

Children First

Better Public Spending
for Better Outcomes
for Children & Families



Eurochild

Putting children at
the heart of Europe



**HHC
România**

O casă și o familie
pentru fiecare copil

Eurochild

11th Annual Conference

co-hosted by Hope and Homes
for Children Romania

Bucharest,
26-28 November
2014



CONFERENCE REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Eurochild's 11th Annual Conference took place 26-28 November 2014 in Bucharest, Romania on the theme of **"Better public spending for better outcomes for children and families"**. The event was co-organised by Eurochild and Hope and Homes for Children Romania and brought together representatives of civil society, government, professionals, researchers and young people themselves from 36 countries.

Jana Hainsworth, Eurochild Secretary General explains the reason for the choice of theme: "We believe that **realising the rights of every child is not only a moral or legal imperative, it also makes economic sense. We need a clear and convincing narrative** to bring those people on board who still believe that children are for charities and not for the real business of government."

The Conference came at an important time with the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child preparing a **General Comment on Better Public Spending** and the ongoing work around implementation of the European Commission's 2013 **Recommendation on Investing in Children**.

The Conference took participants on a six-stage journey to develop their thinking and ideas:

1. Inspiring

Representatives of the hosting organisations, the Romanian government and young people themselves and keynote speakers presented ideas and themes for discussion during the conference. These included the need for authorities to invest more and **to invest better in children; the importance of preventive services**; the value of **participation of children and young people**; and the importance of **evaluating and monitoring budgets for their spending on children**.

2. Deepening

The next stage of the Conference used presentations and workshop discussions to give in-depth consideration to three important cross-cutting themes of better public spending on children. The three themes and some of the key findings were:

- a. **Evaluation Methodologies** – evaluation of effective investment and public spending choices in child and family services should be based on **greater pluralism** in the types of methods used and evidence collected, appropriate to the specific stage of intervention.
- b. **Public-Private Partnerships** – the private sector can have a useful role in investing in services for children, but **the State must ensure accountability, quality and sustainability** of services, and long-term social outcomes must be the ultimate objective; not profit.
- c. **Social Return on Investment (SROI)** – rights-arguments are at the heart of our advocacy. **Demonstrating SROI in child protection** can generate real change. Research must enable us to build our capacity to engage positively in the conversation about money.

3. Learning

Participants exchanged good practices through complementary sessions:

- A **poster session** presenting 12 practices supporting improved outcomes for children
- **Study visits** to two initiatives providing services for children and families in Romania
- A **video corner** of six initiatives **on child and youth participation**
- **Two side events**, a workshop on child-friendly justice and a panel on regional cooperation for child protection

4. Exchanging

Four parallel workshops discussed and delivered important messages on four priority themes of Eurochild's work to support better public spending for better outcomes for children and families:

- a. **Child Participation** – Children's Councils and Parliaments offer valuable opportunities to feed messages from young people to politicians. At a different level, it is very important that children in (foster) care have someone they can talk to safely about any problems.
- b. **Children in Alternative Care** – poverty should never be a reason for placing children in care institutions; there must be more investment in supporting vulnerable families. Where children have been taken away from their families, support to foster families and social workers is crucial and more support is needed for young people preparing to leave care.
- c. **Early Years Education and Care (ECEC)** – so far the Commission's ECEC Communication (2011) or the allocation of Structural Funds to ECEC appear to have had limited impact. The proposed European Quality Framework could still bring important benefits.
- d. **Family and Parenting Support** – we need to start with what children and families need. Families should not have to wait for the service, they can be part of it and co-design it, based on effective integration between different services and flexibility in delivery.

5. Building

A panel debate on funding advocacy for children's rights built on the previous discussions of the Conference. Panellists were experts from national and regional child rights networks, civil society, funders and government representatives. Key messages of the debate were that:

- The economy and children's rights are connected. We need to invest in children.
- We need good long-term strategies and policies for children.
- We need to get engaged in public discourse and we need to change its values.
- There is a discrepancy between the realities of practitioners and politicians.
- We need to ask children themselves what they need and what should be done.
- Passion is very important, but we need to give policymakers messages they can understand.
- NGOs can play an important role in helping assess budgets and their impact on children.
- Children's Rights Coalitions can support better coordination amongst NGOs.
- NGOs should be paid for the important service they provide to governments.
- EU structural funds offer the potential to really change the lives of children.

6. Visioning

Closing keynote speakers included Corina Cretu, European Commissioner for Regional Policy, Agnes Von Maravic from the Council of Europe and Mária Herczog, President of Eurochild.

Concluding messages focused on the importance of: the **long-term benefits of investing in children**; child-centred **social investment** following a human rights approach; **supporting vulnerable families**; **prioritising children's rights**; linking rights arguments with **economic arguments**; **eliminating institutional care**; implementing **what children are telling us**; ongoing co-operation **between different stakeholders**, including the private sector; and **improved use of ESIF money** - all to support better investment and better outcomes for children.

INTRODUCTION TO THE CONFERENCE

Public spending must be for the public good. We believe there is no more effective way of building more cohesive and resilient communities than investing in children and families, particularly the most vulnerable.

As we pass 25 years since the adoption of the UNCRC, we are at a watershed in the child rights movement. It is true that violation of children's rights are a daily reality across Europe. But children's rights are finally beginning to appear centre stage of politics.

We have made significant headway in recent years at EU level. The adoption of the 2013 European Commission Recommendation 'Investing in Children: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage'¹ and the broader Social Investment Package² reflects a significant broader paradigm shift in EU rhetoric. It recognises the capacity and contribution of individuals throughout their life cycle – regardless of whether they are active on the labour market or not.

According to Article 4 of the UNCRC, all States Parties “shall undertake measures [to implement the UNCRC] to the maximum extent of their available resources”.

The UNCRC is recognising this with the upcoming General Comment on Better Public Spending. So is the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights which is developing a report on investment in children's rights.

Our choice of theme this year is not a narrowing of our agenda to fit into a dominant economic paradigm. The UNCRC remains the fundamental compass for our work. But we believe that realising the rights of every child is not only a moral or legal imperative. It also makes economic sense.

Our conference therefore comes at a critical time. It is the moment to set the agenda of the new leaders and to contribute to key ongoing work within the child rights movement. We need a clear and convincing narrative to bring those people on board who still believe that children are for charities and not for the real business of government.

We want to unpick a number of complex issues around public spending choices. We have selected evaluation methodologies, social return on investment and public-private partnership as three cross-cutting themes for this event. They are part of a continuum of work within the Eurochild network.

Each of these cross-cutting themes will be addressed through the lens of better public spending in key areas: early years; family and parenting support; children in alternative care; and child and youth participation.

We hope that the event will give participants new knowledge, contacts and most of all inspiration for the on-going work of promoting and achieving full implementation of children's rights in Europe.

Jana Hainsworth
Eurochild Secretary General

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- 1 European Commission Recommendation 'Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage', COM(2013) 778 final, 20.2.2013.
 - 2 European Commission Communication on 'Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion – including implementing the European Social Fund 2014-2020', COM(2013) 83 final, 20.2.2013

INTRODUCTION TO THE REPORT

This report is based on the content of Eurochild's 11th Annual Conference which took place 26-28 November 2014 in Bucharest, Romania on the theme of "Better public spending for better outcomes for children and families". The event was co-organised by Eurochild and Hope and Homes for Children Romania.

The report is structured to reflect the approach of the three-day Conference in taking participants on a journey through six different stages:

1. Inspiring

Opening welcomes and keynote speakers to present ideas and themes for discussion during the conference

2. Deepening³

Presentations and debate on the three cross-cutting themes of the Conference:

- a. Evaluation Methodologies
- b. Public-Private Partnership
- c. Social Return on Investment

3. Learning

Presentation of good practice through a series of different approaches:

- a. Poster Sessions
- b. Study Visits
- c. Video Corner on Child and Youth Participation
- d. Side Events

4. Exchanging

Parallel workshops on priority themes

- a. Child and Youth Participation
- b. Children in Alternative Care
- c. Early Years Education and Care
- d. Family and Parenting Support

5. Building

Panel debate on funding advocacy for children's rights

6. Visioning

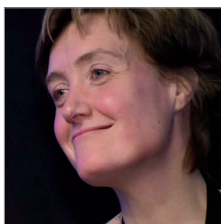
Closing keynote remarks on future steps

3 The section on 'Deepening' covers the 'Deepening' and the 'Debating' sections of the Conference planning as these are two aspects of the same principle of exploring the issues in greater depth.

Opening comments and speeches

Eurochild's 11th Annual Conference opened with some welcoming remarks from representatives of the host organisations, the Romanian government and young people themselves.

WELCOMING REMARKS



Jana Hainsworth - *Eurochild Secretary General*

"Welcome to Bucharest and the 11th Eurochild Annual Conference, which this year is on the theme of Better Public Spending for Better Outcomes for Children and Families. I am delighted to welcome so many participants from different backgrounds, including civil society, government, professionals, researchers and young people themselves.

Investing in people is about investing in children. The human-rights argument is the primary argument for us. But investing in children also makes sense from the economic perspective. Policies and politics – they both matter. We look forward to some very content rich discussions over the coming days."



Stefan Darabus - *Country Director of Hope and Homes for Children Romania*

"We are here 36 countries together to talk about Investing in Children. The key challenge is to persuade public authorities to invest more. Public spending on children is a bit rigid at the moment and, in countries like Romania, a lot of money has been lost in administrative processes. But there are huge opportunities ahead from the European Structural Funds.

Investment in preventive services is a key for many organisations to reach their goals, but is a weak link at the moment. The State spends a lot of money post factum, but we need to invest more into families so that children do not end up in institutions."



Ivan Tancabel - *Young Person, Member of the Children's City Council Opatija in Croatia*

"I was elected as a children's mayor and am now the president of the Children City Council in Opatija where children are heard in the decision making process. I am lucky to come from a child friendly city where we have meetings with the mayor, forums, council etc. Why is this important? Because it brings benefits for children, adults and the wider community.

Child participation encourages tolerance, intergenerational dialogue and respect for children; it increases awareness about the issues that children encounter, and strengthens both democracy and trust between children and adults. It also helps the young people themselves develop their confidence and skills. I hope that during this conference the adults will learn more about children's participation."



Codrin Scutaru - *Deputy Minister, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and Elderly, Romania*

"No one can convince me that an institution is a good place for children. We need more firm action to eradicate institutional care and support prevention in Romania. Unfortunately, we are still living in a difficult transitional period, but we should not try to hide our problems, but rather recognise our weaknesses and accept support from international organisations.

It is a big honour to host this event in Romania and thanks to many national organisations for being present. We hope to reach conclusions that turn into real social policies. It should be our priority to put children at the forefront of policy-making. Family is a solution for many problems."

Keynote speeches

The welcome was followed by three keynote speeches from high-level experts who aimed to inspire participants with their experience and vision for investing in children and young people.



Frank Vandenbroucke

Former Belgian Minister of Social Affairs and Professor in Leuven and Amsterdam

THE REALITY OF CHILD POVERTY

Professor Vandenbroucke started by looking at the at-risk-of-poverty (AROP) rate for 0-18 year-olds, showing that there are huge disparities between countries in the EU⁴. The AROP rate is increasing in nearly in all EU countries, but the gap between countries is also increasing.

Social problems should be a matter of common concern for all, but they affect Member States very differently creating 'social imbalances'. This is illustrated with imbalances in child poverty that may create long-term problem 'spill-overs' across Member States if they persist.

A high level of child poverty is a leading indicator for long-term social and economic problems signalling investment deficits that may be cause and effect in a vicious circle of underperforming labour markets and education systems.

Figures on real public spending on primary & pre-primary education in 2012 vs. 2004-2008 shows some bad news for countries like Portugal, Hungary and Romania. However, the important thing is not to start blaming countries, but to ask government to justify what is happening (as there might be unavoidable reasons) and to think how we can help those countries that are not doing so well.

NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS AND THE EU NEED TO DO THEIR HOMEWORK.

It is not very original to say that we need social investment, but it is important to emphasise this anyway as we are not yet delivering on this principle in the EU. There is a deficit of investment in childcare, social protection, education and the labour market. We need a new political deal for a European Social Union, based not only on nice objectives or blaming, but a political deal giving priority to social investment and investment in children.

Clever investment should prevent social problems. There is a social investment imperative based on:

- **Child-centred social investment following a human rights approach** - the European Commission's Recommendation on Investing in Children was very well written and provides very good advice on how to link policies with children's rights in practice.
- **An intelligent combination between protection and prevention** – more investment in prevention is essential, but some children are already in problems and so protection systems are also very important.
- **Universal and targeted systems** – the perceived conflict between these two approaches is a very old debate. The research shows that there is no conflict between selectivity and universalism.

The EU needs to support national welfare states on a systemic level in some of their key functions. Links between social policies and budgetary policies need to be developed. If there is a surveillance

4 EU-SILC, Eurostat

system on budgetary policies (EU Semester), social policies should not be put at risk because of this. In the EU Semester, EU Member States receive country-specific recommendations (CSRs) from the European Commission every year. These should focus even more on social issues and push the particular situation of children onto the agenda.

Eurochild's work to develop a strategy on how to use the **European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)** to support deinstitutionalisation is a very smart step. The process is a complicated one, but it should be possible to influence it. We do have practical instruments and now we need to implement them so as to move towards the Social Union.

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

It will be interesting to read the **new EU Investment Package** which has been announced by the new European Commission today (26 November 2014). There are legitimate concerns about how much money we have, but we have to invest in people as well as investing in technology and infrastructure. Just spending money does not guarantee good results, but cutting spending is not a recipe for success either. It was a good sign that Commissioner Thyssen⁵ stated clearly that it is necessary to link budgetary choices with social objectives.

Opportunities in life are of course determined not only by materialistic goods, but also issues such as health problems, lack of space, accommodation problems, lack of leisure time etc. Income is just one of the indicators. **Family problems and violence** are linked with this too.

The presentation took a macro perspective and so did not focus on the specific issues facing certain groups such as **Roma populations**. However, the important point is that the EU should base their policies on a human-rights perspective, so there should be no discrimination in access to social services etc.

In the modern political world, it can be a challenge to persuade people to invest in things that bring **long-term benefits rather than fast results**. It is important to convince people that developing better policies for children will pay off. Having better educated, less-stressed children with greater capacities is a vision which we need to sell.

There is a tension between **budgetary consolidation** and investment in social services and education, but long-term success requires governments to do both, hand in hand.



5 Marianne Thyssen became the new European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility in 2014



Jorge Cardona Llorens

Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child; Rapporteur for the General Comment on Public Spending to Realize Children's Rights

ENFORCING RIGHTS

The first 25 years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) has seen significant developments in special legislation incorporating the Convention and national strategies and plans for children. However, there has been little increase in investment and public spending.

The Committee has always reflected the importance of this crucial issue, notably in its recommendations to States and its General Comments (GCs). General Comment No. 5 (GC5) on General Measures of Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child⁶ (2003) dedicates two paragraphs to "Making children visible in budgets". But of course, this alone is not enough.

