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From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

Subject: Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children's rights

Delegations will find attached the abovementioned conclusions, approved by the Council (Education, Youth, Culture and Sport) at its meeting on 13-14 May 2024.

Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children's rights

THE COUNCIL AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL,

RECALLING THAT:

1. The European Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail, as does ensuring solidarity between generations¹,
2. Discrimination of the child and its parents or legal guardians, based on any ground such as sex², race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, the membership of a minority, property, birth, disability, age, sexual orientation, or gender identity is prohibited. Specific groups of children face particular vulnerabilities and suffer from socio-economic exclusion and discrimination,

¹ Article 2 and 3(2) of the Treaty on European Union.

² The Court of Justice of the European Union has held that the scope of the principle of equal treatment for men and women cannot be confined to the prohibition of discrimination based on the fact that a person is of one or other sex. In view of its purpose and the nature of the rights which it seeks to safeguard, it also applies to discrimination arising from the gender reassignment of a person. See recital 3 preamble Directive 2006/54/EC. Considering the scope of application of the Directive, this provision is only relevant for the parent or legal guardian of the child.

3. It is the European Union's aim to protect the rights of the child. In all actions relating to children, whether taken by public authorities or private institutions, the child's best interests must be a primary consideration. Children shall have the right to such protection and care as is necessary for their well-being. They have the right to express their views freely. Such views shall be taken into consideration on matters which concern them in accordance with their age and maturity³,
4. European Union actions shall be aimed at encouraging the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe,
5. The EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child aims to build the best possible life for children in the European Union and across the globe, supports the development, protection and promotion of the rights of the child in the EU and on a global level and promotes and improves the inclusive and systemic participation of children at local, regional, national and EU levels, for example through a new EU Children's Participation Platform. It reflects the rights and the role of children in our society and puts children and their best interests at the heart of EU policies, notably by stressing the importance of child participation in political and democratic life⁴,

³ Article 3(3) of the Treaty on European Union and Article 24 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

⁴ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child (COM(2021) 142, p. 1-2); to achieve the objectives set out in the strategy, the Commission will ensure that a children's rights perspective is mainstreamed in all relevant policies, legislation and funding programmes. This will be part of efforts to create a child-friendly culture in EU policymaking and will be supported by providing training and capacity building to EU staff and enhanced internal coordination through the team of the Commission's coordinator for the rights of the child. A mainstreaming checklist on the rights of the child will be developed. For more information see Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/1004 of 14 June 2021 establishing a European Child Guarantee.

6. The EU Youth strategy 2019-2027, which fosters youth participation in democratic life and supports social and civic engagement, aims to ensure that all young people have the necessary resources to take part in society; the 11 European Youth Goals – that are an integral part of the strategy – are of relevance to these conclusions and in particular Goal #9, ‘Space and Participation for All’, which aims to strengthen young people’s democratic participation and autonomy and provide dedicated youth spaces in all areas of society,
7. Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/1004 of 14 June 2021 establishing a European Child Guarantee recommends to the Member States that they guarantee for children in need⁵ effective and free access to high-quality early childhood education and care, education and school-based activities, at least one healthy meal each school day and healthcare, as well as effective access to healthy nutrition and adequate housing. All Member States have prepared their national action plans on how to implement this recommendation,
8. The European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles for the Digital Decade includes principles and commitments on the protection and empowerment of children and young people in the digital environment⁶,

⁵ Understood as persons under 18 years of age who are at risk of poverty or social exclusion, see Article 3(a) of the Recommendation.

⁶ Joint Declaration of the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission on Digital Rights and Principles for the Digital Decade (2023/C 23/01).

9. The European Strategy for a Better Internet for Kids (BIK+) and the Digital Services Act are essential building blocks to protect, empower and respect children and their mental health and wellbeing online, including via initiatives aimed at raising the awareness of their rights,
10. The Council conclusions on the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child⁷, welcome the Commission's initiative to mainstream the children's rights perspective into all relevant EU policies, legislation and funding programmes and stress the importance of strengthening the participation of children in political and democratic life at local, regional, national and EU level, including by establishing new and supporting existing mechanisms for meaningful, inclusive and safe participation by children and promoting equal participation by children without discrimination of any kind, and reaffirm the importance of joining efforts with international organisations, namely the Council of Europe and the United Nations, in protecting and promoting the rights of children in the EU and worldwide,
11. The Council conclusions on the European and International Policy Agendas on Children, Youth and Children's Rights encourage Member States to cooperate and take an active role in the field of children, youth and children's rights and in future international meetings at both expert and ministerial level dealing with children's rights⁸,

⁷ Council conclusions of 9 June 2022 on the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child (10024/22).

