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THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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Subject: Tackling child poverty and promoting child well-being  
- Council Conclusions

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Delegations will find attached the final version of the Council conclusions as adopted by EPSCO on 17 June 2011.

# Tackling child poverty and promoting child well-being

## Council Conclusions

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

HAVING REGARD TO

1. Article 3 of the Treaty on the European Union, which inter alia states that the EU shall combat social exclusion and discrimination and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child;
2. Article 9 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union which states that "in defining and implementing its policies and activities, the Union shall take into account requirements linked to the promotion of a high level of employment, the guarantee of adequate social protection, the fight against social exclusion, and a high level of education, training and protection of human health";
3. Article 160 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which attributes to the Social Protection Committee the task to monitor the social situation and the development of social protection policies in the Member States and the Union;
4. Article 24 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union which recognizes that children shall have the right to such protection and care as is necessary for their well-being and also makes the child's best interests a primary consideration in all actions relating to children, whether taken by public authorities or private institutions;

## RECALLING

5. that at least 20 million children, out of 100 million, are at risk of poverty in the European Union; that orphans, children in lone parent and large families, as well as in families exposed to specific disadvantages (such as families including members with disabilities and/or which belong to certain marginalised communities, including the Roma and other ethnic minority groups), are particularly exposed to the risk of poverty;
6. that poverty affects children's well being, including their health, educational attainments and life chances, which also puts a toll on Europe's future human capital;
7. that child poverty together with the inter-generational transmission of poverty entails major social and economic costs;
8. that parents' participation in the labour market, and their access to decent jobs, in particular as regards lone parents, as well as women' economic independence, and comprehensive programmes for second chance education and lifelong learning opportunities, are key factors for reducing the risk of poverty among children;
9. the Council declaration on the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion: "Working together to fight poverty in 2010 and beyond" which states that combating child poverty should be a top priority of the EU and its Member States in the next decade;
10. the Communication of the Commission "The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: A European Framework for social and territorial cohesion"<sup>1</sup> highlighting that the Commission will propose a Recommendation on child poverty in 2012;
11. the work done by the Social Protection Committee and its Indicators' Sub-group on monitoring the situation of children as outlined in the SPC 2008 Report on Child Poverty and Child Well-being in the EU;

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<sup>1</sup> Doc. 18111/10.

12. the Trio Presidency declaration of the conference "Roadmap for a Recommendation on Child Poverty and Child Well-being" in Marche-en-Famme, 2-3 September 2010 in which the Spanish, Belgian and Hungarian Presidencies presented a number of recommendations for future action;

#### STRESSES

13. that child poverty and well-being is a multidimensional phenomenon and that a comprehensive approach is therefore needed to tackle it combining employment for parents, income support and access to social services, including childcare, as well as health care services and education;
14. that such a comprehensive approach involves the use of adequate human and financial resources;

#### INVITES THE MEMBER STATES

15. to adequately emphasise the aspects of child poverty within their national policies and to consider it when drafting the National Reform Programmes backing them up with adequate targets where appropriate, and resources, as well as monitoring and evaluation arrangements;
16. to ensure that combating child poverty and promoting children's well-being are mainstreamed across all policy areas and where appropriate, targeted actions are taken, with a view to addressing the multidimensional nature of the problem and encouraging integrated interventions at national, regional and local levels, especially in the most disadvantaged territories;
17. to bear in mind that the fight against child poverty cannot be separated from the situation of families: decent employment opportunities for parents, adequate family benefits and income support, arrangements for reconciling work and family life, and parenting support services are crucial;

18. to improve access to quality services, in particular early childhood development and care services from the earliest ages and decent housing, to guarantee access to quality education, across the cycle of childhood, including combating early school leaving, as well as quality health care, and adequate protection and support, especially for children without parental care;
19. to promote close cooperation amongst public authorities at all levels, social partners, local communities and civil society organisations, inter alia through social innovations for the creation of a quality environment for all children (notably those experiencing social exclusion);
20. to effectively use the Structural Funds and other existing EU financial resources for the purposes of helping to eliminate child poverty and promoting child well-being, without prejudice to future negotiations on the next multi-annual financial framework;

#### INVITES THE COMMISSION

21. to consider child poverty and well-being as one of the priorities of the social dimension of the Europe 2020 Strategy in the framework of the monitoring and evaluation of the National Reform Programmes, as well as in the framework of social impact assessments;
22. to put forward, as set out in the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion, a Recommendation on child poverty and well-being in 2012, outlining common principles and effective monitoring and assessment tools to tackle child poverty; such a recommendation could follow a broad approach, covering adequate resources for families with children, access to quality services (especially for the most vulnerable), arrangements for reconciling work and family life and taking into account the importance of the involvement of children and the participation of young people in decisions affecting their lives;
23. to continue to promote the exchange of best practices among the Member States on effective policies of combating child poverty and promoting child well-being;

INVITES THE COMMISSION AND THE MEMBER STATES

24. to ensure that work on child poverty and well-being takes a child-rights approach in line with the Treaties, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC);

INVITES THE SOCIAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE

25. to actively contribute to the preparation of the Recommendation on child poverty and well-being;
26. to continue to work on existing EU indicators and consider the need to develop further EU indicators on child poverty and well-being; and to enhance the timeliness of data.

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