



CHILD-FRIENDLY EUROPE

**Prague, Czech Republic
6-7 April 2009**

The idea of this conference, keen to make a significant contribution to the enhanced protection of children's rights in Europe, is the idea that, in all cultures, the child's interests are central to respect for the rights of the child. The aim for every child in Europe is to enjoy the same degree of protection, esteem, and respect.

The 50th anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, in conjunction with the 20th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, is a unique opportunity to form a European programme accentuating the fact that adults influence and mould the world not to their advantage or in pursuit of their own vision, but in the interests of their children. We all know that childhood plays an inimitable role in shaping each individual, so it is logical for all actions and policies to be subordinated to the interests of the child, i.e. to the advancement and essence of the human rights dimension which is increasing in magnitude, significance and importance as the society develops.

Children's rights are already the focus of programmes and projects to build and support child-friendly communities and child-friendly justice; changes in public thinking and attitudes fuel the ambition to build and support a child-friendly Europe in the spirit of Council of Europe programmes.

As the 2009-2012 strategy of the 'Building a Europe for and with Children' programme encompasses the mainstreaming, protection and participation of children in Europe, as outlined by Sweden in 2008 during its chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers, attention will be focused on Professor Eugene Verhellen's three categories which are traditionally used to classify rights in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and which smooth the way for the balanced fulfilment of all rights of all children in Europe. And that is the vision of Child-Friendly Europe.

A child-friendly Europe is synonymous with a society in which respect for and the fulfilment of disabled children's rights, socially disadvantaged children's rights, and the rights of children of all cultures and nationalities are accepted as the norm.

The results of the UN's First World Report on Violence against Children provide an incentive to draw up, integrate and coordinate national strategies aimed at preventing all forms of interpersonal violence against children; in Europe, they should be formulated with the close cooperation of all countries and experts. Violence is a phenomenon that knows no boundaries; a pan-European approach, the regular exchange of experience and appointment of an expert team are therefore imperative today.

The aim of the Child-Friendly Europe conference is to deal with selected aspects of contemporary life which significantly affect the quality of life enjoyed by children and the conditions required for their healthy, harmonious development. In keeping with the parental

care priorities of the Czech Presidency, the conference wishes to draw attention to the essential support for positive parenthood, which is a basic parental social skill and helps shape the personal identity of children, their self-confidence, and attitudes to life and other people that will be key factors in determining their quality of life and the quality of life enjoyed by their loved ones. This concept links up with the priority of protecting children against all forms of violence.

The first part of the conference will address the issues of the media and children, with a presentation of the results of reputable studies and proposals to protect children by means of a rating system for television programmes. This panel will be complemented by information on enhancing the protection of children in contact with new technologies and is fully in line with the priorities of the Czech Presidency regarding the increased protection of children. In accordance with the International Online Charter adopted in 2008, the conference wants to make the warning that the media literacy of children is dependent on the accompanying fundamental media guidance and awareness of parents and adults.

The third part focuses on human rights education, paving the way for an understanding of rights, respect for rights, and the participation of children. The conference will highlight the need for the human rights education of parents, teachers, other professionals and the general public. There will also be a presentation of a collaborative project with the Visegrad countries that will contribute to the fulfilment of the Czech Presidency's priorities in relation to Europe. The programme will be complemented by a workshop taking the form of a practical example of the human rights education curriculum at the Teacher Training College, which trains nursery-school teachers.

The Preparatory Committee of the Child-Friendly Europe conference is convinced that the conference will provide a new angle on certain issues of children's rights and will lay the foundations of respect, as a matter of principle, for the interests of children in the building of a child-friendly Europe.

The conference will be co-moderated by students of Prague secondary grammar schools, the Children's Press Agency will be in attendance, and children will feature in the accompanying cultural programme. As part of the conference preparations, children are making ceramic bells by hand in the hope that conference delegates will ring the knell of violence and lack of respect for the rights of children in Europe!

The logo consists of the text 'EU2009.CZ' in a bold, sans-serif font. Each letter is a different color: 'E' is blue, 'U' is yellow, '2' is blue, '0' is green, '0' is orange, '9' is red, and '.CZ' is blue.

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bez bariér

Europe
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Europe
sans barrières