GUIDANCE ON PUBLIC SPENDING TO IMPLEMENT CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

On publishing GC5, the UNCRC Committee recognised that it was "likely to issue more detailed general comments on individual elements in due course, to expand on this outline." Now it has agreed to develop a specific GC on "Public Spending to Realize Children's Rights".

We have tried to be as participative as possible and take on board comments and input from civil society, States, experts and children. However, General Comments can only be 7 000 words maximum and must be universally applicable. We have already had to take out many examples, so it is important to keep expectations realistic.

Some key messages and observations on the content of the General Comment:

1. Evaluation and monitoring of the budgets must be embedded in all processes.
2. We need to make clear that public spending on children is a legal obligation. (Article 4 in the Convention).
3. There is an ethical imperative to invest. However, we need to explain what we mean by sustainable, prudent, efficient and effective public spending. It needs to be clear that spending must be inclusive and looking at diversity and always in the best interest of the child.
4. There are studies showing that there are also economic returns from investment in children. We need to make this argument to people. It needs to be politically fitted. Democratic societies must do this.
5. Each political party has its investment priorities, but investing in children should be first of all. They need to keep this in their minds
6. We need to speak in the General Comment about the need for impact studies and indicators.
7. We need to invest better – not only more.
8. We need to coordinate better both vertically and horizontally.

February 2016 is the deadline for the General Comment and we still have to overcome many difficult challenges. For example, it is very difficult to go deeper into indicators due to the word limit. The General Comment on public spending will have to remain quite general, and it will have to be elaborated in additional documents. Implementing the General Comment will also be an ongoing challenge. We have many organisations interested to be the partners in this work.

⁶ <http://tb.ohchr.org/default.aspx?Symbol=CRC/GC/2003/5>



Norah Gibbons

Chairperson, Child and Family Agency, Ireland

A new government took office in Ireland in 2011. A key objective was to do more with less. A crisis can also provide a new opportunity to do things differently.

EVIDENCE

An inquiry found that there was very little public accountability about spending on public services. There was also an imbalance between prevention, social protection and early intervention. There were too many deficits in decision making. Voices of children were not heard. They were not involved in decision making.

We did not have the data to fully understand children's needs and direct resources accordingly. We had to look at the key experiences and evidence from other countries.

CHANGING STRATEGY

A new policy framework was provided by government, with national standards. We delivered a successful referendum on children's rights, which are now integrated into the Constitution and are being used in the Courts. Programmes are now rigorously evaluated to give us our own evidence base in Ireland.

A new Child and Family Agency was established in 2014, bringing together Children & Family Services, the Family Support Agency and the National Educational Welfare Board. Many laws had to change to introduce the Agency. We created a new Board and executive and a corporate plan.

We have also worked to develop more partnerships between philanthropy and government. Another big change was in terms of participation and working with the NGO sector. Children now have a voice in Cabinet meetings. This was a change that was advocated from the bottom that has been really powerful.

CHALLENGES

The ultimate objective is active and healthy, safe, contributing children. We need to support children's learning, their key transition points, promote inclusion of everyone; we must consult, consult and consult again.

The amalgamation of the different services into one agency created important cultural changes between different ways of working and quite a lot of personnel changes. An important change of approach is that children with disabilities are now treated as children first and foremost. We still need to improve the way we involve children more actively in decision-making.

Budgetary issues remain an important challenge to have the resources to deal with important social issues, such as the relatively small number of children in institutional care and rising poverty rate among children and issues of homelessness.

We also have more to do to communicate the positive changes we are helping to deliver to people who do not see and feel it. This is a long-term project that was introduced by the Government, but the creation of the Agency has helped give the project some impetus.

Presentations and debate on cross-cutting themes

Following the inspiring introductory presentations, participants took part in debates on three cross-cutting themes: A. Evaluation methodologies; B. Public-private partnerships; and C. Social return on investment. Each debate was launched by an introductory speaker and then three expert witnesses.

A. Evaluation Methodologies

EVALUATION METHODOLOGIES - INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME

This theme focused on the different aims of evaluation in children and family services, how choices are made about different approaches to evidence and methodology, what methodologies are most 'fit for purpose', and how they can and should be used.

Eurochild has identified that there tends to be a rather narrow interpretation of the assessment of effective investments and public spending choices in child and family services by national governments, international organisations, research centres and some large programme funders, as well as the EU.

It is crucial to broaden understanding of what is meant by 'evidence-based' practice and explore some of the risks and consequences that arise from narrowly defining what counts as evidence in the evaluation of social interventions. It is important to think more broadly about what evidence is needed, at what stages and for what purposes.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGIES - INTRODUCTORY SPEAKER



John Canavan

Associate Director, UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre (UCFRC), National University of Ireland Galway, Ireland

John clarified that the session offered an opportunity to debate the Eurochild policy position on evidence and evaluation methodologies. This position originated from the work of a Eurochild thematic working group on family and parenting support, and developed based on a paper by the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre (UCFRC).

Whilst the topic has grown out of Eurochild's work in the field of family and parenting support, it is relevant for all child and family services including early years' education and care and child protection. In its policy position, Eurochild calls on the new leadership at the European Commission and European Parliament for a pluralist approach to evidence of effectiveness - from *what works* to *how it works* and *why, for whom*, and in *what contexts*.

John referred to a case study from his work at the UCFRC which illustrates how to build a culture of evaluation and adopt a pluralist approach. The Best Practice Unit (BPU) of Foróige – an Irish youth organisation – established a partnership with UCFRC. Through collaboration, they built a body of evidence on practice. Research partnership has proven to be successful. Scientific research and more formalised methodologies need to be combined with (and complemented by) practice wisdom. Encouraging reflective practice⁷ in practitioners will contribute significantly to our understanding of what works.

⁷ Reflective practice is based on a mixture of description and questioning informed by action leading to change – for the individual and in social contexts (Dolan P., Canavan, J. and Pinkerton J., *Family Support as Reflective Practice*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London, 2006).

EVALUATION METHODOLOGIES - EXPERT WITNESSES

Jean Gordon

Universal Education Foundation / Learning for Well-being Consortium

Jean talked about using the principles of Learning for Well-being (L4WB) to challenge assumptions about “measuring what matters” and how they can be used in relation to monitoring, evaluation and quality frameworks.

She presented an example of how the L4WB Charter for Children can be used as a tool for advocacy through the piloting of a policy review template to strengthen policy advocacy that was carried out in 2014 by a Eurochild Reference Group.

She concluded with some questions about measuring progress towards a vision or a goal, including: who decides what are valuable outcomes for children?; how are outcomes defined and by whom?; what matters and is that what we are measuring?; and do we need to create new sets of indicators, or influence existing sets?

Allyn Fives

UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, National University of Ireland

Allyn proposed a pluralist approach to evidence, using an Evaluation Evidence Matrix (or typology). This was offered as an alternative to ranking evidence types in a hierarchy with Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs) at or near the highest level.

Allyn’s pluralist approach stands opposed to the polarised debate between those for whom RCTs are the “gold standard” and those who contend that RCTs are often inappropriate in social settings. The two opposing paradigms are based on a series of ethical and methodological myths concerning RCTs that this presentation attempted to dispel.

The speaker concluded by providing a description of what an Evaluation Evidence Matrix can and cannot do. In particular, an Evaluation Evidence Matrix (or typology) has greater value in evaluating evidence, making programmes more robust, fit for purpose and of value to practitioners. The matrix approach to evidence evaluation would not only offer better assessment of effectiveness but also give greater weight to the different contexts in which children and families exist, and the practical wisdom of the service providers.

Tom van Yperen

The Netherlands Youth Institute / Utrecht University / Groningen University

Tom presented three main arguments related to the selection of appropriate evaluation designs. The first was that the design should match with the developmental stage of the specific intervention.

The second was that the design should fit the type of intervention, because for some types it is extremely difficult to perform an RCT.

The third was about using existing data and advanced techniques to form control groups, instead of collecting new data on the control groups over and over again – which will ultimately also save effort and money.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGIES - POINTS OF DEBATE

Following the presentations, debate with participants focused on the following areas:

- The pros and cons of cohort studies in evaluating programmes and services
- The pros and cons of using RCT in longitudinal research
- The need for reflective practice at professional and (inter)organisation level
- The importance of looking at process quality and professionals' competencies
- The importance of setting long-term goals with a wide variety of stakeholders
- The importance of doing a long-term evaluation to assess what is required to bring about a "tipping point"

EVALUATION METHODOLOGIES - KEY MESSAGES AND LEARNING POINTS

There seems to be an over-reliance on a hierarchical approach to understanding evidence in evaluation. Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs) are not the gold standard in evaluation and they are only an adequate and appropriate tool in certain contexts and circumstances, for specific purposes and in response to specific questions.

We need to promote an evaluation culture advocating for greater pluralism in the types of evaluations and evidence collected. Evidence of effectiveness can come from a range of sources.

Evaluation practices need to be appropriate to the specific stage of intervention. There is no single "best" methodology for all cases. Different approaches have strengths and weaknesses and can be more or less appropriate for a specific purpose and the developmental stage of the intervention.

It is crucial to inform and improve practice through the knowledge that has emerged and evolved primarily on the basis of practical and community experience, including professional wisdom, and through the engagement of all stakeholders including children and families.



B. Public-Private Partnership

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS - INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME

The aim of this debate was to bring clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the public and private sectors and highlight the different motivations behind their respective engagement.

Promotion of children's rights and well-being is a common responsibility across all sectors of society and the necessity to work together across the public, private and voluntary sectors is widely understood. The role of businesses and private sector finance is subject to much debate, particularly in the current context of shrinking public expenditures.

Discussions on this theme focused on the role of social innovation, social entrepreneurship and social enterprise and the opportunities and threats this trend poses to improving outcomes for children and families. We also addressed questions around the role of business and the private sector and issues around procurement and commissioning of children's services.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS - INTRODUCTORY SPEAKER



Valentina Caimi

Policy and Advocacy Adviser, Social Platform

Valentina recalled the specific mission of "Social Services of General Interest" (SSGIs) and their place as a priority in the EU legislation. She reminded that access to SSGIs is a human right before describing the different competences of the EU and Member States in this matter.

Valentina presented the legal, political and financial framework of social service provision in the EU, highlighting the cultural differences that affect provision in different Member States. However, she stressed that whatever model is used and whoever provides the service, a profit-making logic should not prevail over the general interest enshrined in the mission of these services.

There is the need for a rights-based approach to SSGIs with the State setting a legal, financial and regulatory framework guaranteeing universal access and non-discrimination in the provision of quality, affordable and accessible services. Financing of social services must be seen as social investment.

The EU, State authorities and NGOs all have roles to play in addressing the challenges and opportunities facing social service provision in Europe.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS - EXPERT WITNESSES

Bianca Isaincu

Child & Youth Finance International (CYFI)

Bianca talked about promoting young people's economic rights through innovation and co-operation with the banking sector. She focused on the importance and the limitations of private investors in their efforts to improve the lives of children and young people.

She presented the Child and Youth Finance International Movement and the role of the CYFI Secretariat as coordinator and catalyser of efforts for enhancing the economic rights of children and youth. She explained some of the strategic partnerships between the Secretariat and representatives of the private sector and the governance mechanisms put in place in order to ensure transparency of the collaboration and accountability.

Kevin Goldberg

Groupe SOS, France

Kevin explained that Groupe SOS is a large non-profit social enterprise operating in the fields of youth, employment and solidarity across France. Their work uses public-private partnerships as a way to trigger social innovation in the field of prevention.

Three projects co-financed and developed in co-operation with private donors were presented, targeting children and young people at risk or from disadvantaged backgrounds. One focused specifically on achieving greater social impact by using sport as a community-building factor. One was an enabling project targeted at care leavers in the form of social experimentation. The third project was a social business initiative created in partnership with the Ministry of Justice for the inclusion of young people in contact with the law.

Delia Pop

Director of Programmes at Hope and Homes for Children, UK

Delia briefly introduced some public-private financing models for the transition from institutional to community-based care. She highlighted that each type of funding can help leverage the other through mutually beneficial value propositions and interests.

Financing mechanisms can enable as well as block accountability of the State (policy and legislature) and its service provision agents and our ability to hold them to account with regard to children's best interests.

The business models of civil society agencies can often compromise their ability to meaningfully contribute to the conditions in which different types of funding partnerships can be successful.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS - POINTS OF DEBATE

Following the presentations, debate with participants focused on the following areas:

- The different motivations and values of NGOs, the private sector and public authorities in engaging in public-private partnerships
- The need for private sector partners to be socially responsible, show accountability towards stakeholders and ensure the returns (and risks) on investment are appropriately shared
- The potential for the public sector to use private money to increase the scale, outreach, efficiency and continuity of certain measures
- How public procurement models support or hinder the capacity of the voluntary or non-profit sector and the need for sustainable long-term funding for their activities
- The need for NGOs to gather expertise and innovate in their activities
- The potential for public-private partnerships to address new social needs and to test and change policy and practice

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS - KEY MESSAGES AND LEARNING POINTS

Public-private partnerships cannot replace statutory service provision. It is the State's responsibility to ensure accountability, quality and sustainability of services – particularly in light of their obligations under the UNCRC and the EU Lisbon Treaty.

Promoting the general interest should be the aim of services provided through public-private partnerships. Reducing public spending should not be the first priority of public-private partnerships. All partners must recognise that the core business of the partnership is to further social outcomes.

Social service provision requires a long-term perspective. Service provision cannot be undertaken for short-term benefit, but requires a long-term perspective and sustainability of actions. This might be a challenge for the State when it invests in social experimentation projects and for the private sector's market logic.

An independent evaluation framework for measuring social impact has to be put in place at the beginning of the partnership. It should look at ways to ensure sustainability and long-term perspective in interventions.

Children's engagement should be ensured in services provided for them, throughout the whole process starting from its design.

The defensiveness of civil society to entering into public-private partnerships should be addressed. Civil society should be attentive to arguments that can convince the private sector to enter the sector. The stereotype of the private sector as a counterpart rather than a potential partner in the social sphere was challenged. It was noted that civil society organisations sometimes face quite similar challenges when engaging with the public as with the private sector.

Capacity building of civil society should be considered a legitimate investment priority under public-private partnerships.



C. Social Return on Investment

SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT- INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME

This session addressed ways to strengthen our arguments for investing in children based on the concept of social return on investment (SROI). Discussions mapped existing knowledge and knowledge gaps and weighed success factors and barriers for SROI studies.

In times of austerity, pressure to demonstrate returns on investment in children's rights and well-being mounts. Despite evidence that institutionalisation gives rise to rights violations, and that prevention and alternative family care are more cost-effective in the long term, vested interests and short-sighted financial considerations often tend to prevail.

There are plenty of cost-effectiveness studies calculating the economic value of specific interventions for children in specific contexts. However, there are far fewer studies which calculate the broader social return on investing in systemic changes towards deinstitutionalisation reforms and child-centred policies.

SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT - INTRODUCTORY SPEAKER



Nicholas Rees

Policy Analysis Specialist, Division of Policy and Strategy, UNICEF Headquarters, New York

Nicholas explained that social return on investment analysis was an extension of cost-benefit analysis (CBA) intended to capture a broader concept of value including social and environmental returns.

Case studies from Tajikistan and Romania showed how economic analysis can help advocate for investment in children and drive policy change, because it enables engagement in high-level policy discourses and allows stakeholders to identify common ground. Integrated assessments of returns to investment can facilitate strategic discussion, help manage unexpected outcomes and improve programming.

The importance of creativity in assigning value to outcomes was highlighted, while at the same time applying rigour to the analysis. Assumptions need to be clearly laid out, to ensure transparency and integrity. Sensitivity and risk-analyses also need to be conducted to ensure the conclusions of the study are robust, and account for the possibility of unforeseen circumstances arising.

The practical counter indications (lack of data, lack of time in emergency situations) as well as the ethical objections (pricing the priceless and troubling trade-offs) were discussed.

Based on the success factors of the case studies, it was suggested to involve stakeholders and link into the decision-making cycle early on. One of the main issues discussed was how to apply SROI to system-changes, such as alternative care reforms. This would include how to manage long-term outcomes and extended timeframes.

SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT - EXPERT WITNESSES

Aagje Ieven

Senior Advocacy and Campaigns Coordinator, Eurochild

Aagje presented the results of a literature study on methodologies for demonstrating social return on investment (SROI) in prevention and quality alternative care.⁸ Out of the 38 relevant studies, 15 used the SROI framework. Cost-benefit analysis and cost-effectiveness studies were also frequently used. Some examples of each were presented to demonstrate success factors and barriers.

A full SROI analysis requires the availability of quality data, and ultimately the whole choice of methodology depends on this. Assessing system-wide reform raises challenges with scaling up from the intervention level at which all SROI studies identified were situated. Creating a set of standardised outcomes as proxies to make research outcomes in different contexts comparable would also be a big challenge as these should be selected by the stakeholders and will be different in different contexts.

Stefan Darabus

Country Director of Hope and Homes for Children Romania

Stefan presented a study projecting the financial impact of reform of the public child protection system in Romania up to 2020. It compared a scenario of no reform with modest and fully fledged reforms. The study focused on child flows, departures expenditure and costs of foster and residential care, taking into account recent trends in admissions etc.

The study showed that – although initially incurring additional costs – medium and long-term results were unquestionably in favour of comprehensive reform. This resulted in the recommendation to embark on a nationwide, medium-term reform of the child protection system using the particular opportunities provided by the 2014-2020 EU Cohesion Policy framework prioritising deinstitutionalisation.

Despite it being too early for definite conclusions, the economic evidence of the study had already been instrumental in getting commitment from Romanian authorities to deinstitutionalisation and to allocation of a meaningful amount of money to reform social services.

Hanna Heinonen, Programme Director &

Tiia Hipp, Senior Advisor, Central Union for Child Welfare, Finland

The joint presenters showcased their study describing alternative 'service paths' for children and calculating the associated costs across the life course. The study made fruitful use of storytelling, using four imagined scenarios of a child's starting situation and progression through different services, on the basis of strong evidence of probabilities for each scenario.

It showed that for the cost of one year of institutionalisation, plenty of specialised services could be purchased, and no less than seven years of intensive family support. This study made a strong case for investing in prevention. In a country situation where child welfare is considered as being in crisis, considering rising rates of out of home placements and child protection services not being able to cope with the 'demand', the study had been highly valued by political decision-makers.

8 This work was commissioned by Eurochild and carried out by Claire Milligan, Strategic Advisor on Violence against Children at Save the Children UK, as part of a two year study, funded by OAK Foundation, with the aim to develop a framework that will allow advocates and policymakers to make the case for investing in family care, community based services and closure of institutions.

SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT - POINTS OF DEBATE

Following the presentations, debate with participants focused on the following areas:

- The most appropriate ways to use costings, cost-effectiveness, cost-benefit analysis and social return on investment analysis in advocating for systemic child protection reforms, including the risks of focusing on economic arguments rather than arguments on the best interests of children.
- The need to compare quality and outcomes – including (very) long-term outcomes for both individuals and society as a whole - as well as comparing the costs of different service paths.
- How to ensure maximum impact of the research and how research for advocacy can be best used to drive policy change.
- Early involvement of all stakeholders, including the involvement of children as beneficiaries of child protection system reform.
- How robust SROI analyses – based on projections and hypothetical case studies – can be.
- The level of understanding of policy-makers of SROI analyses

SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT - KEY MESSAGES AND LEARNING POINTS

We should focus advocacy on investment in child protection not spending on child protection. Policy makers need to start seeing the broader social gain.

We should not fear figures. Rights-arguments are the heart of our advocacy, but if we can also follow the money, reveal financial barriers to systemic change, and create incentives we can generate real change.

It is important to understand the needs of policy-makers. When we understand who our target audience is and what information they need, we can decide what to measure and the most appropriate methodology. It can be useful to involve policy-makers in the study or research from its inception.

Research for advocacy should take into account the full richness of information available. Involving all stakeholders in the process - citizens, politicians, workers, families and children - a richer and more comprehensive understanding of reality can be achieved, leading to better informed financing.

We do not need to bring perfect evidence, we need to make the case for investment. SROI analyses must be as robust as possible to ensure buy-in from governments. Nevertheless, they should not be judged by a higher standard than other economic analyses, which all use modelling and hypotheses. Research must enable us to build our capacity to engage positively in the conversation about money.

Practitioners need guidance on how to develop data, how to make good assumptions, how to define parameters and boundaries for their study, and which limits to take into account.

Policy-makers also need capacity building. The development of toolkits and guidance to build the capacity to do and understand this type of economic analysis (such as ongoing work within UNICEF) can be very useful for different stakeholders inside as well as outside the Ministries.

Good research must be linked with good advocacy. Continuous dialogue with policymakers as well as good media connections are crucial for disseminating research for real change.

Presenting good practice

Several learning opportunities were provided to participants through a variety of formats covering: A. poster sessions; B. Study visits, C. Video corner showcasing materials made by and presenting the views and perspectives of children; and D. Side events arranged by partner organisations.

A. Poster Sessions

I. SMALL GROUP HOMES FOCUSED ON INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT

Tomasz Polkowski

Chairman, Our Home Association, Poland

The presentation focused on the model of small group homes managed by Our Home Association in Poland and Georgia⁹. The model uses child and family individualised services based on attachment studies, a casework plan and planning permanency.

Participants discussed the responsibilities of the individually assigned care-giver in a small group home, as well as the teamwork procedures focusing on the effective reintegration of the child within the family and the tools of the Individual Planning Method.

The small group homes model seems to be an interesting organisational and methodological formula, where individual needs of children are being satisfied, including recreating the child's capability for emotional relationships. The small group homes have good effects in child and family reintegration, tightly co-operating with social workers and the so-called "family assistants". Such a model may be an alternative, temporary solution for teenagers who cannot (or do not want) to be placed in a foster care environment.

II. THE EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR INVESTING IN CHILDREN (EPIC)

Benoit Guerin

Analyst, RAND Europe

This presentation briefly introduced the European Platform for Investing in Children¹⁰, which is an EU platform for collecting evidence, news, and reports on child-focused policies and practice. It aims to provide an evidence base of what works in practice to support investment that is more likely to provide a decent social return (SROI).

The presentation aimed to help stakeholders learn more about how to leverage the potential of evaluations for smart investment. It explained the links between EPIC and the European Commission's recommendation on 'Investing in Children'. The presenter highlighted EPIC's 'practices that work' section, where stakeholders, policymakers and practitioners can search and view child and family-related practices from around the EU.

The presentation also addressed the way in which practices are evaluated, and the value of engaging with evidence-based platforms in this policy area. Examples of practices which have generated significant social returns on investment were shared.

⁹ See more at <http://www.towarzystwonaszdom.pl/en/>

¹⁰ Available at <http://europa.eu/epic>

III. NORTHERN IRELAND'S DELIVERING SOCIAL CHANGE FRAMEWORK

Henry Johnston

Director of Programme for Government and Delivering Social Change, Northern Ireland

The Delivering Social Change Framework¹¹ was set up by the Northern Ireland Executive to tackle poverty and social exclusion among children and young people. Under this Framework, Signature Programmes aim to tackle root issues before they develop into problems and provide children, young people and their families with the support they need.

Attendees learned about new innovative processes under the Framework for effective cross-departmental working and for tackling big societal problems holistically. Delivering Social Change demonstrates how new policy ideas can be piloted and evaluated. The presentation illustrated methods and ideas for effective evaluation of how to roll-out and up-scale policy initiatives which have demonstrated success.

Although the framework involves a relatively small financial investment and a small number of pilot programmes, the long-term goal is to achieve real social change for the most disadvantaged members of our society.

IV. SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH COMPLEX NEEDS

Ioana Giurisici

Children with Complex Needs Services Director, FARA, Romania

FARA Romania has been working with abandoned and orphaned children for more than 20 years, setting up family-style homes, foster-parents systems and programmes to re-integrate young people into society. All activities are carried out in close collaboration with staff from the Department of Child Protection.

FARA's Specialist Learning and Development Centres¹² provide community-based care, special-needs education and therapies, and promote inclusion. FARA opened the first specialised learning and recovery centre in Bucharest in 2007 using a UK model. They have specialised, trained staff, modern equipment and educational materials to provide all the services to meet each child's needs.

Appreciating its results, the Child Protection Department in the area opened a similar one in 2013. In 2011, FARA opened the first Specialised Centre for Children with Autism in northern Romania, which also became a model for state institutions in the north. A state recovery centre for children with autism was opened in northern Romania in 2013 using FARA's model.

V. EARLY YEARS EDUCATION AND CARE: A DRIVER OF HEALTH EQUITY

Peter Goldblatt

Senior Advisor University College London Institute of Health equity

DRIVERS¹³ (2012-2015) is a research programme coordinated by EuroHealthNet, with several project partners including Eurochild. It is funded by the EU's 7th Framework Programme aiming to convey knowledge and understanding of what works in what contexts in three areas having a key impact on health inequalities: 1) Early childhood development; 2) Realising fair employment; and 3) Social protection.

The presentation focused on some of the findings of the project in relation to early child development (ECD). These show that in Europe, a number of indicators of parents' financial, educational, employment, housing and social status are all associated with children's health and development outcomes.

11 Delivering Social Change website: <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/delivering-social-change>

12 See more at <http://www.faracharity.org/what-we-do/supporting-children-with-special-needs/21-special-needs>

13 See more about the project at <http://health-gradient.eu/>

According to a systematic review examining the literature on early childhood interventions, the majority of existing ECD programmes aim to improve parenting capacities, but some had additional components such as day-care provision, improving housing and speech or psychological therapies for children. The presenter's recommendations include adopting interventions that have proved effective in other countries and contexts, and investing in universal quality services related to social needs to prevent the transmission of inequality between generations.

VI. FINANCING OF PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION – AN EVALUATION FROM AN EQUITY PERSPECTIVE

Luminita Costache

Education Specialist, UNICEF Romania

UNICEF Romania and the Romanian Institute of Education Sciences conducted in 2013 an evaluation in terms of equity of the current standard-cost financing and transition to the new system of financing (using a per capita formula) of the pre-university education system. The research was delivered within the context of the School Attendance Initiative '*Let's go to School!*'¹⁴ and aimed to identify the extent to which the per-capita allocation provides adequate support to the most disadvantaged categories of students.

The investigation was carried out in 77 schools located in socio-economically disadvantaged areas, using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Almost half the schools (47%) signalled that available funds are not sufficient to cover their needs. Local governments provided extra funds for only 39% of schools. All the schools complained that they lack resources for investment in infrastructure upgrading or repairs.

The investigation underlined that 80% of the schools consider the new budgets insufficient for the extra-curricular activities, with many having to cancel a number of planned activities. Smaller schools functioning in the most socio-economic disadvantaged communities are in the most vulnerable situation, whilst the new financing mechanism also generates a disparity between rural and urban schools to the disadvantage of the rural schools.

VII. CALCULATOR COST OF INACTION MODEL - EVIDENCE-BASED SOCIAL INVESTMENTS

Gabriela Sempruch

Chief Policy Advisor, Mazovian Social Policy Center

The Calculator Costs of Inaction (CCI) model¹⁵ promotes evidence-based social investments through the use of technology. The CCI Model is based on several IT instruments, including: Social Calculator, Diffuser of Social Innovation and Strategy Generator. These new tools are dedicated to local authorities and public sector representatives, agents involved in conducting social policy (e.g. NGOs, private companies) and local communities including service users.

The model enables: costs assessment; budget and strategic planning; focus on active social policy; social services development; and support to local community development through social investments. It aims to provide new methods and tools for implementing evidence-based social policy.

The CCI model was created by the multi-sectoral partnership in the Mazovia region (Poland) in 2012 and was based on wide participation of the beneficiaries. It was tested in practice in several Mazovian local communities. Now it is being scaled-up in Mazovia and other regions of Poland.

14 More information on the campaign can be found at <http://www.unicef.ro/ce-facem/initiative/hai-la-scoala/despre-campanie/> (only in Romanian)

15 More information is available at: <http://www.kkz.mcps-efs.pl/angielski-engilsh.html>

VIII. VELUX MICRO-GRANTS PROJECT: “STEPS TO SELF-RELIANCE”

Nicoleta Preda

National Programme Development Director, SOS Children's Villages Romania

The Velux Project “Steps to Self-Reliance”¹⁶ enables SOS Children's Villages Romania to reach more users within local communities and to increase the possibility of self-reliance among vulnerable families and young people ready to leave existing SOS projects. It does this by providing them with an opportunity through a micro-grant. The project demonstrated that this type of intervention can be very well integrated into the case management method.

The micro-grants led to a rapid improvement of the situation of families placed below the absolute poverty level. Grants offered to young people leaving alternative care contributed to improving their access to the labour market through education and training, while grants for children and families contributed to overcoming crisis situations, supporting families and meeting children's developmental needs.

Micro-grants thus showed themselves to be a very efficient instrument for alleviating poverty and a good example of social return of investment. A recommendation is that micro-grants could be introduced as a very efficient instrument in the frame of the future structural funds as they imply active measures to support families at risk of poverty.

IX. THE ECONOMIC RECESSION IMPACTING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN SOUTHERN EUROPE

Rita Nunes

Researcher, Freie Universität Berlin, European Network of Masters in Children's Rights, CREAN Network

The partners of the CREAN Mediterranean network¹⁷ have focused on researching how the economic recession in southern Europe is influencing the position of children in countries' policymaking and political agendas. The Mediterranean network aims to put children at the centre of the economic debate and emphasise an understanding of children's rights where the participation of children is an essential prerequisite.

The first phase of the research involved the collection of data covering, amongst others, legislation, studies, national reports and the existence and practice of an Observatory for Children. The research examined the country-specific initiatives, legislation, or funds for children and families and if specific budgets supporting children were introduced or social expenditure cuts made.