⁸ Council conclusions of 19 November 2010 on the European and International Policy Agendas on Children, Youth and Children's Rights (2010/C 326/01).

12. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), its Optional Protocols and General Comments of the Committee of the Rights of the Child form the fundamental treaty setting out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children, and the UN 2030 Agenda for sustainable development strives to provide children and youth with a nurturing environment for the full realisation of their rights and capabilities,
13. The Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2022-2027 takes a transversal approach and looks more closely at the multiple, often interrelated challenges met by children and by those protecting their rights, but also at strengthening the role of children, enhancing their right to be heard and to influence decisions made by adults, as well as at the interdisciplinary and interagency responses that are required to take effective action. The strategy aims to find synergies with priorities and actions proposed by other Council of Europe strategies and action plans, such as the Youth sector strategy 2030, and with the EU, in particular with the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child⁹,
14. The Council of Europe Youth sector strategy 2030 states that the Council of Europe youth sector should aim to enable young people across Europe to actively uphold, defend, promote and benefit from the Council of Europe's core values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, notably by strengthening young people's access to rights, deepening youth knowledge and broadening youth participation. It acknowledges the importance of achieving coherence and synergy with the work of all relevant international stakeholders in the youth field, in particular with the European Union and the United Nations¹⁰,

⁹ The Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2022-2027 (pp. 10 and 5, 13, 27, 33, 39, 50).

¹⁰ Committee of Ministers Resolution CM/Res(2020)2 on the Youth sector strategy 2030 (p. 13-14).

15. The Council of Europe Education Strategy 2024-2030, which states that its overall long-term vision is that all learners will be able to fully exercise their rights as active citizens in European democratic societies. This long-term vision will be achieved in cooperation with the Member States through a programme whose main mission is to improve the quality and accessibility of education in order to enhance the acquisition of knowledge and competences for life in democratic societies and ensure equal opportunities for all learners.

ACKNOWLEDGING THAT:

16. Significant progress has been made since 2010 in the recognition and advancement of the rights and well-being of children and youth, both within Europe and on a global scale. International agreements and commitments aimed at improving the lives of children and young people have been adopted. Notable examples include the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the first comprehensive EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child and the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, as well as the significant contributions and resources provided by the Council of Europe in the field of youth rights and youth participation, such as Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)7 on young people's access to rights,
17. Children and young people across the European Union are facing a changing and complex society¹¹ tainted by a variety of unprecedented developments and challenges: the triple planetary crisis (climate change, loss of biodiversity and pollution), the COVID-19 pandemic, the downsides of the acceleration of the digital revolution, as well as Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the conflict in the Middle East, other conflicts and wars in the world and other security threats. These circumstances and phenomena also have an impact on the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people,

¹¹ 'Noting with concern, in the light of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, that children are at greater risk than adults in armed conflicts and their aftermath, and affirming that they need to be protected, in particular from their conscription into and use by the army or other armed forces as well as from trafficking in human beings, illegal adoption, sexual exploitation and separation from their families; that the same is true in other crisis and emergency situations caused by terrorism, a public health crisis, an economic crisis, climate change or natural disasters'. - Council conclusions of 9 June 2022 on the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child (10024/22) (p. 3).

18. Children and young people are individual rights-holders, actors of change and an important force in our society, both present and future. They continue mobilising for their concerns, which contributes to positive change in society¹². Children and young people, in all their diversity, should be enabled, supported and empowered in their positive and active engagement for their concerns, both in the physical and digital environments, and should be given spaces to express their voices and opinions. Building on existing initiatives, these spaces should be tailored to the specific needs of target groups and ensure that participation is meaningful, inclusive and safe. Close synergies should be established to ensure a continuum of participation from children to young people,
19. The commitment to promoting, protecting and fulfilling children's rights and promoting equal and equitable access for young people to their rights and opportunities, at the heart of European and international policies, requires reaffirmation and strengthening.

TAKING NOTE OF:

20. The 2023 state of the art document entitled 'The European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children's rights',
21. As part of the 'Defence of Democracy' package, the Commission recommendation on promoting the engagement and effective participation of citizens and civil society organisations in public policy-making processes¹³, which notably promotes children's and young people's meaningful, inclusive and safe participation without discrimination of any kind and calls on Member States to strengthen the participation of children and young people in political and democratic life at local, regional and national level, including in rural and remote areas,

¹² The European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027 (2018/C 456/01); Article 51 Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1): 'Children and young women and men are critical agents of change and will find in the new Goals a platform to channel their infinite capacities for activism into the creation of a better world.'

