

Resolution on children's rights on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

2019/2876(RSP) - 26/11/2019 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 495 votes to 58, with 87 abstentions, a European Parliament resolution on children's rights on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The text adopted in plenary was adopted as a joint resolution by the EPP, Greens/EFA and GUE/NGL groups.

Members recalled that 100 million children live in Europe and account for more than 20% of the EU population, and that children under 18 represent more than 40% of the population of developing countries. In this context, Parliament stated that the rights of the child must be at the heart of the EU policies.

A comprehensive and ambitious approach to children's rights

Members called on the President-elect to take concrete measures to give greater visibility to the EU's actions in respect of children's rights, for instance by appointing a high-level public figure as the EU representative on children's rights. They called for the principle of the best interests of the child to always be fully respected in all legislation and court decisions.

While welcoming the new Commission's commitment to present a new comprehensive strategy on child rights, Parliament called on the Commission to propose an ambitious and comprehensive framework for children's rights and to consider how the European Union could accede to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Recalling the negative impact of climate change on children, Members called for more action to ensure a healthy environment for children. They called on Member States to protect children from misleading advertising and profiling for commercial purposes and to ensure that media service providers and video sharing platforms do not encourage behaviour prejudicial to children's health or safety.

End all forms of violence against children

Parliament condemned all forms of violence against children, including abuse, online and offline violence, forced marriage, child labour, prostitution, trafficking in human beings, organ trafficking, torture, female genital mutilation, the use of children as soldiers or human shields, malnutrition, psychological violence and all forms of intimidation. It called on Member States to legislate to prohibit and punish corporal punishment of children.

The Commission and Member States are invited to develop a national strategy and to put in place a comprehensive approach involving all stakeholders to eliminate sexual violence and child abuse online and offline.

Parliament called for an intersectional approach to combat all forms of discrimination against children, taking into account their vulnerabilities, including those of children with disabilities, migrant children, children from minorities or religious groups, LGBTI children, children in care, children in detention, children whose parents are imprisoned.

Investing in children

Recalling that nearly 25 million children under the age of 18 are at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU, Parliament called on the European Union and its Member States to step up their efforts to end child poverty by adopting a new Council Recommendation on investing in children and to provide sufficient support for the establishment of a European Child Guarantee.

Guaranteeing the right to education to every child

Stressing the importance of a holistic approach to education, Parliament encouraged Member States to define measures to prevent early school leaving and to ensure equal access to quality education for girls and boys from early childhood to adolescence, including for children with disabilities, marginalised children and children living in areas affected by humanitarian crises or other emergencies.

Migrant children

Parliament called on Member States to fully implement the Common European Asylum System in order to improve the conditions for all migrant children, including unaccompanied children in the European Union, and to step up their efforts to end the detention of children in the context of migration in the Union. It stressed that the protection of children, and not migration policies, should be the leading principle of Member States and the European Union when dealing with them, thus respecting the core principle of the child's best interests.

The Commission is invited to promote universal access to birth registration and the right of the child to acquire a nationality, in order to ending the risk of statelessness.

Children and armed conflict

The Commission is called on to provide support to and ensure adequate and long-term funding for rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for conflict-affected children. Expressing its gravest concern regarding the humanitarian situation of children of foreign fighters held in north-east Syria, Parliament urged Member States to repatriate all European children, taking into account their specific family situations and the best interests of the child as a primary consideration, and to provide the necessary support for their rehabilitation and reintegration.

Parliament also urged Member States to step up their cooperation and dialogue with third countries, with the aim of raising awareness and advocating for children's rights to be respected everywhere in the world. It urged the EU and the Member States to apply unified legal standards with regard to the procedure for dealing with child marriages.

Child participation

The resolution called on the Member States to strengthen the participation of children in their legislation and encouraged the Member States and the Commission to create meaningful mechanisms for child participation, such as children's councils, in the work of European, national, regional and local parliamentary assemblies, in particular in key policy areas.

The Commission is urged to include children in the consultation process in view of the Conference for the Future of Europe.