Over the past few years serious economic and social setbacks have threatened the development and progress of the health, education and protection of children in the Mediterranean area. A first summary of these findings were presented from Cyprus, Greece, Croatia and Spain.

X. FREE MEALS IN KINDERGARTEN, HUNGARY

Eszter Salamon

President of European Parents Association

The presentation by the European Parents Association¹⁸ demonstrated a programme applied in Hungary by a local municipality between 1999 and 2002, as a successful example of public spending for inclusion. Amongst others, the programme was aiming at offering general education services to children under compulsory schooling age, educating the parents, supporting enrolment and steady attendance, and raising the level of social competencies.

¹⁶ <http://www.sos-satelecopiilor.ro/>

¹⁷ See more about the network at <http://www.crean-home.net>

¹⁸ See more about the organisation at <http://euparents.eu/>

The programme was targeted to mixed background 3-6 year old children, many of them Roma, living in the district. Amongst other financial provisions, the local municipality offered free meals three times a day to every child below the age of 3 at kindergarten. The programme also included training for parenting support and parental education.

One of the main outcomes was that nearly all Roma children involved in the programme, especially of those in the most difficult financial situation – generally educated at home before compulsory schooling age – enrolled and attended kindergarten. It resulted in a better level of socialisation among children and also offered a good experience for parents who had very bad experiences with teachers from their own school time.

XI. FOSTERING SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW

Jeffrey Coleman

Project Programme Director, British Association for Adoption and Fostering

Alternatives to Custody for Young Offenders¹⁹ was a 2-year international project, led by the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF), **co-financed by the European Commission's 'Daphne III' child-friendly justice initiative. Starting in January 2013, the partners, including Eurochild, have carried out an extensive research-based programme of study, and mutual learning, in all 28 EU Member States, devoting special attention to Hungary, Bulgaria, Italy and the United Kingdom.**

All the partner agencies advocate the principle that detention is a measure of last resort for children in conflict with the law. The rehabilitative potential of remand and intensive fostering as alternatives to custodial sentencing is considerable. The project aimed to set up a European good practice model of 'Intensive and Remand Fostering Programmes' for young offenders with the active participation of young people with personal experience of custody.

This project aimed to help fill the gap in the availability of viable alternatives, supporting diversion from detention. The project showed that fostering for children in conflict with the law has the potential to reduce re-offending, respects children's rights, improves children's life-chances, and promotes social inclusion of the marginalised.

XII. FINANCIAL ANALYSIS FOR SCALING UP COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES AT NATIONAL LEVEL

Voica Pop

Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF Romania

UNICEF, in partnership with the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and Elderly Persons (MLFS-PEP), developed a modelling project based on the theory that children's welfare in Romania will improve only if children have enhanced access to the minimum package of social services (education, health, and social assistance services).²⁰

The presentation highlighted the uneven development of social assistance services at local level and the concept of the minimum package of services in the context of preventive community-based services. It considered the costs of prevention services in comparison with protection services, as well as costs, drivers of costs and indicators for progressive implementation at national scale.

19 See more at <http://www.baaf.org.uk/ourwork/developing-intensive-and-remand-fostering-programmes>

20 More information available at <http://www.unicef.org/romania/>

The modelling project clearly demonstrated that preventive community services are: i) relatively simple and do not necessarily require a specialised intervention; ii) delivered in the community, close to and within the reach of its members; iii) fast, straightforward solutions, ensuring support for children and families; iv) low-cost solutions, maximising the use of already available community resources and services; and v) focused on prevention, helping decrease the need for expensive specialised services.

B. Study Visits

1. World Vision Romania organised a study visit to their innovative project called *“Interdisciplinary School Based Services for Child Welfare in Romania”*. This model of service provision aims to fill the gaps in the continuum of child welfare services to ensure that the implementation of child welfare policy meets the rights of children.

The study visit explained: how evidence from the pilot project “School-based child welfare service (SDS)” had been used to advocate at local and national level for policy change; how they document and report on impact; how this project links between child protection and educational systems; and the role of the public and private sectors in delivery of school-based child welfare service (SDS) for vulnerable children.

Participants heard from beneficiaries (children, parents and schools) about the impact and investment of the programme in their lives and gained knowledge about ways of working with children and families to involve and empower them in community life.

The study visit showcased two cross-cutting themes of the conference: social return on investment; and public-private partnership. It also focused on the following thematic priorities: family and parenting support; and child and youth participation.

2. The Feed the Children Association’s study visit gave participants an overview of its services offered through different programmes of social assistance for children and families, and activities in the field of protection of children’s rights in Romania. The Association also campaigns for the development of social services integrated into a local network of social assistance and promotes education activities for at-risk people as well as a rapid and efficient intervention in crisis situations.

The Feed the Children Association’s main objectives are to improve life quality of underprivileged socio-economic people, to prevent family and school abandonment, to prevent the institutionalisation of children, to attract public attention and to develop the public-private partnership.

The Association’s programmes provide specific support such as: material and financial support to overcome crisis situations; specialised counselling and accompanying the parents in finding a job; registration to family physician, psychotherapy and family counselling; educational assistance for children with learning difficulties; social counselling for children and their parents; and educational programmes for family life, raising children, caring for the home, and budget management.

The visit particularly enabled participants to learn about public-private partnership in Romania and about the community and user involvement in information services and their future contribution to the success of social programmes.

C. Video Corner on Child and Youth Participation

Supporting children's empowerment through social and financial education - Aflatoun



The video showed experience of children and youth participating in Aflatoun programmes, inside and outside of school.

By teaching basic social and financial skills and providing children with practical experience, Aflatoun hopes that they will believe in themselves and their ability to make a difference in their lives and in the lives of people around them.

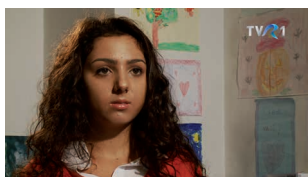
Mind Your Wallet! - International Debate Education Association (IDEA)



This short movie from IDEA showed a project aimed at raising awareness on financial issues and how to avoid getting

into debt and/or to get out of debt. Youth workers, teachers and young professionals are trained to organise debate activities where young people learned to talk about issues related to financial problems and responsibilities.

Overcoming prejudice: supporting children with dyslexia - Sorana Stanescu, TVR Romania



The video presented testimonies from dyslexic children and their families on what it is like to be dyslexic in Romania, a country

where learning disabilities are largely unknown. Children struggle through school undiagnosed, with a lack of proper therapy and support, while their parents desperately try to come up with solutions on their own. It makes the case for investing in inclusive education and in support for children with dyslexia from an early age to improve their chances of reaching their full potential.

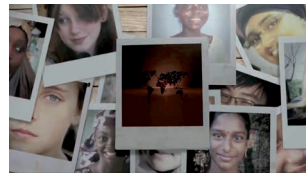
Talking about public spending for children - Eurochild



The video showed children taking part in the CATS (Children as Actors in Transforming Society) initiative discussing public spending to

realise the rights of the child (in contribution to the upcoming UNCRC and OHCHR reports²¹). They identified priorities for government funding, such as health, education, welfare and social security.

Wadada World Kids News Flash - Child and Youth Finance International



The video is a Wadada World Kids News Flash for a Chance for Change. Kids from around the world address the UN regarding

the Post-2015 Human Development goals. They call for financial education to be included and embedded in good and accountable financial governance. Common desires include gaining greater knowledge on finances, how to save and administer money more wisely and how to sustain oneself and become empowered.

The benefits of after-school programmes - World Vision Romania Foundation



The video presented the after-school programmes provided by the World Vision Romania Foundation, 2010-2014, in areas

that require socio-educational intervention and dropout prevention services for the most vulnerable children. At the beginning, the Foundation provided 80% of funding and after 1-2 years, the local authorities, noticing the results, decided to participate in the programme through public investment from the local budget.

21 UNCRC Committee General Comment on Public Spending to Realize Children's Rights and the OHCHR report on "Towards Better Investment in the Rights of the Child"

D. Side events

1. WORKSHOP: BUILDING THE ECONOMIC CASE FOR CHILD-FRIENDLY JUSTICE

INTRODUCTION

This workshop was co-organised by Eurochild and the Embassy of France in Romania, with the participation of the International Juvenile Justice Observatory. It had 40 participants, representing a range of professional disciplines²² and perspectives²³ from 10 European countries. The aim was to incorporate the issue of public spending in justice for children and the economic case for child-friendly justice into the larger debates taking place during the conference. Case studies on approaches on justice for children in Bulgaria, France and Northern Ireland were followed by group discussions on key areas in child-friendly justice.

DISCUSSION POINTS AND FINDINGS

Reforming juvenile justice systems can have three major benefits in terms of social return on investment: 1. Ensuring protection of vulnerable children and young people; 2. Ensuring real opportunities for children and young people to be fully integrated and active in today and tomorrow's society (to everyone's benefit); and 3. Delivering safer societies - preventing youth crime and reducing risk factors that lead children to crime.

Investing in four key areas of child-friendly justice is the most cost effective: 1. Prevention services; 2. Diversion measures; 3. Community sanctions; and 4. Alternatives to pre-trial detention and imprisonment. Improved family support and social and education services are crucial in this context.

There are resources available, they just need to be used in a more appropriate manner.

Progress can still be made in youth justice reform when budgets are cut. Money could be saved by the abolition of out-dated legal texts and the creation of new structures better focused on outcomes for children, shifting from a punitive to an educative approach.

Public budgets should be scrutinised and the effectiveness of public spending analysed to ensure effective investment in child-friendly justice. This means revising budgets that tend to imbalance the provision of actual services to beneficiaries versus excessive administration costs, and reallocating budgets to the creation of new child-friendly services.

Strategies and approaches might be slightly different depending on the countries' budget situation. For some the challenge may be to lobby for a reallocation of available budgets to new child-friendly services; for others it may be to ensure the maintenance of a good level of services and child-friendly procedures in the face of budget cuts.

Sufficient budgets need to be allocated for data collection and sharing, cross-sectoral work, evidence generation and capacity building for professionals.

Whatever process is undertaken, it is essential that due process is still provided for young people and that quality of services is maintained. It is essential to ensure that children and young people are consulted in all of these measures when we are improving justice systems.

²² Participants included senior experts in juvenile justice, including judges, lawyers, policy officers, probation officers, project managers, consultants, researchers, social workers, a mediator, a psychologist and an ombudsman.

²³ Including the International Juvenile Justice Observatory, government bodies, NGOs, international organisations, foundations and diplomatic representations.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMMEDIATE STEPS BY KEY STAKEHOLDERS

At EU level:

- Organise a European discussion on cross-sectoral data standardisation in the youth justice sector, to provide governments with evidence for better decisions about cost savings and budget allocations, as well as to allow Europe-wide comparable data on youth justice.
- Ensure that calls for proposals to access EU funding in the area of child justice incorporate investment in data collection and the creation of evidence-generating structures.

At national level, national governments to:

- Demonstrate how child-friendly policies can be linked with efficient expenditure to prevent youth crime, as part of justice reforms.
- Provide harmonised guidelines and indicators for data collection on the number and profile of children and young people in contact with the law.
- Revise legislation where necessary and invest in formulating and diffusing clear child-friendly justice standards to sub-national administrations for the provision of child-friendly services.
- Reallocate budgets for costly detention services to youth justice alternative services, while implementing accessible public procurement processes, for better long-term social integration of young people who committed a crime.

At sub-national level, local administrations to:

- Invest in setting-up cross-sectoral collaboration mechanisms with other public departments, as well as with NGOs, to build professional capacity and contribute to the provision of quality youth justice services.
- Assist in developing easy-to-use data collection and sharing tools for accessible data on children and young people in contact with the law.
- Revise and allocate sufficient budgets to child justice and make necessary adjustments for the creation of new prevention services and alternatives to detention services for young offenders.

At local level, NGOs to:

- Assist, as part of the implementation of their projects, sub-national and national governments in collecting and sharing data, as well as generating evidence of child-friendly approaches in the justice sector. NGO expertise and knowledge of young people and children in contact with the law constitutes valuable information for the elaboration of the necessary budgetary reforms.
- Assist governments in applying children and young people consultation mechanisms for youth justice policy development. Ensuring young people's voices are heard contributes to more adequate policies and budgetary decisions for long-term social return on investment.

For more information see the workshop report²⁴.

²⁴ <http://bit.ly/1HbwKvg>

2. PANEL DISCUSSION: CHILDPACT

INTRODUCTION

This side event saw a panel discussion on ChildPact, the Regional Coalition for Child Protection. The event aimed to:

- Introduce and raise awareness of ChildPact.
- Celebrate its incorporation as a legally registered entity in Romania.
- Celebrate and tell the story of the Romanian transition in the field of child protection and how Romania became a promotor of child protection reforms in the region.
- Introduce ChildPact's Child Protection Index.

The panel discussion was organised by ChildPact with co-financing by the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through the Official Development Assistance Unit, with UNDP Regional Center for Europe and CIS as implementation partners.

OVERVIEW

The panel was moderated by Mirela Oprea, ChildPact Secretary General who presented ChildPact, the Regional Coalition for Child Protection in the wider Black Sea area and talked about Romania's transition experience in child protection and its support for child protection reforms in the region.

Mira Antonyan, ChildPact board member and President of the Child Protection Network Armenia gave an overview of ChildPact's main projects.

Andy Guth presented the Child Protection Index, which ChildPact proposes as an independent tool to measure each country's child protection reform in accordance with the UNCRC's rights-based approach and the systems approach to child protection. The Child Protection Index is an independent monitoring tool that ChildPact is piloting in 5 out of its 10 member countries (Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Moldova and Georgia).

OUTCOME

At the end of the panel, the ChildPact founding members - Romania, Bulgaria, Armenia, Albania and Moldova - signed the ChildPact incorporation documents. This marked exactly four years since ChildPact's informal establishment at the Black Sea NGO Forum in 2011.



Parallel workshops on priority themes

The parallel workshop session focused on four main thematic priority areas of Eurochild's work: early childhood education and care; family and parenting support; children in alternative care; and child and youth participation. These workshops were led by members who are active in Eurochild's respective thematic working groups and its reference group on child participation. The focus was on exchanging experience and knowledge.

A. Child and Youth Participation

CHILD PARTICIPATION - INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME

All children have a right to participate. They are young, but in terms of their own lives, they have more experience than anybody. Participation means they become more involved, but also that they feel listened to and more cared for.

Children from three organisations and countries presented their experience with children's participation. Each was followed by a discussion with participants on specific or general questions.

1. Donya Azimi (young person from Sweden) and **Elinor Brunnberg** (Mälardalen University, Sweden).

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Donya came to Sweden 11 years old as an unaccompanied minor from Afghanistan. She explained that the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children coming to Europe and specially Sweden are increasing. In 2014 there will be coming about 7000 unaccompanied children to Sweden. Most children come from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Syria, and Somalia and 80% of them are boys, mostly aged 13-17.

Donya and Elinor presented their research on unaccompanied minor asylum seekers in foster care in Sweden. They have so far interviewed seven unaccompanied children in foster care and they aim to continue and interview more. The aim is to collect stories to know what is important for them in the caring situation.

