Towards an EU strategy on the rights of the child

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This document accompanies the Commission's communication seeking to establish an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child (COM(2006)0367). It is a Commission Staff Working Document providing a preliminary inventory of EU actions affecting Children's Rights.

The European Union has developed various concrete policies and programmes on children's rights using different existing legal bases, covering both internal and external aspects of the European Union across a broad range of issues. They may be summarized as follows:

Within the European Union:

- Policy on asylum, immigration and external frontiers;
- Health, safety and wellbeing of the child;
- Child poverty and social exclusion;
- Child labour;
- Children's participation;
- Civil justice and family matters;
- Education;
- Environment;
- Media and Internet;
- Non-discrimination;
- Violence against children.

Although children's rights are universal, different ways can be used to promote them: within the EU, legislation and funding programmes are widely used to promote children's rights.

In **candidate countries**, children's rights are given priority in the pre-accession strategy in order to fulfill the criteria for their membership of the Union (via, in particular, the pre-accession programmes).

As far as the **rest of the world** is concerned, the Union has a political mandate to promote children's rights in the framework of its external relations (political dialogue, development aid and humanitarian aid). The instruments used most frequently are:

- political dialogue;
- trade negotiations;
- development aid;
- humanitarian aid;

- future instruments in the Community's external policies: three horizontal to respond to particular needs (humanitarian aid, stability, macro-financial assistance) and three to implement particular policies and cover particular geographical areas (pre-accession assistance (IPA), the European neighbourhood and partnership instrument (ENPI) and the development cooperation and economic cooperation instrument (DCECI)).