



PRESS RELEASE

25 October 2011, Brussels

Inclusion Europe and Eurochild call on authorities to recognise the equal value of children with intellectual disabilities

The European Report “**Children’s Rights for all! Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child for children with intellectual disabilities**” revealed that across the whole of Europe, children with intellectual disabilities are highly vulnerable to discrimination, neglect and exclusion.

“*Very often, we are forgetting about the most important aim – guaranteeing the joyful childhood*” said **Maria Herczog**, President of Eurochild and a member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

“*The central problem is to get people to recognise the equal value of children with intellectual disabilities. With the financial crisis, it turns out that children with intellectual disabilities are not a priority. Governments use the financial crisis as an excuse to justify stopping progress in implementing children’s rights, especially in realisation of inclusive education. We need resources and funds but foremost political will and cooperation to make sure every child with an intellectual disability is valued equally. Additional assistance is not a luxury, it is an essential,*” explained **Maureen Piggot**, President of Inclusion Europe.

Jan Jařab, Regional Representative for Europe of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights welcomed the initiative. At the conference, he pointed out that “*members of the EU should stop using the European Structural Funds to reinforce their child care systems in their current form. They should instead use the Funds to launch fundamental reform of their systems of child protection and care to ensure transition from institutions to community-based services*”.

The report examines the protection of the rights of children with intellectual disabilities related to education, health, abuse, participation, family support and community-based services. Although a number of good practices in promoting their rights have been recorded, the systemic approach to change is missing. The report concludes that the critical lack of information on children with intellectual disabilities significantly impedes the real implementation and monitoring of their rights.

The document was launched during the **European Conference on Children’s Rights** held on **20-21 October in Brussels**. During the event, Inclusion Europe and Eurochild together with representatives from 22 national disability and children’s rights organisations further called on the regional and national governments as well as the European Union to:

www.childrights4all.eu

- **Recognise the right of children with intellectual disabilities to live in the community in their families or family-type settings.** Governments are urged to stop placing children in institutions and provide families with appropriate community-based supports.
- Create inclusive **opportunities for children with intellectual disabilities to express their views** and have them respected when decisions are taken on matters affecting them.
- **Take over immediate responsibility** for multiplying existing experiences in promoting the rights of children with intellectual disabilities in a systemic manner.

The European Report together with 22 national reports can be found at:

www.childrights4all.eu

About the project Children's Rights for All:

In December 2009, Inclusion Europe, Eurochild and the Charles University in Prague embarked upon the research project to analyse the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child from the perspective of children with intellectual disabilities. The research, conducted by highly-qualified experts in the EU member states, focused on 5 priority areas: health, abuse, family and (de-)institutionalisation, education, as well as promotion, participation and antidiscrimination. The initiative received funding from DAPHNE Programme of the European Commission.

About:

Inclusion Europe (IE) is the European voice and representation of 70 member organisations of people with intellectual disabilities and their families. Founded in 1988, Inclusion Europe has an over 20-year track record of successful operation and defending the rights of its constituency.

Eurochild is the European network of organisations and individuals promoting the rights and welfare of children and young people in Europe. Founded in 2004, the network has currently 109 Full and 36 Associate Members in 35 European countries.

For more information, please, contact:

Petra Letavayova

Communications Officer
Inclusion Europe

<http://www.inclusion-europe.org/>

Tel: +32 2 502 28 15

Fax: +32 2 502 80 10

E-mail: p.letavayova@inclusion-europe.org

Björn Becker

Information and Communication Officer
Eurochild

www.eurochild.org

Tel.: +32 2 211 05 53

Fax: +32 2 511 72 98

E-mail: bjorn.becker@eurochild.org

www.childrights4all.eu