In one Swedish municipality studied, 49% of unaccompanied minor children live in foster families and 39% of them live in smaller institutions. 10% of them live in between an institution and living on their own (Melanbo), when they are 18-21 years old. This last group is living in a new type of caring situation.

MAIN DISCUSSIONS AND MESSAGES

- Small meetings are often the most appropriate for unaccompanied children and can make a big difference for them, e.g. regular meetings with the guardian or social workers. "Smaller meetings demonstrate that I mean something."
- The different motivations of foster families can result in very different experiences for the children. Some seem to be more interested in money than really loving and caring for the child.
- It is very important that the children can talk to someone (social workers) about problems in their foster family and to feel safe to do so. This should happen regularly and systematically, even if everything seems to be fine - problems can very easily be hidden under the surface.
- Social workers need to show that they care and not that they are just doing their job – otherwise children in vulnerable situations will not trust them or really talk to them.
- Involvement and information on the family budget can make a child in foster care feel much more part of the family.
- The need for interpreters trained for working with unaccompanied children.

2. Maria Timotheou and Ourania Kyriakou from the Cyprus Children's Parliament

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Maria and Ourania are two members of the Cyprus Children's Parliament, which was established in 2000 and includes 56 children. It meets in five district committees each month and once every three months in plenary. Once per year they meet in a plenary session at the Parliament, where MPs, Ministers and the Commissioner on Children's Rights are present to listen to what they have to say.

The relevant Law explicitly mentions the Cypriot Children's Parliament as a body to be consulted before the appointment or reappointment of the Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights in Cyprus.

Maria and Ourania explained the difficult economic situation in Cyprus and as a result the extreme cuts in services and benefits during the past 2 years. This has affected and continues to affect social spending and consequently all services to parents and children.

The Children's Parliament has called for a National Action Plan for Children, the reorganisation of social services covering prevention and intervention services for children, for social spending on children to be considered as an investment and for implementation of all children's rights whether migrants or children with special needs etc.

MAIN DISCUSSIONS AND MESSAGES

- The Children's Parliament has asked the government to invest more in education and general services for children, including healthcare, social services, family services and recreation: "we asked them to invest in the future".
- The Children's Parliament has asked questions on the use of EU funds and how these are used to eliminate child poverty. They also questioned why there is not a social worker in each school and why children with special needs are in mainstream schools without proper support.
- On the process of selection of delegates in the Children's Parliament – in every school/town children can come forward if they would like to take part and other children then elect them.
- Other children have ongoing opportunities to tell delegates what is important for them to ensure representativity. In some cities, meetings take place as often as once a week.
- Teachers can support the meetings a bit, but in general, the children only discuss their views with other children to see how they see things.
- The balance of girls and boys depends on the elections and changes over time. Currently, there are more boys.

3. Ivan Tancabel and Katja Knežević from the Youth Council in Opatija - Croatia

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Ivan and Katja explained that the Children's City Council in Opatija aims to give children the opportunity to be involved in the decision-making of the city. The Children's Council has three to four sessions per year.

The Council participates in creating important documents such as the city's budget. The Council even gives suggestions on the national children's strategy, contributes to the alternative report on the CRC and are members of a network of young advisors of the children's ombudsman.

When contributing to the city budget, child councillors asked their classmates and consulted with NGOs and other organisations to give input. After the adoption of the city budget, they only discussed proposals that are related to children, such as: playgrounds in distant areas of town; playgrounds adapted to

disabled children, sports halls, skate parks, city buses, and support for disabled children etc.

The Children's City Council has 1 500 EUR to spend each year and they decide which projects can be funded, for example: sex education; children-friendly sign-posts; school lockers, measures to protect children in traffic. Every year the Council has a project called 'my arms grow bigger towards you, because I want to give happiness to you too'.

Every 2 years there are elections for the Children's City Council. Children can candidate themselves and run an election campaign. The elections are held with a secret ballot and two children can be elected per class. The Child Councillors elect their children's mayor, who follows the adult mayor in all protocols.

MAIN DISCUSSIONS AND MESSAGES

- What is so positive about the Children's Council in Opatija is that it is genuinely involved in all proposals that concern their lives in the city.
- A great success of the Children's Council is that they can ask questions to councillors and people in the town and they get answers to everything.
- Another real added value is that each assembly of the children's council has its own project, which is chosen by the children themselves. Some examples of projects are: revive children's playgrounds; how do children live in Europe; children and the media, etc.
- People who work with children, should think more like children. Adults often only talk with numbers and words and do not see the real needs of children.
- This year at the 25th anniversary of the UNCRC a memorandum on Children's Rights was signed by the children's and adult mayor, which includes that Opatija is a city where children are heard and listened to.

B. Children in Alternative Care

INTRODUCTORY SPEAKERS

A video called 'Aftercare' prepared by **LOS (private Social Services) in Denmark** argued that young people have a right to after-care services. This video can be found here: <http://www.los.dk/aktuelt/nyt-fra-los/videokommentarer>

Chris Gardiner, "*V zájmu dítěte*", Czech Republic, emphasised the importance of investing in quality care, including using European Structural and Investment Funds. Bigger investments should be made in training of social workers and judges, who make decisions about children's placements. Having standards is one thing, but these must be monitored. Mental health services should be available for care leavers – there is a high need. Foster care is not an answer for all children, as not all children want it. There should be some very small institutions and children should be free to choose to live there if they would wish so.

Meelis Kukk from the Estonian Care Workers Union gave a practical illustration on investing in aftercare support services. As a child, he used to live in the streets and was put into a special school for 'difficult children'. At age 14, he moved to live in SOS Villages and eventually went to study at university. Five years ago - together with other colleagues – he established the Estonian Association of Care Placement Workers. They run activities such as a pilot project supporting young people in: finding and keeping their job; personal budget planning; helping to communicate with the local authorities etc. Additionally, they organise various seminars, psychological consultations and offer crisis help for young people.

Adriana Birloi from *SOS Children's Villages Romania* focused on family strengthening programmes (FSPs) in Romania. The general objective of FSPs is to prevent family break-up and enable children to grow within a caring family environment. Types of support vary, including: health, food and nutrition, psycho-social, improving living conditions and access to education. On average, around 800 children and 225 families benefit yearly from FSPs and around 75% of the families that leave this support centre manage to live independently. Partnerships with local authorities are crucial since they co-finance these services and can improve their own actions.

Michal Dord, *President of Vteřina poté in the Czech Republic*, comes from a Roma family, and due to poverty, he was taken away from his family when he was 2 years old. At the age of 6, he was supposed to be sent to a special school. Luckily, he was finally sent to a regular school. This helped him progress to university in Prague later. Together with other young people, he set up an NGO advocating for foster care. Additionally, they meet with young people in care and give them information on what to do after they leave a care institution, what their funding possibilities are and their rights etc.

MAIN DISCUSSIONS AND MESSAGES

- Poverty cannot be a reason for placing children in care institutions.
- We must invest in services to support families in vulnerable situations, so that these families themselves can take care of their children. This can cover support to extended families as the role of grandparents etc can be very important for many children.
- Social housing needs to be part of this discussion since stable housing is so important to children's life chances.
- Investing in quality care of children will deliver significant future 'public profit' with people better able to take responsibility and a full social role in their adult life. "It is better to invest in strong children rather than to repair a broken man."
- Where children have been taken away from their families, support to foster families and social workers is crucial to ensure that they can support the child. Children need to feel that they are living 'at home' and not just with people who see it as a job to look after them.
- Children growing up in foster families should not be labelled, particularly in front of their classmates at school. This is especially relevant in that context when agencies for social assistance start coming to schools and interrogate about children's foster parents.
- Child participation can be a powerful instrument. Children have a right to the expression of their voices etc. Children and young people should be brought to the national parliaments, ministries, other institutions and allowed to express their personal views and experiences. Additionally, families should be treated as equal partners.
- Agents should first of all talk to a child and ask how s/he feels so as to build trust.
- Investment in support services for preparation of care leaving is particularly important –how to find and keep a job, accessing rights, social assistance etc to prepare for this crucial time. Also offer counselling and therapies at an early stage, not only after serious problems have occurred. It is important to involve people from outside the care system to bring a new perspective for the young people – mentoring can be useful in this context.
- Particular support is needed for children – such as undocumented migrants - who cannot access all their rights, such as to university education and employment and can end up in a vicious circle.
- We need to encourage strong partnerships with local authorities and other NGOs, and to build capacity of the partners.
- We need a good monitoring system following children's development and plans to show the benefits of the services to policymakers.

C. Early Years Education and Care

The workshop looked at the linkages between the recent EU policy developments, especially the European Quality Framework²⁵ and the Investing in Children Recommendation²⁶, and developments at a national / local level. It particularly sought to explore: how EU policy can influence national policies, advocacy and practice; the implications of austerity measures and their impact on public investment decisions on early years at national and local level; and the relevance of Structural Funds to advance quality early years provision.

INTRODUCTORY SPEAKERS

Mathias Urban, *Director of the Early Childhood Research Centre at Roehampton University of UK* set the context outlining the European Recommendation for Investing in Children and the principles and action statements of the European Quality framework for early years. “Without education dreams vanish”

Aude Harou presented OvidiuRo’s programme ‘Every child in pre-school’. It is an integrated child and family support programme targeting disadvantaged families in rural Romania looking at providing both resources and access to quality services for parents and children. It implements a food coupon system at pre-schools conditional on attendance. Poverty is the criteria and 90% of children who qualify are Roma. It also supports staff - cash is provided to teachers for school materials and professional training delivered to pre-school teachers.

Monitoring and evaluation found a positive impact for parents, children, and professionals. Half of those coming out of the programme enrolled into primary school and 65 per cent have very good or good school attendance. Challenges remain in finding resources and buy in from public authorities to scale the programme up.

Nektarios Stellakis, *Assistant Professor at University of Patras*, presented the difficulties brought by austerity measures and the impact on early years’ education and care services in Greece. The lack of data, namely the percentage of GDP spent on early childhood, was highlighted as an obstacle to advocate for the allocation of resources and the development of better policies for early childhood. Implementation of recommended standards is far from reality and despite existing legislation, derogations are the rule. Children in disadvantaged situations – Roma, migrant or children with disabilities – have been particularly affected by funding cuts due to the crisis.

Toby Wolfe spoke on behalf of Start Strong, an Irish organisation created in 2009 to advocate for a national strategy for early years care and education (ECEC), which is now expected to be published in 2015. He highlighted why reform was so important. In UNICEF’s 2008 report card, Ireland only achieved 1 out of the 10 minimum standards.

Furthermore, OECD figures show a low level of public investment in pre-school education. “ECEC spending in Ireland fell 63 per cent 2008 to 2011 - it was the first victim of austerity.” There has been a long history of ECEC being left to the market and a split system between care and early years’ education.

25 Proposal for a Quality Framework on early years Education and Care (<http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/archive/>)

26 Commission Recommendation Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage. COM(2013) 778 final, 20.2.2013.

MAIN DISCUSSIONS AND MESSAGES

- Despite positive developments at EU level, no impact has been seen from the Commission's ECEC Communication of 2011 nor the allocation of structural funds which in the past have mainly funded infrastructure. But there is huge potential to change and there should be a push for embracing the proposal for the European Quality framework.
- Workshop participants were unanimous on the advantages that a European Quality framework can bring, but stressed that it should be accompanied by indicators to assess progress and allow for public scrutiny on the implementation of early years policies.
- In some countries, notably the UK and the Netherlands, there are concerns with services delivered due to private provision which is not always linked to the objectives of national plans.
- Ovidiu Ro's programme 'Every child in pre-school' reflects many of the principles proposed for the European Quality Framework for early years in the way that it encourages participation, strengthens social inclusion and embraces diversity.
- The main challenge ahead is to overcome the disconnection between policy areas both at EU and national level but also within countries and provide more arguments to persuade Governments to invest in early childhood. This means not only using economic arguments based on benefits in years' time, but engagement to provide quality for children now.
- Workshop participants agreed on the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration where all partners have a clear and shared understanding of their role and responsibilities.

D. Family and Parenting Support

This workshop looked at why helping parents to help children should be a priority for the public sector. It considered what the need is, which services related to family and parenting support should be promoted and what is needed to get decision-makers and commissioners to buy/use them.

The workshop offered participants an opportunity to discuss how we can move the discussion forward in practical terms.

INTRODUCTORY SPEAKERS

Introductory speakers presented two areas of practice where integration and research have been core to the delivery of services.

'The practical challenges of integration' - Michelle McCabe, *Lifestart Foundation, Ireland*

The presentation looked at the experiences of implementing a collaborative working arrangement between a voluntary sector organisation and public sector agency in Ireland. This case study illustrated the challenges of integration on practice, culture and programme fidelity, and assessed what the overall benefits were for both the organisations and more so for the families involved.

'Long-term investments in children – the Finnish case' - Petri Paju, *Central Union for Child Welfare, Finland*

Social returns on investment often become real only from generation to generation. However, political decisions are usually made in the short-term, from election to election. This makes good long-term decision-making difficult, but not impossible.

Finland provides an example. Finland gained its independence a hundred years ago. During those 100 years, Finland has made its way from an under-developed ruined country to the top ranks of countries for child well-being. There are many reasons to argue that this progress is connected to investments made in children's well-being. Furthermore, it seems obvious that universal benefits and services have given good returns in the long-run.

POINTS OF DEBATE

- Adaptability of programmes – process/content and relationships are more critical for success than fidelity of replication.
- Services and financial benefits are both important and complementary.
- Efficiency and minimum of administration is vital.
- Long-term planning is crucial – ‘support’ rather than intervention.
- A national culture of valuing social investment is important – policy-makers need to develop this culture.
- If you provide services that families engage with and value, they will sustain involvement and are far more likely to change their behaviours / parenting approaches.
- Communication – being able to deliver clear messages supported by practical examples – and vertical/horizontal collaboration are fundamental.
- We cannot advocate for the same approach across Europe and we need to be responsive to communities’ needs.
- ‘Soft’ and ‘hard’ impact are both important – feelings and relationships are important as well as statistics.

KEY MESSAGES AND LEARNING POINTS

Co-production - We need to start with what children and families need. Families should not have to wait for the service, they can be part of it and co-design it.

Collaborative working and integration - We need to work smarter, build multi-level and multi-disciplinary capacity, and move beyond the silos approach. For good outcomes for children and families we are all aware that services need to integrate and work together in a seamless manner. A huge challenge in integration is that we must align practice without compromising our impact.

Adaptability – Any programme or service needs to be flexible enough to adapt and change to suit the needs of a range of social groups and day-day practice to meet the needs of each individual family, parent and child. Not changing the core components of the programme but the practice and delivery methods.

Learn from mistakes – Implementation is a process, it is not an event or a one-time act. There is more to manualised programmes than taking a book off the shelf and reading it – it requires a transfer of knowledge. Implementation and sustainability require change – skill levels and organisational capacity – which all require education, practice and time to mature.