¹³ Commission Recommendation on promoting the engagement and effective participation of citizens and civil society organisations in public policy-making processes, C(2023)8627 final, 12.12.2023.

22. The Commission recommendation on inclusive and resilient electoral processes in the Union and enhancing the European nature and efficient conduct of elections to the European Parliament,¹⁴ which covers supporting young citizens in the exercise of their electoral rights, both as voters and candidates, and promoting political engagement, with a special focus on young people, especially first-time voters. This support may include actions such as fostering citizenship education, organising election simulations in schools, knowledge tests or art competitions on elections, youth-friendly communication campaigns, election guides to familiarise children and teenagers with the registration and voting process, encouraging students to become election observers and peer-to-peer programmes,
23. The Better Internet for Kids (BIK+) Strategy, which supports a comprehensive, prevention-oriented and multi-stakeholder approach based on a safe, age-appropriate digital environment, digital empowerment and active participation of children, bringing children and youth participation activities to the forefront; also the Digital Services Act (DSA), which has the protection of children as a core objective,
24. The Council's conclusions on Digital empowerment,¹⁵ which invite Member States to raise awareness among the public, including children and young people, of the importance of protecting their privacy and personal data in the digital world, including the right to access their own personal data, the right to be forgotten, and how to configure privacy settings and use encryption. In addition, Member States are invited to adopt the necessary measures to provide specific protection and/or digital skills tailored to the needs of children and young people,

¹⁴ Commission Recommendation (EU) 2023/2829 of 12 December 2023 on inclusive and resilient electoral processes in the Union and enhancing the European nature and efficient conduct of the elections to the European Parliament.

¹⁵ Council conclusions on digital empowerment to protect and enforce fundamental rights in the digital age, 14309/23.

25. The outcomes of the expert seminar on 21-23 January 2024 that took place in Leuven and its recommendations for action (attached in Annex IV).

UNDERLINING:

26. The crucial importance of work undertaken in the area of children, youth and children's rights, as well as the role of youth work in the promotion, support, development and defence of the rights of children and of young people,
27. The necessity to mainstream children's rights, as well as the child perspective and youth perspective into all relevant policy areas to ensure coherent, comprehensive and inclusive policies for children and young people, particularly those with fewer opportunities¹⁶, those in the most vulnerable situations¹⁷, including, those with disabilities, those from the LGBTI¹⁸ community, as well as those with a migrant background, who are displaced or seeking refuge,
28. The value of the active engagement and involvement of children and young people in decisions that affect their lives, including in elections where relevant, recognising their right to participate in matters that concern them, in line with the principles enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child¹⁹, Article 7 in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 24(1) and (2) of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, and in line with the EU Strategy on the rights of the child and the EU Youth Strategy including the EU Youth Dialogue.

¹⁶ UNCRC, General Comment 4 on UNCRC Adolescent Health and Development in the Context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

¹⁷ Resolution on the outcomes of the 9th cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue 2023/C 185/04, paragraph 36 and the Council conclusions on promoting youth mainstreaming in policy decision-making processes in the European Union (C/2023/1337) and the UN CRC General Comment n°12 (2009) on the Right to be Heard.

¹⁸ Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on promoting youth mainstreaming in policy decision-making processes in the European Union (C/2023/1342); The LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025 (COM(2020) 698 final).

¹⁹ Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

WELCOMING:

29. The EU's concerted efforts, programmes, initiatives and tools such as Erasmus+, the Reinforced Youth Guarantee²⁰, the EU Child Guarantee, the European Solidarity Corps, the Conference on the Future of Europe (2021-2022), the European Year of Youth (2022) and its legacy, the EU Youth Dialogue, the EU Network for Children's Rights, the EU Children's Participation Platform, the Youth Wiki, the European Youth Portal, the Better internet for kids (BIK) platform and the EU Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles²¹,
30. The focus of the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme (2021–2027) on, *inter alia*, supporting, advancing and implementing comprehensive policies aimed at protecting and promoting the rights of the child²²,
31. The focus of the Erasmus+ Programme and Principle 1 of the European Pillar of Social Rights on the importance of good quality early childhood education and care,
32. The work of the EU Youth Coordinator and the European Commission Coordinator on the Rights of the Child, as well as the work of the national Child Guarantee Coordinators in charge of the effective coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the Child Guarantee recommendation.

