

ROADMAP

Title of the initiative: **Communication on the EU strategy on the rights of the child 2011-2014**

Type of initiative (CWP/Catalogue/Comitology):CWP

Lead DG/contact person/details: **JLS/D1**

Expected date of adoption of the initiative (month/year): **December 2010**

Date of modification:

Version No:

Initial IA screening & planning of further work

A. Context and problem definition

(i) What is the political context of the initiative? (ii) How does this initiative relate to past and possible future initiatives, and to other EU policies?

Children's rights form part of the fundamental rights that the EU and the Member States are bound to respect under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the international and European treaties, in particular the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The 2006 Commission's Communication "Towards an EU strategy on the Rights of the Child" laid the foundations for an EU policy on children's rights, in internal and external policies alike. The communication encompasses a broad number of EU policies that have an impact on children's rights policy and initiated a process that helped develop a method, structures and awareness. The Stockholm Programme calls for an ambitious EU strategy on the rights of the child should be developed.

What are the main problems identified?

Needs for a focused approach: to render EU policies linked to the rights of the child more effective and to ensure tangible results, it is necessary to prioritise certain fields of action that fall into the scope of the Treaties.

Needs for data for developing an evidence based approach: the main problem that the Commission is confronted with when developing policies for children is the lack of available (comparable) data.

Needs to reinforce the involvement of all parties, in particular children themselves: the 2006 Communication gave emphasis to the creation of consultative structures with a view to bringing together all relevant stakeholders. There is a need to ensure the involvement of children themselves in the development and in the implementation of the strategy. There are no best practices in this area. The Commission has launched Eurobarometers and a qualitative study to consult children to input into the new strategy. In addition there is also a need for more involvement of the Council in the EU Strategy for the Rights of the Child.

Who is affected?

The rights of the child potentially concern all EU policies and all individuals as well as many various public authorities and stakeholders.

(i) Is EU action justified on grounds of subsidiarity? (ii) Why can the objectives of the proposed action not be achieved sufficiently by Member States (necessity test)? (iii) As a result of this, can objectives be better achieved by action by the Community (test of EU Value Added)?

Yes. The EU has no general competence in the field of children's rights. The actions and policies having the stronger impact on children are taken, in line with the subsidiarity principle, at Member States level. The communication will focus on areas where the EU can offer real added value.

B. Objectives of EU initiative

What are the main policy objectives?

- **Mainstreaming.** The horizontal character of the EU strategy allows the Commission to ensure a more coherent approach that complies with the standards laid down in the UNCRC and avoids duplication of EU actions having an impact on children. Experience and expertise obtained during the implementation of the 2006 communication and results of the study on the evaluation of this communication will enable to reinforce the efficiency of mainstreaming the rights of the child.
- **Addressing priorities.** The communication would be axed around four major areas of intervention: poverty, vulnerable children, violence and child-friendly justice. These are areas where the EU can bring real added value. The identification of these themes is the result of work done to date within the steering group of the Forum and the Forum itself. Moreover, the choice of topics reflects the major concerns of children themselves. The Stockholm programme has indicated violence and invisible children as priority areas. As a priority, specific actions will aim to gain better knowledge of the situation on the ground in these four areas.
- **Providing stronger support to Member States.** The effective implementation of the strategy on the Rights of the Child requires strong support towards Member States as well as the strengthening of mutual cooperation between Member States. The Strategy could aim at supporting Member States in providing high standards of protection for children in line with the UNCRC. Existing structures (EU Forum) could provide stronger support to Member States when developing and implementing their policies on children's rights as well as facilitating exchange of best practices among them.
- **Ensuring participation.** The Forum on the Rights of the Child would be adapted to better serve its role of a body to design and monitor EU and Member States actions. Participation of children in the elaboration of the strategy should be enhanced. Full exploitation of the European web site for children will be a priority.

Do the objectives imply developing EU policy in new areas or in areas of strategic importance?
No.

C. Options

Not relevant

D. Initial assessment of impacts

Not relevant

E. Planning of further impact assessment work

No impact assessment is planned as this communication is about mainstreaming current policies.