Continuous improvement and monitoring – Fidelity measures and programme evaluation need to be carefully monitored and the information acted on quickly, reviewing and updating according to the research. Training, coaching, quality assurance and evaluation require well informed and skilled trainers, coaches, evaluators and administrators. Once trained, on-going support is needed.

Panel debate on funding advocacy for children's rights

The panel debate built on the three cross-cutting themes of the conference, linking with Eurochild's aim to build more effective advocacy for children's rights to influence and monitor public spending.

The debate focused on three areas:

1. The role of civil society in better public spending
2. The role and added value of national children's rights coalitions
3. Measuring the impact of child rights coalitions

Panellists were experts from national and regional child rights networks, civil society, funders and government representatives. The debate was moderated by Radu Soviani, a Romanian journalist.

PANELLIST INTERVENTIONS



Aine Lynch

Treasurer of the Children's Rights Alliance, Ireland.

"Passion is really important, but it needs to be balanced. We need to put forward messages to the policy makers in the way they understand."

Aine Lynch presented the work of the Irish Children's Rights Alliance (ICRA) around **the Irish national budget and its impact on children**. The ICRA is involved in bilateral meetings with different ministries during the drafting process of the budget and has long tried to positively influence the budget for children.

In 2003, a PR consultant did a review for IRCA and concluded **that 80% of the pre-budget submissions had no influence**, since demands were unrealistic and for organisations' own sake only. Following this review, the ICRA completed a course in London and Dublin to learn how to do smart budgeting across all areas for children in Ireland, looking at what will have the least negative impact on children.

Since 2008, ICRA produces **a detailed analysis of the budget and its impact on children** within 48 hours of the budget being published and targets media attention on the positive and negative impacts for children.

She stressed the importance of policies allowing for evidence-based impact on the ground. The ICRA publishes **an annual Report Card on what the government has achieved for children**. ICRA members have a voice in this and it attracts funding, even though they go to government departments to advocate for the outcomes of the Report Card, which gives a grade (mark) to the different government departments.

In response to questions from the floor Aine highlighted that IRCA promotes children's rights all the time and not just during elections or the drafting of the new government budget. She also stressed that access to data had been a challenge in Ireland as much as it is in other countries. They had worked to overcome this by increasing their internal capacity through staff trainings in economics and direct engagement with economic experts. This work had been supported by philanthropic foundations and project funding.



Valeriu Nicolae

Regional Advocacy Director for World Vision, Romania

"There is a discrepancy between politicians and practitioners. Politicians create their own realities."

Valeriu Nicolae showed a trailer of his movie *'Toto and his Sisters'*, which is based on 10 years of work in the ghettos in Bucharest and shows two sisters and a brother, whose mother is arrested by the police and taken from their home to prison because of drugs. The children remain left alone. It has been seen by 9 million people and has won prizes at four festivals. This has been a better advocacy tool than writing papers and attending conferences.

He stressed the need to spend 90% of our time on grassroots activities and not on paper work. The most cost-efficient solutions start with keeping children off drugs and HIV-free. He expressed his frustrations at attending Conferences with budgets of hundreds of thousands of euros and then returning to his daily work trying to find basics such as shoes and clothes for children to be able to go to school. There is too much discrepancy between practitioners and politicians. We should not always play their game, just contributing to the production of meaningless documents etc.



Bjørn Bredeesen

Former Deputy Director General, Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, Norway

"The economy and children's rights are connected. We need to invest in children."

Bjørn Bredeesen stressed that we need active NGOs – including the voices of young people themselves – as part of a living democracy. NGOs play an important role in shaping policies and as watchdogs. They need both capital and human resources to succeed. When it is listened to, **civil society can make a real difference to policy and people's lives**. As an example from Norway, an NGO representing young people who have been in care told the government about the need to have after-care measures. The government listened to and was convinced by the arguments of the young people and changed the care system: young people can now stay in care on a voluntary basis until they are 23 years old.

He also explained that, in Norway, most of the ministries have their own budget including measures concerning children. The Ministry of Children collects all figures and budgets from the different ministries and puts these together to present the governments overall investments in child policy and measures. He added that there are youth councils in most Norwegian cities and they can decide on budgets, which teaches them about democratic ways of working.

He also explained **the EEA grants** (European Economic Area - Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway), and **Norway Grants** (Norway alone). These two financial mechanisms were created in 2004 and have so far contributed with proximately 3 billion Euros to reducing social and economic disparities in mainly 16 of the EU member states. European goals have been defined for these projects. In Romania, 58 projects were funded with EEA funds. However, the long-term impact of these projects is not evaluated. There will be another 1.8 billion Euros for the next 5 years, but there is still a need to simplify some of the procedures to apply for funds as a mid-term review shows.



Joost van Haelst

Children's Rights Coordinator of the Flemish Government, Belgium

"We need good policies for children. This includes looking at strategies and the long-term effects of policies."

Joost van Haelst explained that the Flemish government funds the **Flemish children's rights coalition** since 2007 to support coordination between NGOs. The UNCRC Committee asked for more expertise of civil society and the funding is provided on the condition that there are only NGOs in membership. One of the key activities of the Flemish NGO coalition is its alternative report to the UNCRC Committee.

In 2012 the Flemish Parliament Act on a revised youth and children's rights policy (20/1/2012) was adopted, in which a specific article 8 was included to fund an NGO coalition to work on the alternative report.²⁷ This **Law guarantees a legal base to fund the Flemish Children's Rights NGO coalition**. Government-commissioned research in 2011 showed that co-operation between members is better due to the funding. However, it is important to look for other funds as well and this is a matter of awareness raising.

He also presented the outcomes of a study carried out in Flanders on child budgetary spending. It turned out that **all budgets affect children**, for example also budgets for pedestrians. Within Flanders they had equal opportunities budgeting, but it turned out that this did not help child budgetary spending.



George Bogdanov

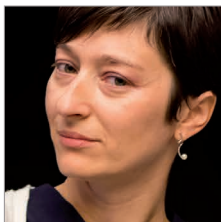
Executive Director National Network for Children, Bulgaria

"EU structural funds offer the potential to really change the lives of children in Bulgaria."

George Bogdanov highlighted **EU structural funds** as a valuable tool that can have a genuine and positive impact on the lives of children in Bulgaria. However, more of this money needs to go to **projects run by grassroots organisations and municipalities**. More than 85% of the funds are currently spent on projects realised by the national government, which often does not have the right knowledge and expertise to deliver the results we need.

Money that was made available for deinstitutionalisation in Bulgaria was a good example of using EU money effectively. One big institution was closed and smaller ones/homes were opened. Unfortunately, NGOs are still insufficiently involved in the delivery. The government started looking for children in the community to be placed in the smaller homes. This is not acceptable. It is important to have **more preventive measures**.

²⁷ Article 8, paragraph 5 states "The Government of Flanders shall subsidise an umbrella organisation of non-governmental organisations for the preparation, editing and distribution of a report on the way in which Flanders puts children's rights into practice."



Mirela Oprea

Secretary General ChildPact, Romania

“We need to get engaged in public discourse and we need to change its values.”

Mirela Oprea highlighted the underfunding of NGOs and in particular of coalitions of NGOs. She demonstrated how children's rights coalitions provide important services to governments and societies in helping improve policies and outcomes. These services should be better supported by public and private funding. Donors who claim that they invest in reforms but do not support NGO coalitions are simply not credible. Unfortunately, civil society networks are victims of a misconception of what matters when deciding on funding. Networks are seen as structures with un-productive structures that do not offer direct services to children. But this reasoning is hugely flawed as children also need good policies: if policy-making is wrong services can be inadequate or even harmful.

ChildPact, a network of networks, with members in 10 countries in the South Caucasus, the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe, calls for a trust fund for child protection networks to be established with a view to end the structural weakness of child protection networks, end their dependence on unpredictable funding flows and end the knowledge practice - gap in the field of child protection.

Speaking about child participation, she stressed the importance of asking children about the services they need. She gave the example of the Milk and Bread Programme in Romania, which provides milk and bread to children at school. The program was meant to decrease school drop-out, but this aim has never been met. While some children are grateful for this meal, the great majority throws the milk away or they take it home and feed the animals. The reason to provide this service seems mainly to help the providing companies and in some cases it seems to even encourage local level corruption.

She also highlighted inconsistencies in government spending for the poor. She recounted a personal story about meeting a young woman who was begging at a Metro station in Bucharest with a baby. She learned that this 18-year old girl is a mother of two. Her monthly allowance was in the range of 50 EUR, so she came to Bucharest to beg to prevent her family from going hungry. But the police continuously hassled her, threatening her to take her children and put them in an institution. A child in institution costs 500 EUR / month! Instead of support, this desperate mother received threats. The state would be willing to spend 10-15 times more than what she needs for caring for her children by herself.

COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR

A strong area of debate and discussion from participants was around some of the challenges of **ensuring that EU Structural Funds are used effectively**. Several people highlighted that implementation of projects by governments using this money was not always good and stressed the need to improve the ability of grassroots organisations to support better implementation of projects on the ground.

In Slovakia, NGOs are trying to convince the government to use global grants and to make this EU money accessible for NGOs, but the government still does not seem to trust them to manage grants effectively. This is despite strong NGO experience with managing **EEA/Norwegian grants**.

A major problem with accessing the EU Structural Funds is the long waiting times for money to arrive. An experience was shared of grassroots workers in one project having to advance money from their own pockets to pay for essential materials for children because the funds did not arrive in a timely way. The project was aimed at overcoming barriers to school attendance.

In parallel, some participants talked about the quality of EEA/Norwegian grants. These were seen as being good, but they could still be made better.

Another area of discussion was around the **importance of co-operation between NGOs**. Individually, NGOs often have a small voice, particularly with finance ministries. Uniting in a collective voice would make it easier to get attention, but it is not always easy to have the same position and strategy. Many NGOs are also faced with increasing financial threats to their survival, which does not help collaboration. Sharing power between NGOs also requires effective exchange between NGOs.

The **funding of Child Rights' Coalitions** was an issue of concern. Stable and adequate funding really helps the strength of such coalitions. Many felt they should be funded by governments, but there were concerns that this could make them less critical.



Closing keynote remarks on future steps



Corina Cretu

European Commissioner for Regional Policy, European Commission

"There is funding available for supporting projects in the field of social inclusion and the fight against poverty and discrimination."

The Commissioner highlighted what an important and emotional event this has been for her, being one of her first visits back to Romania since becoming a Commissioner. As a child, she was lucky enough to have been well looked after by her family and the community in Bucharest. But not all children are so lucky.

Many children lack opportunities in life. Many are at risk of poverty, especially those from certain backgrounds, such as Roma children. Things are not easy in this time of austerity, so it is very important that there are organisations such as Eurochild working to defend children's rights.

The cross-cutting topics in this conference are highly relevant. There are over 30 billion of Euro of funds available for the next seven years to fight poverty and social exclusion. This must be used wisely. Our top priorities for funding are deinstitutionalisation and investment in childcare and educational infrastructure. It is terrible to see that once born, children are already in competition for childcare services. This is unfair and this disadvantage is passed from one generation to another.

There is no alternative to deinstitutionalisation, which seriously affects the emotional wellbeing of children. Children need affection and love; they need family. Institutionalisation of children is a big issue in Romania and a cause of shame and anger. But it is good that there has been progress during recent years. We need to know that funds have reached and were used for the deinstitutionalisation process.

There are different mentalities from the past, but we need to spread awareness and exchange good practice, particularly in the regions where there can be more poverty and other problems. Local authorities are not always aware of other ways to be and to act.

Partnership between different actors in society is very important. The work of Eurochild and its members must continue. Pope Francis in his speech in Strasbourg talked about vulnerable children as well. It is our fundamental duty to take care of children, especially those who are abandoned, poor, or otherwise vulnerable.

Under the Cohesion Fund and ERDF most of the funding goes to infrastructure, but it is important to think broader to achieve better conditions for children, parents and families. As Commissioner for Regional Policy, Ms Cretu expressed her willingness to cooperate and support good projects that are integrated into the ESIF spending plans (Operational Programmes).



Efi Bekou

Secretary General of Welfare, Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare, Greece

"The first priority is the support of families with children that face poverty and social exclusion."

With apologies, Efi Bekou sent a written statement in which she spoke about the Greek Plan of Action for the Rights of the Child which has just been completed after a wide inter-ministerial process. It had been presented in the Greek Parliament the previous week and to Greek society for public consultation.

Reform has seen a revision of the basic priorities for the national child protection system. The first priority is the support of families with children that face poverty and social exclusion. There are new measures of financial support to struggling families based on means testing and depending on the number of children. Since November 2014 Greece is piloting implementation of the minimum income guarantee and it should be rolled out nationally in 2015. This uses the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020 and the European Social Fund etc.

A second priority of child protection reform is make foster care available for cases where the child cannot stay with their biological family. The practice of adoption is being scrutinised in light of the new priorities to ensure it always focused on the protection of child rights and the best interests of the child.

A target is to eliminate the stay of children in closed-type institutional care. There are still twelve public institutions (at prefecture level) and several private institutions in Greece. The relevant framework has set a three-year timeframe of adaptation and aims to normalise and enrich the care of children facing abandonment.

It is important to review the care of particularly vulnerable groups of children, including unaccompanied minors in Reception Centres supported by the European Refugee Fund and children with disabilities. The care methodology should not be limited to living situations, but cover socialisation and increased ability to function independently.

This is a difficult route because it challenges perceptions, stereotypes and traditional operations. But the Greek government has the political will, supported by the Greek Constitution and International Conventions. Independent authorities such as the Greek Ombudsman and organised civil society are important allies.

Ms Bekou's statement concluded by highlighting the importance of co-operation with Eurochild and looking forward to co-organising a public event in Greece as soon as possible.

A strong **contribution from the floor** sought to highlight how serious the current situation of the crisis in Greece is. Children face hunger, young people are unemployed, Roma people are excluded from society, immigrant workers and asylum seekers are stigmatised as being responsible for the crisis.

EU Structural Funds cannot resolve the levels of escalating poverty and social exclusion. Political will must also come at national level, working in partnership with civil society in an open and transparent way. Only through acknowledging failures and openly seeking solutions in partnership with different stakeholders, can we start to build a better future for our children.



Agnes von Maravić

Children's Rights Division, Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law, Council of Europe

"We need to link a logic of rights and a logic of economic arguments."

We need to justify economically a need to invest in children, and this is easy because the data is obvious. But even if there was no economic argument, children have rights that must be respected. It is important to realise that everyone – big and small – has a right to a dignified life, underpinned for children by the UNCRC, the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Social Charter and other Council of Europe standards.

Resources have always been scarce and will always be scarce. What is important is to make sure that they are invested where needed. Family or parenting support mechanisms need to be better funded. We need more evidence, more evaluations, more sharing of good practices. Child-friendly justice is another important issue covered here during the workshops. There are still too many gaps and limitations here.



Mária Herczog

President of Eurochild, Member of the UN Committee of the Rights of the Child

"There is still a lack of understanding about children's rights."

Sometimes it seems obvious to us that children have rights, but clearly in practice it is not so obvious. I have been very surprised how little research has been done on calculating the effectiveness and efficiency of quality services for children.