²⁰ Council Recommendation of 30 October 2020 on A Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee.

²¹ 'Protection and empowerment of children and young people in the digital environment' under Chapter V 'Safety, security and Empowerment' of the Joint Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles (2023/C 23/01).

²² Article 4 of Regulation 2021/692 establishing the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme.

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THAT:

33. The life and future prospects of young people are marked by the opportunities, support and protection received during childhood,
34. A seamless transition from childhood to adulthood, especially for those young people in vulnerable situations, must be facilitated through informed policies and better coordination between the policies concerned,
35. In the age range addressed by EU Youth Policy cooperation, there is an intersection between children and young people, notably up until the age of 18 years old,
36. These Council conclusions aim to raise awareness and propose avenues for achieving better cooperation, coordination, information and exchange on European level regarding the policy fields within the scope of these conclusions.

ACCORDINGLY INVITE MEMBER STATES AT THE APPROPRIATE LEVELS, WITH DUE REGARD FOR THEIR SPECIFIC NATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES, TO:

37. Consider developing and implementing, or elaborate upon existing national strategies or other equivalent integrated or coordinated policies for children's rights and youth, striving towards policy coherence between children, children's rights and youth affairs, therefore ensuring that children's rights and the child perspective and the youth perspective are coordinated across all relevant policy areas, while responding to specific age-related needs, in light of the children's rights-based approach and relevant EU acquis,
38. Where applicable, ensure that child and youth participation is structurally embedded in decision-making processes that concern children and young people by establishing accessible platforms and mechanisms that promote their active participation or by making existing platforms or mechanisms more accessible, by providing the resources and support necessary for their effective functioning and by making sure that their participation is meaningful, inclusive and safe,
39. Promote age-inclusive and disability-inclusive tools and programmes that aim at facilitating child and youth participation in decision-making processes at local, regional, national and EU level (such as Erasmus+ Youth, including the EU Youth Dialogue, the European Youth Portal, the Citizens' Engagement Platform and the EU Children's Participation Platform),
40. Increase their efforts to prevent and combat all forms of violence against children and young people, including by taking measures to protect children and young people from discrimination on the grounds identified in paragraph 2 and ensure a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for all children at school, in particular those belonging to vulnerable groups while duly respecting their individuality.²³

²³ EU Strategy on the rights of the child (COM(2021) 142), p. 7.

41. Inform and educate children and young people, in all their diversity, about their rights and, where relevant, responsibilities, including EU citizenship rights and, where applicable, young people's right to participate in elections, provide child-friendly and youth-friendly accessible information, improve support and access to services and empower and equip them to become active, informed citizens capable of driving positive change within their communities and beyond. Additionally, raise more awareness for children and young people's rights to work towards the realisation of inclusive societies.

ACCORDINGLY INVITE THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY, TO:

42. Strengthen synergies in the implementation between the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 and the BIK+ Strategy and possible successor strategies through shared priorities and actions, notably through the cooperation between the EU Youth Coordinator and the European Commission Coordinator for the Rights of the Child,
43. Strive for the continuation of the European Youth Portal, the EU Children's Participation Platform, the Citizens' Engagement Platform and the BIK platform and synergies between them, by providing information, resources and adequate funding and elaborate on how to continue these in the relevant EU programmes to cater to the specificities and needs of children and young people,

44. Maintain a steadfast cross-sectoral commitment to safeguarding, protecting and promoting the rights and well-being of children and young people, in all their diversity, offline as well as online, ensuring their active participation in shaping Europe in current and future EU political cycles,
45. Assess the continuation of the biennial update of the 2023 state of the art document entitled ‘The European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children’s rights’ where appropriate with the support, involvement and expertise of the EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership.

ACCORDINGLY INVITE THE MEMBER STATES AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, IN THEIR RESPECTIVE AREAS OF COMPETENCE AND AT THE APPROPRIATE LEVELS, WITH DUE REGARD FOR THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY, TO:

46. Provide and ensure sure access to children and youth spaces for meaningful, inclusive and safe participation,
47. Stimulate the monitoring of the progress and the evaluation of the impact of policies related to children, children’s rights and youth affairs, utilising existing mechanisms, indicators and benchmarks to assess the effectiveness of measures taken and making those monitoring and evaluation processes inclusive for children and young people.

