

Basic information	
2007/2093(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Towards an EU strategy on the rights of the child Subject 1.10 Fundamental rights in the EU, Charter 4.10.03 Child protection, children's rights 4.10.05 Social inclusion, poverty, minimum income 4.10.10 Social protection, social security	

Key players				
European Parliament	Committee responsible		Rapporteur	Appointed
	LIBE	Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	ANGELILLI Roberta (UEN)	13/09/2006
	Committee for opinion		Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	AFET	Foreign Affairs	BELOHORSKÁ Irena (NI)	17/10/2006
	DEVE	Development	KINNOCK Glenys (PSE)	06/11/2006
	EMPL	Employment and Social Affairs	PAPADIMOULIS Dimitrios (GUE/NGL)	23/01/2007
	CULT	Culture and Education	GRÖNER Lissy (PSE)	12/09/2006
	JURI	Legal Affairs	LÓPEZ-ISTÚRIZ WHITE Antonio (PPE-DE)	29/01/2007
	FEMM	Women's Rights and Gender Equality (Associated committee)	PANAYOTOPOULOS-CASSIOTOU Marie (PPE-DE)	20/12/2006
Council of the European Union	Council configuration		Meetings	Date
	General Affairs		2839	2007-12-10
European Commission	Commission DG		Commissioner	
	Justice and Consumers		FRATTINI Franco	

Key events			
Date	Event	Reference	Summary
04/07/2006	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2006)0367 	Summary
26/04/2007	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
26/04/2007	Referral to associated committees announced in Parliament		
10/12/2007	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		Summary
18/12/2007	Vote in committee		Summary
20/12/2007	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0520/2007	
15/01/2008	Debate in Parliament		
16/01/2008	Decision by Parliament	T6-0012/2008	Summary
16/01/2008	Results of vote in Parliament		
16/01/2008	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2007/2093(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	LIBE/6/43585

Documentation gateway				
European Parliament				
Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee opinion		PE386.415	07/06/2007	
Committee opinion		PE386.547	12/06/2007	
Committee opinion		PE388.396	26/06/2007	
Committee opinion		PE388.542	27/06/2007	
Committee draft report		PE390.381	10/07/2007	
Committee opinion		PE388.588	19/07/2007	
Committee opinion		PE388.696	12/09/2007	

Amendments tabled in committee		PE393.850	12/09/2007	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE398.501	07/12/2007	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0520/2007	20/12/2007	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0012/2008	16/01/2008	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2006)0367 	04/07/2006	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	SEC(2006)0888 	04/07/2006	
Document attached to the procedure	SEC(2006)0889 	04/07/2006	Summary

Towards an EU strategy on the rights of the child

2007/2093(INI) - 04/07/2006 - Document attached to the procedure

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))

Towards an EU strategy on the rights of the child

2007/2093(INI) - 16/01/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drawn up by Roberta **ANGELILLI** (UEN, IT) in response to the Commission's communication on an EU strategy on the rights of the child. The resolution was adopted by 630 votes for, 26 against and 62 abstentions.

Overview of the strategy: Parliament calls on the Commission to put forward a proposal to create a **specific budget line** for children's rights, in order to finance work to implement the Commission Communication, and child-specific projects, such as a European early warning system on child abductions. The budget line should also include subsidies for NGO networks working in this field and ensure children's participation in the work to implement that Communication and those projects. It also calls for an **effective monitoring system backed with financial means and annual reports** to ensure the implementation of the commitments set out in the Commission Communication and the future strategy on the rights of the child. Furthermore, the Commission should draw up a comprehensive EU **Child and Youth Report every two years**, beginning in 2008. Parliament applauds the Commission's plan to introduce an EU-wide child helpline telephone number. It calls for the following, inter alia:

-the protection of children's rights to be included among the priorities Multiannual Framework of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (the Agency), and for the Agency to set up a network for cooperation with international institutions, particularly ombudspersons for children and NGOs;

-children's rights to be mainstreamed in the external policies of the EU. The Commission should submit a report on the possible inclusion in all international agreements between the EC and third countries of a specific and legally binding clause on respect for children's rights, as defined at international level.

Parliament feels it is regrettable that not all Member States have yet established an ombudsperson for children's rights, as called for by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The EU should make financial support available to the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC).