As we heard from Jorge Cardona on the first day, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child is also looking at the structure of how governments are spending their money. But there is no integrated vision and no co-operation between the different actors and this is frustrating.

We need to make governments and states accountable for their actions. It should be in the best interest of communities to invest in children and there is an obvious argument and need. But usually, politicians seem afraid of this message. There is still a lack of understanding about children's rights.

Obviously, there will always be limited funds. One of our duties is to provide all those who are in a position to make decisions, with knowledge that children have rights to live a dignified life. This is not simply a financial issue; it is about priorities, how we can distribute better, how we can multiply our capacities etc. These are things to be thought of.



Delia Pop

Director of Programmes, Hope and Homes for Children

“Civil society can play an important role as a broker between the public and private sectors.”

There are many sensitivities and concerns about public-private partnerships. But there can be a lot of value in transforming the relationship between the public and private sectors. We, as civil society, can play an important role as the main ‘brokers’ in the process between the private and public sectors.

In Hope and Homes for Children, we are at the centre of creating a change in public-private partnership. We are helping and supporting a transition from institutional care, since, ideally, no children should be separated from their families. What is needed is quality services to support children and families in need and that are responsive to children.

Discussions here have been clear that we need to have children in mind in our policymaking and implementation. We need a clear vision and policy change that would be sustainable. We need to have strong and accountable governments, who realise how transformative the change from institutionalisation to quality services can be for people’s lives.

Children can really shape their agenda, they are very meaningful collaborators. If we as civil society collaborate in meaningful way, we can bring an impact, using private investment where appropriate.



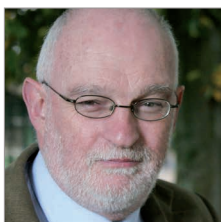
Codrin Scutaru

Deputy Minister at Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and Elderly, Romania

“Institutions are wrong and should be a history for Romania”.

Old style institutions are a cause of guilt in Romania. There cannot be abuses anymore. It is very difficult to change the culture and monitor the behaviour of everybody in every institution. But we do not have time to delay; we need immediate progress. We need to take action and we need to send a signal.

We need to look at how we can use ESIF and budgetary funds in order to change the behaviour and culture of social workers and carers. This is my statement as an individual as well. Thank you.



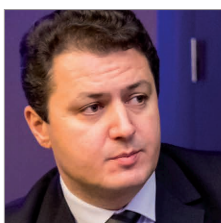
Pat Dolan

UNESCO Chair and Director, UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway, Ireland

“My concern is not how to include children, but how to implement what they told us.”

We need to think of more impact evaluations. We need to think of research evidence that has a practical use and can be applied. A network within the research community is needed. Evaluation should be about learning, about respect for children.

We very much support what Eurochild does. My main concern now is not how to include children, but how to implement what they told us. We need to make sure that we act on what we find in our research.



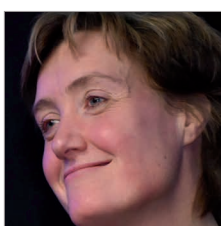
Stefan Darabus

Country Director, Hope and Homes for Children, Romania

“ESIF could produce a very strong impact on children and families in Romania.”

Deprived and marginalised communities are still a reality in Romania. Soft measures – such as counselling and mentoring – are important, but still so many people do not have a place to live in. Too many people – particularly within the Roma community – live in conditions from medieval times.

ESIF could produce a very strong impact on children and families in Romania. Social housing is a critical element, and so far it has not been stressed in the Operational Programmes. We need to invest in infrastructure in Romania. If we put it into the context of, for example, how much is invested in roads, then we are not talking about an impossible amount of money.



Jana Hainsworth

Secretary General, Eurochild – Closing Statement

“Children’s rights and well-being is not a side-issue. They need to be at the very heart of politics and policy-making”

The conference has been extremely rich in content and provided much food for thought. A particular thanks to Commissioner Cretu for her contribution one month into her term of office as Commissioner for Regional Policy, but also to all our many contributors.

Events such as these are important for giving visibility to the issues and for sharing expertise and knowledge. However, the litmus test is what happens next. The verbal commitment of the Romanian government “to clean the garbage in the present systems” is important. Now those words must be converted into action.

Our ambition is that children’s rights and well-being moves from the margins of politics and policy making to the centre. Fiscal policies and public budgeting need to protect the interests of children, particularly those who are disadvantaged. Every child must be supported in reaching their full potential – the future of our society depends on it.



ANNEX 1 : LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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Alina Seghedi	<i>Asociatia OvidiuRo</i>	Romania
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Mihai Pop	<i>Hope and Homes for Children</i>	Romania
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Ioana Herteg	<i>Hope and Homes for Children</i>	Romania
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Reka Filip	<i>Hope and Homes for Children</i>	Romania
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Elena Matache	<i>Organizatia Umanitara Concordia</i>	Romania
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Preda Nicoleta	<i>SOS Children's Villages Romania</i>	Romania
Balint Florina	<i>SOS Children's Villages Romania</i>	Romania
Adriana Birloi	<i>SOS Children's Villages Romania</i>	Romania
Mirela Lavric	<i>SOS Children's Villages Romania</i>	Romania
Lavinia Hagiu	<i>Terre des hommes</i>	Romania
Kirsten Theuns	<i>Terre des hommes Foundation</i>	Romania
Luminita Costache	<i>UNICEF</i>	Romania
Eduard Petrescu	<i>UNICEF</i>	Romania
Voica Pop	<i>UNICEF</i>	Romania
Vega Ioana	<i>World Vision Foundation</i>	Romania
Daniela Buzducea	<i>World Vision Romania</i>	Romania
Simona Mihai	<i>World Vision Romania</i>	Romania
Amadou Seck	<i>UNICEF</i>	Rwanda
Milena Banić	<i>Child Rights Centre</i>	Serbia
Miloš Ilić	<i>Child Rights Centre</i>	Serbia
Ljiljana Vasic	<i>Pomoc deci</i>	Serbia
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Jorge Cardona Llorens	<i>Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child</i>	Spain
Yvonne Oliv	<i>Halmstad Municipality</i>	Sweden
Hans-Jörgen Wahlhed	<i>Halmstad Municipality</i>	Sweden
Elinor Brunnberg	<i>ICU Mälardalen University</i>	Sweden
Donya Sadaf Azimi	<i>ICU Mälardalen University</i>	Sweden
Jeanette Åkerström	<i>ICU Mälardalen University</i>	Sweden
Tarja Nordling	<i>Örebro Regional Development Council</i>	Sweden

Ingmar Ångman	<i>Örebro Regional Development Council</i>	Sweden
Marie Cesares Olsson	<i>The Association to Promot Family Centres</i>	Sweden
Brigitte De Lay	<i>Oak Foundation</i>	Switzerland
Bianca Isaincu	<i>Child and Youth Finance International</i>	The Netherlands
Mihaela Ionescu	<i>International Step by Step Association</i>	The Netherlands
Tijne Berg- le Clercq	<i>Netherlands Youth Institute</i>	The Netherlands
Tom van Yperen	<i>Netherlands Youth Institute & University of Groningen</i>	The Netherlands
Mieke Schuurman	<i>Independent Expert</i>	The Netherlands
Dymytro Chupryna	<i>Hope and Homes for Children Ukraine</i>	Ukraine
Halyna Postoliuk	<i>Hope and Homes for Children Ukraine</i>	Ukraine
Jeffrey Coleman	<i>BAAF</i>	United Kingdom
Gareth Elliston	<i>Cardiff Avocacy</i>	United Kingdom
Kathy Evans	<i>Children England</i>	United Kingdom
Pauline Leeson	<i>Children in Northern Ireland</i>	United Kingdom
Marion Macleod	<i>Children In Scotland</i>	United Kingdom
Lynne Hill	<i>Children in Wales</i>	United Kingdom
Natalie Whelehan	<i>Children's Law Centre</i>	United Kingdom
Jane Rose Nicholson	<i>FARA Foundation</i>	United Kingdom
Maurice Leeson	<i>Health and Social Care Board</i>	United Kingdom
Michela Costa	<i>Hope and Homes for Children</i>	United Kingdom
Timi Volosin	<i>Hope and Homes for Children</i>	United Kingdom
Delia Pop	<i>Hope and Homes for Children</i>	United Kingdom
Verity McGivern	<i>Hope and Homes for Children</i>	United Kingdom
Nicci Smith	<i>Include Youth</i>	United Kingdom
Peter Goldblatt	<i>Institute of Health equity</i>	United Kingdom
Vasylyna Dybaylo	<i>International Foster Care Organisation</i>	United Kingdom
Peter Johnstone	<i>ISP</i>	United Kingdom
Marianne Moore	<i>Justice Studio Ltd</i>	United Kingdom
Michelle McCabe	<i>Lifestart Foundation</i>	United Kingdom
Henry Johnston	<i>Office of the First & Deputy First Minister</i>	United Kingdom
Benoit Guerin	<i>RAND Europe</i>	United Kingdom
Claire Milligan	<i>Save the Children UK</i>	United Kingdom
Emma Grindulis	<i>Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights)</i>	United Kingdom
Jenny Pearce	<i>University of Bedfordshire</i>	United Kingdom
Mathias Urban	<i>University of East London</i>	United Kingdom

Florence Martin	<i>Better Care Network</i>	United States of America
Nicholas Rees	<i>UNICEF New York</i>	United States of America
Mária Herczog	<i>Eurochild President and Member of the UNCRC Committee</i>	Eurochild
Reka Tunyogi	<i>Advocacy and Parliamentary Officer</i>	Eurochild
Federico Lanzo	<i>Communications and Campaigns Assistant</i>	Eurochild
Manon Jacobs	<i>Financial and Administrative Assistant</i>	Eurochild
Nerea Rial	<i>Information and Communications Intern</i>	Eurochild
Andrea Witt	<i>Policy and Events Assistant</i>	Eurochild
Greta Mackonyte	<i>Policy Intern</i>	Eurochild
Jana Hainsworth	<i>Secretary General</i>	Eurochild
Aagje Ieven	<i>Senior Advocacy and Campaigns Coordinator</i>	Eurochild
Marie Dubit	<i>Senior Membership and Network Development Officer</i>	Eurochild
Mafalda Leal	<i>Senior Policy Coordinator - Child Rights and Child Participation</i>	Eurochild
Agata D'Addato	<i>Senior Policy Coordinator - Policy, Practice and Research</i>	Eurochild

ANNEX 2 – CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Wednesday 26 November 2014

- 09:00 -12:30 **Eurochild Thematic Working Groups meetings** (members only)
- 12:00 -15.00 **Registration** (📍 Lobby Atrium)
- 15:00 -18:30 **INSPIRING - Opening Plenary Session** (📍 Platinum)
- 19:30 -22.30 **Welcome reception and dinner** (📍 Iridium Grand Ballroom)

Thursday 27 November 2014

- 09.00 -13.00 **DEEPENING – Plenary Session and Mini-Plenaries on cross-cutting themes**

09.00 -10.30 **Plenary Session on cross-cutting themes** (📍 Platinum)

10:30 -11:00 **Coffee Break** (📍 Lobby Platinum)

11.00 -13.00 **Mini-Plenaries on cross-cutting themes** (📍 Platinum)

A. **Evaluation methodologies** (📍 Platinum Module 1)

B. **Social Return on Investment** (📍 Platinum Module 2)

C. **Public-private partnerships** (📍 Platinum Module 3)

13.00 -14.00 **Lunch** (📍 Avalon&Benihana Restaurant)

14.00 -16:00 **DEBATING & LEARNING** (📍 Iridium Grand Ballroom& Lobby)

Study visits

13:30-16:00
(external venues)

Focus Group Discussions /

Posters Sessions/

Video Corner

▶ 14.00 -14.50 Session one

▶ 15.10 - 16.00 Session two

16:00 -16:30 **Coffee Break** (📍 Lobby Atrium)

16.30 -18.00 **EXCHANGING** - Workshops on Eurochild thematic priorities

A. **Family and Parenting Support** (📍 Iridium module 1)

B. **Children in Alternative Care** (📍 Arizona)

C. **Early Years Education and Care** (📍 Iridium module 2)

D. **Child and Youth Participation** (📍 Colorado)

19.00 - 22.30 **CONFERENCE DINNER** (📍 External venue)

Friday 28 November 2014

09:00 -11:00 **BUILDING** - Panel Debate on funding for civil society dialogue & advocacy (📍 Platinum)

11.00 -11:30 **Coffee break** (📍 Lobby Platinum)

11:30 -13.00 **VISIONING** - Closing Plenary Session (📍 Platinum)

SIDE EVENTS

14:00 - 18:00

“Building the economic case for child-friendly justice”

(📍 Florida)

Workshop co-financed by the Embassy of France in Romania

16:30 - 18:00

“ChildPact: Regional cooperation for child protection.”

Panel organised by ChildPact (📍 Kansas)

For a more detailed programme visit our Conference website at http://bit.ly/Eurochild_AC2014

ANNEX 3 – PLENARY SPEAKERS' BIOGRAPHIES

OPENING PLENARY SPEAKERS

Jana Hainsworth - *Eurochild Secretary General*

Jana Hainsworth joined Eurochild as Secretary General in January 2006. She is responsible for the day-to-day running of the network. Jana previously worked in a Brussels-based communications consultancy where she managed communications on the EU's Community Action Programme to combat discrimination. Jana also managed a network of organisations promoting long-term voluntary service in the youth field and has worked for several years in research and consultancy. She has a Masters degree in environment, development and policy from Sussex University and an Honours degree in Natural Sciences from Durham University in the UK.

Stefan Darabus - *Country Director of Hope and Homes for Children Romania*

Stefan Darabus is Country Director for Hope and Homes for Children in Romania. He has 17 years of experience in developing childcare system reform and innovating social services. His career is focused on changing the paradigm of child protection from institutional to family-like care. His organisation's mission is to be a catalyst for the eradication of child institutionalisation in Romania first, then globally. A graduate of humanities and a Ph.D., Stefan Darabus finalised his MBA studies a few years ago, applying organisational, strategic and change management to child protection and social systems reform processes. Having managed deinstitutionalisation and child rights policy programmes in Romania and abroad, he is currently involved in developing child protection system reform in European countries.

Ivan Tancabel - *Young Person, Member of the Children's City Council Opatija in Croatia*

Ivan Tancabel is an active member of the Children's City Council Opatija since 2007. He has represented the work and projects of Children's City Council to policy makers in Croatia, as well as in the meetings of child-friendly cities and municipalities. Ivan was a member of the Network of Young Advisors of Office of the Croatian Ombudsman for Children and has participated in several national and European meetings on children's rights.

Codrin Scutaru - *Deputy Minister (Secretary of State) at Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and Elderly, Romania*

Codrin Scutaru is Romanian sociologist and public official. Vice-President of the Conservative Party (PC), junior ruling party of the incumbent governing alliance. He has a PhD in Sociology, being licensed both in Political Science and in Law, with a MA in Strategic Management. He was for several years member of the technical staff of experts of the Prime Minister and the Labour Minister. He continued his career in the private sector consulting in the public affairs domain top financial international companies. Since 2013 he is the Romanian Deputy Minister of Labour and part of the Conservative Party leadership.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Frank Vandenbroucke - *Former Minister of Social Affairs Belgium and Professor in Leuven and Amsterdam*

Prof. Frank Vandenbroucke studied economics in Leuven and Cambridge, UK, and received his D.Phil. in Oxford. He was Minister for Social Security, Health Insurance, Pensions and Employment in the Belgian Federal Government (1999- 2004) and Minister for Education and Employment in the Flemish Regional Government (2004-2009). He was appointed "Minister van Staat" (an honorary title) in December 2009. He is now a full time professor at the KU Leuven. He also teaches at the Universities of Antwerp (UA), where he holds the "Herman Deleeck" chair, and the University of Amsterdam (UvA), where he holds the "Joop den Uyl" chair. His research focuses on the impact of the EU on the development of social and employment policy in the EU Member States. His list of publications can be found at www.econ.kuleuven.be/frankvandenbroucke.

Jorge Cardona Llorens - *Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and Rapporteur for the upcoming General Comment on Public Spending to Realize Children's Rights*

Jorge Cardona Lloréns is Professor of Public International Law and International Relations at the University of Valencia. Special Graduation Award (1980) and Special PhD Award at the University of Valencia (1984). Teacher of Public International Law at the Universities of Valencia (1980-1984; 1985-95; and since 2008), Alicante (1984-85) and Jaume I in Castellón (1995-2008). UNESCO Special Advisor on: "Works of the Spirit as Common Heritage of Humankind" (1999-2000). Agent for the Kingdom of Spain before the International Court of Justice in the case of the Declaration of Independence of Kosovo. Legal adviser to diverse States on various international affairs and decisions.

Norah Gibbons - *Chairperson, Child and Family Agency, Ireland*

Norah worked for many years in social work in both the State and NGO sectors in England and Ireland. She was appointed as a member of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse 2000-2009 and while there she chaired the Confidential Committee of the Commission from 2000 to 2005. She was the Director of Advocacy of Barnardos from 2005 to 2012. She was a member of the Task-force on the establishment of the Child and Family Agency which reported in June 2012. Norah was appointed first Chairperson of the Child and Family agency in January 2014. She is currently a member of Acknowledgement Forum of Historical Abuse Inquiry in Northern Ireland.

CLOSING PLENARY SPEAKERS

Corina Cretu – *European Commissioner for Regional Policy, European Commission*

Corina Cretu is European Commissioner for Regional Policy. She is a graduate of the Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies and worked as a journalist before becoming spokesperson and adviser to then-President Ion Iliescu during two separate mandates. Elected to the Senate in 2004 she was a member of the Romanian Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE. She was a Member of the European Parliament between 2007-2014, and a Vice-President in 2014.

Efi Bekou - *Secretary General of Welfare, Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare, Greece*

Efi Bekou holds the position of the Secretary General for Welfare at the Ministry of Labour, Social Security & Welfare of the Hellenic Republic since July 2012. Prior to this, she held the position of the Secretary General for Gender Equality at the Ministry of Interior, Public Administration and Decentralization from 1999 until 2004 and also acted as a Vice President at the State Scholarships Foundation. Efi's experience and expertise is on social welfare and gender equality. More specifically, she focuses on strategic planning and policy implementation on combating poverty; on homelessness and the protection of vulnerable groups and people with disabilities. Also she has designed and implemented programs relating to the mainstreaming of women in the economy. She is a Ph.D Candidate in Political Science, she holds a master's in Political Science and Sociology and an undergraduate degree in Mathematics.

Agnes Von Maravic - *Children's Rights Division, Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law, Council of Europe*

Agnes von Maravić is a Programme Officer in the Council of Europe Children's Rights Division. She studied Political Science and Public Administration in Potsdam and Lille. Before joining the Council of Europe in 2006, she worked for the German NGO "Action Reconciliation Services for Peace" in Kiev, Ukraine, and as a research assistant at Düsseldorf University, Germany. She is currently Secretary to an intergovernmental Committee that develops the next Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child for the period 2016-2019. Her main interests in the field of children's rights at the moment are participation, the rights of children in alternative care and positive parenting.

Mária Herczog - President of Eurochild, Member of the UN Committee of the Rights of the Child

Dr. Maria Herczog, Ph.D is visiting lecturer at the ELTE Budapest University Doctoral School, and at the Law Faculty post graduate course, Chair of the Family Child Youth Association since 2005. She was elected as a member to the UN CRC Committee in 2007 and re-elected in 2010. She was a member of the EU Economic and Social Committee between 2004-2010 as a representative of Hungarian civil society. Maria Herczog has been researching child welfare, child protection, child rights, and family matters over the last 30 years. She is the author of several books, book chapters and journal articles. She was one of the founding members of Family, Child, Youth Association in 1992. She was elected member of the Management Board of Eurochild in 2009 and as president in 2010, re-elected in 2013.

Delia Pop - Director of Programmes, Hope and Homes for Children

Dr Delia Pop is Director of Programmes at Hope and Homes for Children. She is a member of high-level advocacy groups in the US and Europe and has contributed to the transformation of child protection and care systems at national and regional level in 15 countries across Europe and Africa. Born and educated in Romania, Delia is a medical doctor who has worked for 15 years with children trapped in the institutional care system and families at risk of separation.

INTRODUCTORY SPEAKERS ON CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

John Canavan - Associate Director, UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway, Ireland

John Canavan is joint founder and Associate Director of the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre. He has extensive experience in researching and evaluating social intervention programmes in the areas of child and family care, educational disadvantage, and community and local development. He received his PhD from Queens University, Belfast in 2006 and holds an MA in Community Development from NUI, Galway.

Nicholas Rees - Policy Analysis Specialist, Division of Policy and Strategy, UNICEF New York

As an advocate for children's rights, Nicholas Rees has been working with UNICEF for the past six years to help develop and promote evidence-based policies for children. Nicholas has a wide-ranging understanding of the means to measure broader social impact when investing in children and the shaping of social policies. Nicholas received his undergraduate degree from the School of Oriental and African Studies, and his masters degree from the London School of Economics. He has co-authored a variety of publications including Right in Principle and Practice: A review of the economic and social returns to investing in children; Child Outlook; and UNICEF's Advocacy Toolkit.

Valentina Caimi - Policy and Advocacy Adviser, Social Platform

Valentina Caimi is Policy and Advocacy Advisor at Social Platform. She is responsible for the policy and advocacy work on services of general interest, in particular social, health and financial services, the EU Budget, social economy and social enterprises, social innovation, minimum wage and the impact of state aid, procurement and trade agreements' rules on services. Valentina previously worked for thirteen years in EU social policies and project management in Italy, in NGOs, social co-operatives, local authorities and vocational training institutions.

PANELLISTS

Aine Lynch - Treasurer of the Children's Rights Alliance - Ireland

Áine Lynch is Treasurer of the Children's Rights Alliance and a former Vice Chair. She is also the CEO of the National Parents Council (primary) in Ireland and a registered paediatric nurse with a BSc (Hons) in Behavioural Science, a diploma in Management, as well as a postgraduate diploma in Child Protection and Welfare. Áine has served as a nurse in both paediatrics and Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Áine was manager of Childline and a Director of Services for the ISPCC.

George Bogdanov - *Executive Director National Network for Children - Bulgaria*

George Bogdanov is the executive director of the National Network for Children - a network of 124 leading Bulgarian NGOs, working with children and families. He is strongly experienced in project management and research in the social sphere, including projects concerning deinstitutionalisation, development of social services and antidiscrimination policies for children and vulnerable groups. He has a significant background in working with civil groups, NGOs, the Roma community in Bulgaria as well as with isolated communities. As independent national expert, he is a member of the European Social Policy Network and he is a member of the Eurochild Management Board. He has a master in European Social Policy and Social Work.

Mirela Oprea - *Secretary General ChildPact - Romania*

Mirela Oprea is the ChildPact Secretary General since 2012. The ChildPact members are national networks from 10 different countries in the wider Black Sea area, bringing together 600 NGOs, which work with more than 500.000 vulnerable children. She has a key role in supporting ChildPact's main objectives: monitoring child-related policies, strengthening the capacity of the national networks and promoting the creation of a regional co-operation mechanism for child protection. Mirela has a BA in psychology and educational sciences from the Babes-Bolyai University (Cluj-Napoca, Romania), an MA in EU integration policies and a PhD in international development from the University of Bologna (Italy).

Valeriu Nicolae - *Child Rights and Roma activist - Romania*

Valeriu Nicolae is Regional Advocacy Director for World Vision since 2013 and former senior adviser for the Open Society Institute, director of the Roma organisations ERGO and ERIO. He is the producer of "Toto and his sisters" movie that won The Golden Eye for best documentary in Zurich – September 2014. The movie is focusing on the life of children in a ghetto in Bucharest. He is the winner of the 2013 European Citizenship Award of the European Parliament and winner of four other international prizes, including the 2012 UNICEF award for best practice in Sports and Education. He published three books and wrote hundreds of articles about social inclusion, politics and children. He is founder of the Policy Centre for Roma and Minorities.

Joost van Haelst - *Children's Rights Coordinator of the Flemish Government - Belgium*

Joost Van Haelst is children's rights coordinator at the Flemish government since 1997. Nowadays, he works within the Division for Youth of the Flemish Ministry of Culture, Youth, Sports and Media, which coordinates the youth and children's rights policy in Flanders. He is involved in the execution of several policy instruments such as the Flemish youth and children's rights policy plan, the child and youth impact report, the children's rights monitor, the governmental network of (Flemish) focal points for youth and children's rights policy meeting on a regular basis the civil society organisations in a reflection group. Furthermore, he executes the vice-presidency of the National Commission on the Rights of the Child of Belgium. He is Belgian CRC focal point for the Council of Europe and the European Commission. He took care of the start of the subsidisation of the Flemish Children's Rights Coalition since its foundation as autonomous organisation in 2000 till 2007.

Bjørn Bredesen - *Former Deputy Director General in the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion - Norway*

Bjørn Bredesen has been Deputy Director General of the Norwegian Royal Ministry of Children (including Family policy) from 1994 -2014. Before becoming Director General he has been a Director of Social services in the City of Oslo and project manager at the Ministry of Children. Currently he works as an International Consultant in child policy. Bredesen has through many years been a national representative, chairing international steering committees and expert groups in the field of social, family and child policy partly at the Council of Europe, the Council of the Baltic Sea States and the Nordic Council of Ministers and United Nations. He has been working closely with the UN on combating violence against children. Bjørn Bredesen holds a BA in social work and social policy (1974).

ANNEX 4 – FINANCIAL SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

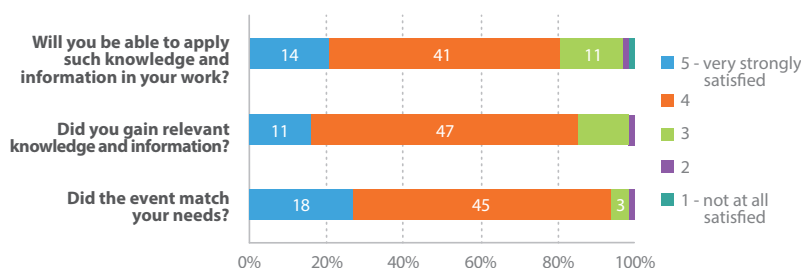
The following table provides a breakdown of expenditure and income for the 2.5 day event on 26-28th November 2014. It excludes the costs of organising staff in the Eurochild secretariat and Hope and Homes for Children Romania, as well as the contributions of partners involved in organising workshops, study visits, etc. Eurochild would particularly like to thank the staff at the Howard Johnson Grand Plaza Hotel in Bucharest for their flexibility and helpful approach, and staff and volunteers from our hosts Hope and Homes for Children Romania.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Expenditure	€ 100.706	Income	€ 100.706
Travel	€ 30.715	Registration fees	€ 27.719
Subsistence & accommodation	€ 51.463	Subsidy FR Embassy	€ 5.450
Editor conference report	€ 3.059	EC grant	€ 67.537
Translations & printing	€ 5.014		
Room & equipment hire	€ 6.282		
Local staff and interpreters	€ 4.173		

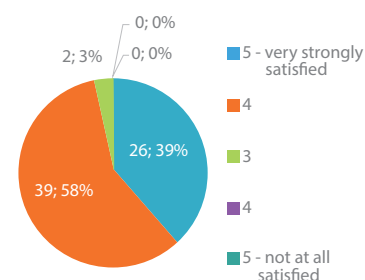
EVALUATION

Nearly 30% of attendees completed an online evaluation form that included a combination of qualitative and quantitative questions. Conference participants rated the event favourably on all aspects, with 66% strongly satisfied with the conference overall, while 55 out of 69 the respondents reported that the knowledge and information gained will be ultimately beneficial in their work. Elements of success included the networking opportunity, broad-ranging agenda and well-chosen themes, high level speakers, well-planned programme, strong messages arising from the discussions and concrete take-aways.



	Did the event match your needs?	Did you gain relevant knowledge and information?	Will you be able to apply such knowledge and information in your work?
5 - very strongly satisfied	18	11	14
4	45	47	41
3	3	9	11
2	1	1	1
1 - not at all satisfied	0	0	1

What is your overall assessment of the event?



ABOUT THE ORGANISERS

Eurochild

advocates for children's rights and well-being to be at the heart of policymaking. We are a network of organisations working with and for children throughout Europe, striving for a society that respects the rights of children. We influence policies, build internal capacities, facilitate mutual learning and exchange practice and research. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is the foundation of all our work.

www.eurochild.org

Hope and Homes for Children Romania

focuses on transforming a child protection system based on institutional care, by preventing child separation from families, and developing family-based alternatives. They believe that attachment, love, individual care and stimulation are essential for every child.

www.hhc.ro

ORGANISERS



Eurochild
Putting children at
the heart of Europe



**HHC
România**

O casă și o familie
pentru fiecare copil

PROGRAMME ADVISORY COMMITTEE



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

UNESCO Chair in
Children, Youth and Civic Engagement
Ireland
CHILD AND FAMILY RESEARCH CENTRE



FONPC
Federația
Organizațiilor
Neguvernamentale
pentru
Copil
România



Universal Education Foundation
Learning for Well-being



COALITION FOR CHILD PROTECTION
IN THE WIDER BLACK SEA AREA



Hope & Homes for Children



Liberté - Egalité - Fraternité
RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
Ambassade de France en Roumanie

The side event "Building the economic case for child-friendly justice
was co-financed by the Embassy of France in Romania.



The conference was organised as contribution to a project co-funded
by the OAK Foundation on Building the Economic Case for Investing in
Prevention and Quality Alternative Care (January 2014-June 2016).



Panel co-financed by the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
through the Official Development Assistance Unit, with UNDP
Regional Center for Europe and CIS as implementation partner.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit the conference website: http://bit.ly/Eurochild_AC2014



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please consult: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>
The views expressed by Eurochild do not necessarily reflect the position or opin-
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