit the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children**;
- explicitly consider children as a priority when programming and implementing regional and cohesion policies, in particular Roma children.

Best interests of the child: Member States are called upon to **ensure that the principle of the best interests of the child is respected** in all legislation, in decisions taken by government representatives at all levels and in all court decisions.

Members called on the Commission to assess the impact of detention policies and criminal justice systems on children, pointing out that an estimated 800 000 children in the EU are separated from an imprisoned parent each year, which impacts on the rights of children in multiple ways. They called on the business community and stakeholders to refrain from aggressive and misleading advertising to children. Children's personal data online must be duly protected. Online profiling of children should be prohibited.

Protect children against sexual abuse: Parliament called on the Member States to implement Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings, and to take measures to combat the illicit transfer of children. It called on the Member States to implement Directive 2011/93/EU on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children, and child pornography, and tackle all forms of cyber predation and cyber bullying.

Improve education: Members called on the EU and its Member States to invest in public services for children, including childcare, education and health, and particularly in extending the public network of kindergartens and nurseries. Member States are called upon to provide free compulsory secondary education for all and to adopt laws to safeguard and strengthen maternity and paternity rights in order to provide a healthy, stable environment for children in the first months of their lives.

End the detention of migrant children: Parliament called on the Member States to fully implement the Common European Asylum System package in order to improve the condition of unaccompanied minors in the EU. It called, in particular, for action to be taken to **end the detention of migrant children across the EU**. It recalled that an unaccompanied minor is above all a child who is potentially in danger and that child protection, rather than immigration policies, must be the leading principle for Member States and the EU when dealing with unaccompanied minors, thus respecting the core principle of the best interests of the child.

Parliament called on all the Member States to facilitate family reunification in a positive, humane and expeditious manner, in line with Article 10 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Missing children: Parliament stressed the need for a more coordinated approach to finding missing children in the EU. It called on the Member States to **increase police and judicial cooperation in cross-border cases involving missing children** and to develop hotlines to search for missing children and support victims of child abuse. It called on the Member States to facilitate the smooth accession of Morocco, Singapore, the Russian Federation, Albania, Andorra, Seychelles, Gabon and Armenia to the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction.

Child abduction between parents: Parliament called on the Commission, in revising Regulation (EC) No 2201/2003 concerning jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in matrimonial matters and the matters of parental responsibility, to take serious note of the best interests of the child, in view of the loopholes in the implementation and enforcement of this regulation in the Member States as regards **parental and custody rights**.

Combating violence against: Parliament condemned any form of violence against children, physical, sexual and verbal abuse, forced marriages, child labour, prostitution, trafficking, torture, honour killing, female genital mutilation, the use of child soldiers and of children as human shields, etc. Moreover, it **condemned the use of children for military and terrorist activities or purposes**. It called on the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) to support the UN campaign 'Children, not soldiers', aimed at **ending the recruitment and use of child soldiers by national security forces by 2016**.

EP Intergroup on children's rights: Parliament expressed the will to establish an intergroup within the European Parliament on children's rights and well-being. Therefore, it supported the initiative of appointing 'focal points' for children's rights within each parliamentary committee to ensure the mainstreaming of children's rights in every policy and legislative text adopted. Parliament insisted on the Commission, the Member States and local authorities to explore ways and means of increasing children's and adolescents' involvement in the decision-making process.

International instruments: Parliament called on the Member States to ratify without delay all the optional protocols to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It called on the Commission and the VP/HR to explore ways and means for the EU to accede unilaterally to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Lastly, it encouraged the USA, Somalia and South Sudan to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child in order to achieve universal ratification.