Violence: Parliament affirms that no forms of violence against children in any setting can be justified and that all violence must be condemned. It calls for Community legislation that prohibits all forms of violence, sexual abuse, degrading punishment and harmful traditional practices. Member States must either implement specific legal provisions on female genital mutilation or adopt laws under which any person who carries out genital mutilation may be prosecuted. Member States must also act against honour crimes, and raise medical practitioners' awareness of harmful traditional practices. A legal framework should be established on sexual exploitation and child abuse and judicial cooperation should be strengthened between Member States, Europol, Eurojust and all competent international bodies. Parliament affirms that the sexual exploitation of children should be considered equivalent to the crime of rape insofar as concerns penal sanctions.

It goes on to state its support for the commitment shown by the Commission which, in conjunction with the main credit card issuing companies, is assessing the technical feasibility of excluding websites involved in online sales of child pornography material to be excluded from the online payment system. Parliament calls on other economic players such as banks, bureaux de change, Internet service providers and search engine operators to take an active part in efforts to combat child pornography and other forms of commercial exploitation of children. One of the Commission's basic priorities should be to strengthen cross-border operations against child pornography internet sites with a view to making a commitment to closing down illegal websites.

Members call for the creation of an adequate regulation system in dialogue with providers, the media and industry, aimed at prohibiting the broadcasting of harmful images and content (including cyber bullying) and the marketing of violent video games. Parliament points with concern, moreover, to the growing problem of MMS exchanges of pornographic images, calling on Member States and Internet service providers, in collaboration with search engine companies and the police, to implement blocking technology to stop Internet users from accessing illegal sites related to child sexual abuse.

Sex tourism involving children should be considered a crime in all Member States and subject to extraterritorial criminal laws. Any citizen of the Union committing a crime in a third country should be dealt with under a single set of extraterritorial criminal laws applicable throughout the EU.

Poverty/Discrimination: 19% of children in the EU live below the poverty line and assistance measures must therefore be taken, including measures to support their families. Member States must adopt ambitious targets for reducing - and eventually eradicating - child poverty, and perform their duty to assist all children against the risks of malnutrition, disease, ill-treatment and abuse, whatever their social and/or legal status or that of their parents. Roma children and children belonging to other national minorities in particular should be covered by targeted measures, in particular with a view to ending the discrimination, segregation, social and educational exclusion of which they are often victims. Parliament takes the view that the EU should set itself the objective of ensuring that there are no homeless children or street children in the EU, calling for appropriate measures to be taken to assist homeless children, since most of them are badly traumatised and socially excluded. It asks for consideration to be given to the possibility of devising a Community instrument on adoptions, that improves the quality of care with regard to information services, the preparation of international adoptions, the processing of international adoption applications and post-adoption services.

Child labour: it is essential to ensure that those children who are legally old enough to be in employment are remunerated on the basis of equal work for equal pay. The Commission must ensure that deliberations by human rights committees set up under trade and cooperation agreements focus on the problem of child labour. Products being sold in the EU may be produced by child labour. The Commission is asked to implement a mechanism by which victims of child labour can seek redress against EU companies in the national courts of the Member States. It is also asked to enforce supply-chain compliance and especially to come forward with mechanisms that make the main contractor liable in the EU in cases of violation of UN conventions on child labour in the supply chain.

Children in armed conflicts: MEPs call for measures to protect child soldiers and victims of war.

Lastly, MEPs call for very specific measures to ensure that all children are registered at birth, making it, a basic legal right such as obtaining a nationality or an identity at birth.

Towards an EU strategy on the rights of the child

2007/2093(INI) - 04/07/2006 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to present an EU strategy on the rights of the child.

CONTENT: the purpose of this Communication is to propose the establishment of a comprehensive EU strategy on the rights of the child.

