

2007-2017: Is Europe doing enough to protect fundamental rights? – *the children perspective*–

Council of the EU (Justus Lipsius) – Press room
28 June 2017

CONCEPT NOTE

As part of its 10th anniversary year, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights in close cooperation with the Maltese Presidency of the Council of the European Union invites its stakeholders, including Members of the European Parliament, the European Commission, national governments and parliaments, national human rights institutions and other human rights actors across the EU to a symposium discussing fundamental rights issues that are currently high on the Union's political agenda. The Agency's annual Fundamental Rights Report will form the background for this discussion. It includes a review of developments over the past 10 years focusing, in particular, on the protection of the rights of children. Children will be among the event's participants.

The Symposium will take stock of developments since 2007, the year in which the Agency was created, to explore and discuss with participants how we can improve the protection, respect, and the promotion of fundamental rights.

Looking back over the past decade FRA finds that, despite progress in many areas, challenges remain too daunting and patterns of abuse too great. Europe is facing persisting high poverty levels, rates of youth unemployment that demoralise young people, political forces that capitalise on fear championing nationalist, populist and sometimes even racist agendas, as well as an overall disappointment in what Europe has to offer to the citizen. Communicating the importance of human rights in this political environment is increasingly difficult.

The discussion will address the following 3 core issues, including on dimensions that affect child rights:

- Migration and asylum
- (In)Security and fear
- Poverty and social exclusion

Meeting structure

- Half-day plenary event
- Two high-level panels with EU and national level leaders, decision makers and experts with discussion with participants
- Videos with children's' view that serve to introduce the sessions

Participants

Some 300-350 participants from the EU's fundamental rights landscape ranging from representatives of EU institutions and bodies, UN / Council of Europe, national governments, human rights organisations, civil society including faith based communities, trade unions, those that work on arts and human rights and other experts, as well as children.

Costs will be covered for 150 participants, including children and their accompanying persons.

Child participation

Children will participate as speakers, observers, and as rapporteurs (preparation supported by Eurochild) through:

- Video messages from children
- Live participation of around 12 children from 3-4 countries to provide input on three levels
 - As observers: to listen, comment and give written, visualized statements on banners displayed in the entrance area
 - As speakers: in a panel debate on the issues discussed, via video (see above) and given the floor to ask and reply to questions
 - As rapporteurs: interviewing participants during the break and communicating about the event via social media

PROGRAMME

8.00 – 8.45 Registration and welcome coffee

9.00 – 9.30 OPENING

- **FRA Video** on 10 years anniversary
- **Welcome by Ms. Frauke Lisa Seidensticker**, Chairperson of Management Board of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
- **Opening address by Hon. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca**, President of Malta
- **Keynote address by Ms. Tiina Astola**, Director General of the Directorate General for Justice and Consumers of the European Commission

9.30 – 10.00 Presentation of the Fundamental Rights Report 2017

- **Mr. Michael O’Flaherty**, Director of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
- **Commentary by Ms. Lotte Leicht**, European Union Advocacy Director and Director of the Human Rights Watch’s Brussels Office

10.00 – 11.30 PANEL DEBATE I Migration and asylum: safeguarding rights while addressing public concerns

- **Video** with children’s perspective
- **Panel discussion:**
 - **Ms. Lora Vidović**, Chairperson of the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) and Management Board Member of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
 - **Mr. Fredrik Malmberg**, Swedish Ombudsman for Children and Management Board Member of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
 - **Mr. Gilles de Kerchove d’Ousselghem**, European Union Counter-Terrorism Coordinator
 - **Ms. Joanna Goodey**, Head of Freedoms and Justice Department, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
- **Commentary by Ms. Verena Knaus**, Senior Policy Advisor in the UNICEF Brussels Office
- **Questions and Answers from the floor**

11.30 – 12.00 COFFEE BREAK

12.00 – 13.30 PANEL DEBATE II Poverty and social exclusion: how to break the cycle, possibilities under the EU Pillar of Social Rights?

- **Video** with children’s perspective
- **Panel discussion:**
 - **Ms. Helena Dalli**, Minister for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties of Malta
 - **Ms. Jana Hainsworth**, Secretary General of Eurochild

- **Ms. Maria João Rodrigues**, Member of the European Parliament Rapporteur of the European Pillar of Social Rights
- **Mr. Patrick Charlier**, Director of Unia (Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities) and member of the Board of Equinet (European Network of Equality Bodies)

- **Commentary by Ms. Margaret Tuite**, European Commission's Coordinator for Rights of the Child

- **Questions and Answers from the floor**

13.30 – 13.45

CLOSING

- **Ms. Kaia Iva**, Minister of Social Protection of the Republic of Estonia
- **Mr. Michael O'Flaherty**, Director of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

Moderator: Ms. Shada Islam, Director of Europe and Geopolitics of the Friends of Europe

14.00 Lunch