References

EU interinstitutional

- Treaty on European Union
- Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
- Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2012/C 326/02)

European institutions

- Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the outcomes of the 9th cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue (2023/C 185/04)
- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European and Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - The EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, COM(2021) 142 final
- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions a Digital Decade for children and youth: the new European strategy for a better internet for kids (BIK+)
- Decision (EU) 2021/2316 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 December 2021 on a European Year of Youth (2022)

- Regulation (EU) 2021/888 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing the European Solidarity Corps Programme and repealing Regulation (EU) 2018/1475 and (EU) No 375/2014
- Regulation (EU) 2021/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing Erasmus+: the Union Programme for education, training, youth and sport and repealing Regulation No 1288/2013
- Regulation (EU) 2021/692 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1381/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014
- Resolution of the Council of the European Union and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on a framework for European cooperation in the youth field: The European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027 (2018/C 456/01)
- Council conclusions of 19 November 2010 on the European and International Policy Agendas on Children, Youth and Children’s Rights (2010/C 326/01)

Council of Europe

- Council of Europe Education Strategy 2024-2030
- Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027)
- Council of Europe Youth sector strategy 2030

United Nations

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols and General Comments
- UN 2030 Agenda for sustainable development (Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development)

Definitions of the main concepts for the purpose of these conclusions:

Children

‘Every human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier’ (in accordance with Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC))

Youth

Young people from 13 to 30 years old (as defined in Article 2 of Regulation 2021/817 establishing the Erasmus+ programme)

Additional references, documents, reports, data:

European Union

- EU Children’s Participation Platform 2023
- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the European Year of Youth 2022, COM(2024)1
- Commission Recommendation on promoting the engagement and effective participation of citizens and civil society organisations in public policy-making processes, C(2023)8627 final, 12.12.2023
- Commission Recommendation (EU) 2023/2829 of 12 December 2023 on inclusive and resilient electoral processes in the Union and enhancing the European nature and efficient conduct of the elections to the European Parliament
- Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on promoting youth mainstreaming in policy decision-making processes in the European Union (C/2023/1342)

- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a comprehensive approach to mental health (COM(2023) 298 final)
- Decision (EU) 2021/2316 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 December 2021 on a European Year of Youth (2022)
- Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on safeguarding and creating civic spaces for young people that facilitate meaningful youth participation (2021/C 501 I/04)
- Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on strengthening the multilevel governance when promoting the participation of young people in decision-making processes (2021/C 241/03)
- Council recommendation (EU) 2021/1004 of 14 June 2021 establishing a European Child Guarantee
- Council Recommendation of 30 October 2020 on A Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee and replacing the Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee (2020/C 372/01)
- European Pillar of Social Rights

- Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 20 May 2014 on the overview of the structured dialogue process including social inclusion of young people (2014/C 183/01)
- Integrated child protection systems initiative by the European Commission
- Joint Declaration of the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission on Digital Rights and Principles for the Digital Decade (2023/C 23/01)

Council of Europe

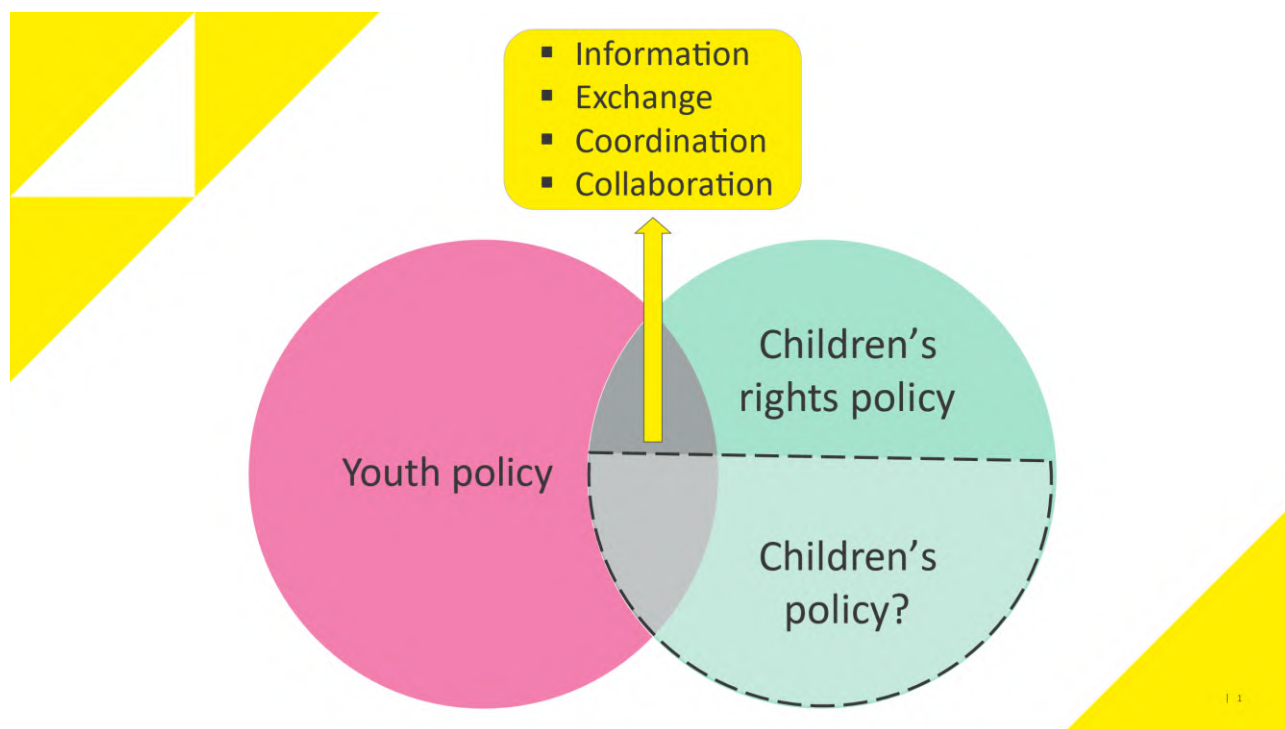
- Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2023)9 on the active political participation of national minority youth
- Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)7 on young people's access to rights
- Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)2 on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18