The EU, and its Member States, are bound to respect the rights of the child under international and European treaties – in particular the UNCRC; the Millennium Development Goals and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). In March 2006, the European Council requested the Member States to take the necessary measures to rapidly and significantly reduce child poverty and to give all children equal opportunities regardless of their social background. This Communication gives effect to these decisions. The strategy is structured around seven specific objectives, each supported by a series of actions. In brief they are:

- 1) **Capitalising on existing activities while addressing urgent needs:** The Commission will follow-up its Communication on fighting trafficking in human beings; the Open Method of Co-ordination on Social Protection and Social Inclusions; the strategic partnership with the International Labour Organisation to fight child labour; and the EU guidelines on children in armed conflicts. In particular, the Commission will: attribute one single six digit telephone number within the EU for child help lines and one for child hotlines dedicated to missing and sexually exploited children; support the banking sector and credit card companies to combat the use of credit cards for purchasing sexual images of children on the internet; launch an Action Plan on Children in Development Co-operation; and promote a clustering of actions on child poverty in the EU.
- 2) **Identifying priorities for future EU action:** The Commission intends to analyse what it is that hinders children enjoying their full rights. The assessment will be updated every five years. It will tackle specific, critical areas rather than attempting to cover all areas of relevance. Concretely, the Commission will: assess the impact of existing EU actions affecting children's rights; issue a consultation document to identify future actions; and it will collect comparable data on children's rights.
- 3) **Mainstreaming children's rights in EU actions:** All internal and external EU policies must respect children's rights in accordance with the principles of EU law and provisions. The strategy will mainstream children's rights when drafting EU legislative and non-legislative actions that may impact upon children.
- 4) **Establishing efficient coordination and consultation mechanisms:** The Commission will seek to strengthen co-operation among the main stakeholders and make optimal use of existing networks and international organisations or bodies involved in children's rights. The purpose of this action will be: to bring stake holders together in a European Forum for the Rights of the Child; to set up a web-based discussion and work platform; to involve children in the decision-making process; to set up a Commission Inter-service Group; and to appoint a co-ordinator for the rights of the child.
- 5) **Enhancing capacity and expertise on children's rights:** All actors involved in implementing and mainstreaming children's rights (concerning both internal and external policies) should acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to help them with their work. To this end, the Commission will continue to make training available. Practical tools such as guidance notes and instructions will be improved, distributed and used as training material.
- 6) **Communicating more effectively on children's rights:** To raise awareness of children's rights, the Commission will design a communication strategy on children's rights as well as providing information on children's rights in a child-friendly manner.
- 7) **Promoting the rights of the child in external relations:** The EU will continue to enhance its active role in promoting the rights of the child in international forums and third country relations. The Union will continue to pay particular attention to the right of girls and children belonging to minorities and it will continue its on-going work on children in armed conflict. Lastly, the EU will also discuss the global study on violence against children which is currently conducted by the UN Secretary General's independent expert.

The Commission is committed to allocating the necessary human and financial resources in order to implement this strategy effectively. It will strive to secure the financial resources needed to fund the actions set out in the communication. In order to increase transparency the Commission will prepare an annual progress report. To conclude, the Commission calls on the Member States, on the EU institutions and on other stakeholders to take an active part in the development of this strategy in order to contribute to its success.

Towards an EU strategy on the rights of the child

2007/2093(INI) - 10/12/2007

The Council adopted a series of conclusions regarding the Commission's Strategy on the Rights of the Child which can be summarised as follows:

- the Council welcomes and adopts the EU Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child (including the implementation strategy). The Guidelines will be an integral part of the process of further strengthening the European Union's human rights policy in external relations;

- it notes that, together with the 2003 Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict which will continue to guide EU actions in that specific area, the new set of Guidelines will enhance the European Union's activities in the promotion and protection of the Rights of the Child by promoting a comprehensive and strategic approach;
- by adopting these EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child, the EU commits itself unreservedly to promoting and protecting all rights of the child as contained in key international and European legal human rights instruments, norms and standards as well as political commitments relevant to the promotion and protection of the rights of the child, in particular the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the International Covenants on Human Rights, the Convention on the rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Statute of the International Criminal Court as well as the Millennium Development Declaration and Millennium Development Goals, the Declaration and Plan of Action "A World fit for Children" of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGASS) 2002;
- to allow for focused action, the EU has chosen "All Forms of Violence Against Children" as its first Priority Area and has adopted, together with the Guidelines, an Implementation Strategy for specific measures to be taken in that area;
- lastly, the Council reaffirms the EU's determination to observe as a matter of priority in its external human rights policy the promotion and protection of all rights of the child, i.e. persons below the age of 18 years, taking into account the best interests of the child and its right to protection from discrimination and participation in decision-making processes, founded on the principles of democracy, equality, non-discrimination, peace and social justice and the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights.