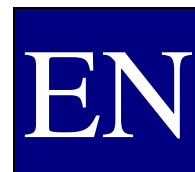




**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



## **Council conclusions on child labour**

*3023rd FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council meeting  
Luxembourg, 14 June 2010*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"1. June 12 is the international day against child labour. On this day the international community, based on a strong belief that the vulnerable deserve protection and that the young deserve a future, commemorate our shared goal of a child labour free world. While during the period 2000 - 2004 the world witnessed a decrease in child labour, since then, this positive trend has slowed down.

2. The Council expresses its deep concern about the fact that over 200 million children are still engaged in child labour, more than a half of which are in hazardous work. The Council reaffirms its commitment to protect and promote the rights of the child, including the right of children to enjoy education and to live a life free from child labour.

3. The Council strongly welcomes the document 'Combating Child Labour' prepared by the Commission, following the Council's discussion in May 2008. The Council supports the conclusion in the study by the Commission that there is room for stepping up EU efforts towards eliminating child labour, based on a comprehensive policy approach. The Council agrees with the Commission that the EU's and Member States' instruments – notably a policy dialogue, combined with development cooperation and trade incentives can be used more effectively to contribute to the internationally agreed goal of eliminating the worst forms of child labour by 2016 and eventually ending all forms of child labour if applied in a mutually supportive manner and as a part of a broader policy framework that focuses on development and poverty eradication.

# **P R E S S**

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4. The Council is fully aware of the role and responsibilities of the EU in the strife towards ending child labour, and agrees to take a number of measures to further increase its contribution to reaching this goal. Particular efforts are called for to counter all forms of discrimination that contributes to child labour, and to address hazardous work by children in regions, sectors and occupations where child labour is most prevalent. The Council considers the following measures as a first step following the report by the Commission and will revert to the issue.

5. Dialogue and multilateral affairs – The promotion of the rights of the child constitute an integral part of the EU's human rights policy. The EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child stress the need to mainstream these rights in EU policy and action. The Council emphasizes that the elimination of child labour is a legal obligation based in international treaties and conventions, in particular the Convention on the Rights of the Child and ILO Conventions 138 and 182. It invites the HR, the Commission and EU Member States to actively encourage effective implementation of these obligations in EU dialogues with third countries.

6. The Council recalls that worst forms of child labour constitute violence against children. It affects very young children, and entails serious physical and emotional harm. The Council welcomes the appointment by the UNSG of Marta Santos Pais as Special Representative on Violence against Children and is committed to work with her, in particular on follow-up to the UNSG's report on child labour presented at the last session of the UNGA as well as the resolution adopted by the General Assembly. The council stresses the need for using effectively the multilateral system and existing partnerships while recognizing the lead role of the ILO in combating child labour.

7. Development Cooperation - Development cooperation by the EU donors represents an important contribution in the efforts to combat child labour. The Council notes that the eradication of child labour requires a holistic approach, including through prevention, and is not only a matter of improving human rights, it also yields high social and economic returns and contributes to eradicating poverty and promoting human development. The Council invites the Commission, and Member States, to encourage partner countries to adopt and implement National Action Plans against Child Labour, Time bound Programmes to end the worst forms of child labour at the latest by 2016, include child labour in the ILO Decent Work Country Programs, and in regional strategies to tackle transborder forms of child labour.

8. The Council invites the Commission and the Member States to work with partner countries to ensure that children's rights, including the fight against child labour where it occurs, is mainstreamed in poverty reduction strategies and addressed in all relevant sectors. The Council welcomes the inclusion of a specific call for proposals on child labour within the Thematic programme Investing in People.

9. The Council reaffirms its December 2009 conclusions on Human Rights and Democracy in Third Countries, in which it expressed its full support for the work of the UN Special Representative on Business and Human Rights. By taking the necessary steps to implement the proposed UN Framework on Business and Human Rights, the European Union would also make a significant contribution to combating child labour. The Council also affirms its support for the ILO Tripartite Declaration, the UN Global Compact and the OECD Guidelines for Multi-national Enterprises. The Council would welcome a future Commission Communication on CSR which addresses the issue of business and human rights in the global context and gives due consideration to the issue of child labour. In this context, the Council invites the Commission to organise a multi-stakeholder conference with representatives of the business community, civil society, international organisations, EU Institutions, and Member States, to discuss progress made and what further steps may be taken.

9a. The Council would welcome future Commission guidelines on socially responsible procurement, and encourages procuring authorities to use existing possibilities to take inter alia social considerations into account at the different stages of the procurement process, whenever possible and deemed to be relevant to the individual procurement.

10. Trade incentives –The Council underlines the importance of the GSP + to promote sustainable development and good governance including the effective implementation of the ILO conventions 138 and 182. To that end, the Council invites the Commission to improve the GSP scheme in the context of the upcoming review of the GSP-regulation.

11. The Council invites the Commission to study and report before the end of 2011 on the worst form of child labour and trade, taking into account international experience and the views of competent international organizations."

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