United Nations

- General Comments, Committee on the Rights of the Child
- UN Human Rights 75 Youth Declaration
- Guidance Note of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on Child Rights Mainstreaming
- Secretary General Policy Brief 3: Meaningful youth engagement in policy making and decision-making processes
- Resolution 51/17 Youth and Human Rights adopted by the Human Rights Council on 6 October 2022
- UN Secretary-General’s Report: ‘Our common agenda’
- UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security (2015)
- UN Youth Strategy
- UN Security Council Resolutions on Children and Armed Conflict Agenda, namely: 1261 (1999); 1314 (2000); 1379 (2001); 1460 (2003); 1539 (2004); 1612 (2005); 1882 (2009); 1998 (2011); 2068 (2012); 2143 (2014); 2225 (2015); 2427 (2018); 2601 (2021)

Report on the outcomes of the European Expert Seminar on the evaluation and update of European and international policy agendas in the field of children, youth and children's rights held between 21-23 January 2024 in Leuven during the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, by Dr. Dan Moxon (Rapporteur General):

Model of policy coherence between Children, Youth and Children's Rights



Recommendations for action

- Establish an ongoing mechanism at EU level to facilitate coordination, cooperation, information sharing and exchange between the fields of youth policy and children's rights within Member States and at EU level. Such a mechanism should seek to better enable policy coherence between the two fields and foster coherence on the major thematic areas of synergy.

- Continue a coordinated approach between The EU Youth Coordinator and the Coordinator on Children’s Rights to ensure that children’s rights, the rights of young people, and child and youth perspectives are integrated across all relevant policy areas at EU level. As part of this, the two coordinators should routinely monitor and identify the concerns that are common to children and young people as raised through the EU Youth Dialogue, EU Children’s participation platform and other participatory mechanisms. Joint action to stimulate cross-sectoral policy responses to these should then be taken.
- Consider how the rights and voices of children can be addressed through using the full potential of the Better Regulation framework, and particularly if a ‘child youth check’ can be developed as a complementary or integrated mechanism alongside the new EU youth check.
- Continue the biennial update of the State-of-the-Art document ‘The European and International Policy Agendas on Children, Youth and Children’s Rights’, and further building upon this with mapping of policy coherence between Children, Youth and Children’s Rights policy at national level.

- Undertake systematic analysis and research into concrete opportunities for policy coherence within the major areas of synergy. This analysis should identify examples of best practice, replicable tools, and potential for common implementation and/or monitoring initiatives between the two fields.
- Better utilise existing platforms for information sharing, such as the EU Youth Wiki, to map and share information on existing national level collaboration or coordination activities across Children, Youth and Children’s Rights policy within Member States.

These recommendations represent starting points for the development of greater coherence, arising discussion in the expert seminar. Further concrete measures will likely be needed and identified as the coherence agenda progresses. Above all, concerted political will and involvement of all actors, including European institutions, Member States, and civil society, in collaboration with children and young people, will be required to progress this agenda.

