



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 14 October 2010**

**14587/10**

**SOC 622**

**NOTE**

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from :	The Presidency
to :	COUNCIL (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs)
Subject :	<b>Information from the Belgian Presidency on the Child Poverty Conference (2 and 3 September 2010) (Any other business item)</b>

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Delegations will find attached a note from the Presidency.

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## **BACKGROUND NOTE**

### **on the Child Poverty Conference (2 and 3/9/2010)**

#### **EPSCO meeting – 21 October 2010**

The at-risk-of-poverty rate is greater among children than among the whole population. Child Poverty is a growing problem in Europe and we should invest now in order to avoid heavier costs in the future. This is the reason why the Trio Presidencies (Spain – Belgium – Hungary) signed a strong declaration on the subject during a European Conference organized by the Belgian Presidency early September 2010. Here are the positions contained in the declaration:

1. There are over 100 million children and young people in Europe and at least 20 million of them are at risk of poverty, with risk of further deepening of the transmission of poverty to the next generation of children. Specific steps must be taken in the context of the crisis response and recovery to safeguard and promote critical investments and effective policy interventions for children and young people. An inclusive, open and confident Europe will not be achieved unless and until child poverty is eliminated in our times.
2. The Belgian EU Presidency Conference: Child Poverty and Well-Being on 2-3 September 2010 in Marche-en-Famenne brought together the Trio Presidencies of Spain, Belgium and Hungary, the Member States, regional and local authorities, the European Commission, international organisations, NGOs, child poverty experts and academics and members of civil society to discuss the contents of a future Recommendation to Fight Child Poverty and Ensure the Well-Being of Children. The Conference addressed three main topics: ensuring adequate resources, and in particular, income and benefits and reconciling employment and family life; guaranteeing access to quality services, in particular education, across the life cycle of childhood, especially for the most vulnerable; and ensuring active participation and inclusion of children and young people and ensuring their voices are heard in shaping policies that affect their lives. The Conference underlined that progress is possible and concrete actions are within reach.

3. The Conference has been building on the commitments in the Treaty to combat social exclusion and discrimination, to promote solidarity between generations, and to protect children's rights, and also on the EU 2020 Strategy for developing a Europe that is "smart", "green" and "inclusive".
4. As a conclusion of the Conference, building on the legacy of the European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, and paving the way towards the adoption of a **Recommendation to Fight Child Poverty and Promote Child Well-Being**, the three Presidencies of Spain, Belgium and Hungary call upon Member States and the European Council, in close collaboration with the Commission, to:
- Set **clear, quantified sub-targets for the reduction of child poverty** in order to meet the EU 2020 poverty target of lifting at least 20 million out of poverty, taking into account the specifics of each Member State;
  - Include the fight against child poverty and the promotion of child well-being as key priorities of the **EU 2020 Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion**;
  - Ensure **children's well-being is mainstreamed** across all policy areas both at national and European level in an integrated and coherent manner with a view to addressing the multidimensional nature of the problem;
  - Make the link with the work on the **EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child**;
  - Give specific focus to children in **extreme poverty**, especially the most marginalised and those subject to discrimination, such as migrant children, including undocumented children, and children from minority backgrounds, in particular the Roma, and children with disabilities;
  - Promote the **involvement of children and young people in all decisions that affect their lives** and to strengthen the involvement of all stakeholders defending children rights.

The informal meeting for European Ministers in charge of combating poverty which took place on the 19<sup>th</sup> October discussed the outcomes of the Conference. It became clear that the reality of children experiencing poverty in Europe should be taken into account and translated into strong policies. European Commissioner for Social Affairs L. Andor positioned himself in favour of the adoption of a Recommendation to fight child poverty.