



Protecting Children. Providing Solutions.

**Summary Report
Round Table**

**A Global Approach to Ending the Institutionalisation of Children:
How the EU and the USA can help children in adversity around the world**

**European Parliament (Room A5G315)
14.30 -17.30 Tuesday 8th April
Co-hosted by Claude Moraes MEP and Lumos**

Summary

This round table was co-hosted by Claude Moraes MEP and Lumos. The objective was to provide an opportunity to share experiences and expertise on the international funding of programmes for children with a particular focus on the importance of ending the use of international funds to support institutions for children.

The meeting aimed to:

- highlight the major progress exemplified by specific EU and US initiatives which prioritise the use of funding to end institutional care: The EU's Structural Funds Regulations 2014-2020 and the US Action Plan on Children in Adversity;
- explore the need for policy coherence across different funding streams both within Europe and globally and;
- identify how the USA and EU could work together at the global level to further this important human rights issue.

The round table brought together representatives of EU structures, the US Mission to the EU and other National Governments, International Foundations and NGOs from both sides of the Atlantic with a view to exploring if it might be possible to develop a common agenda aimed at promoting strong beginnings for children, ending institutionalisation and protecting them from harm and abuse.

Introductory Session

Claude Moraes MEP, stressed the importance of the issue and the role of the European Parliament in securing the criteria on deinstitutionalisation which are found within the Structural Funds Regulations.

██████████ CEO of Lumos briefly illustrated the importance of coherent international action to end the institutionalisation of children and that the two good funding examples being focused on today should be used to inspire new efforts to ensure a consistent approach across all international funding mechanisms both in Europe and globally. This argument is made in the Lumos publication, "Ending the Institutionalisation of Children Globally – the time is now."¹

¹ <http://wearelumos.org/sites/default/files/Lumos%20The%20Time%20is%20Now%20April2014%20FINAL.pdf>

Professor ██████████, Special Adviser on Children in Adversity to the US Government and Chair of the Global Alliance for Children, presented the reasoning behind the US Government's focus on children in adversity, stressing the long-lasting impact on a child's development of adversity, especially in the early years. He stressed the three main areas of focus of the US government Action Plan on Children in Adversity: Build Strong Beginnings- increase the percentage of children surviving and reaching full developmental potential; Put Family Care First – reducing the percentage of children living outside of family care and ending institutionalisation; Protect Children – reducing the percentage of girls and boys exposed to violence and exploitation. For more information about this Action Plan, please see: <http://www.usaid.gov/children-in-adversity>

Discussion 1: How Deinstitutionalisation became a European Union priority

██████████ OHCHR Regional Office for Europe set the scene with a historic overview of the use of institutions for children across Europe stressing that it was a problem in Western European countries too. He highlighted the importance of UN tools such as the Guidelines On Alternative Care and key Conventions in particular the CRC and the CRPD in driving some of the progress in this area that we have seen in recent years.

██████████ of DG Enlargement, Andor Urmos of DG REGIO, ██████████ and ██████████ of DG EMPL highlighted the European Union's experience so far of deinstitutionalisation and the important policy frameworks such as the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Social Investment Package, the Disability Strategy which support deinstitutionalisation and contain specific priorities related to ending child poverty. They further focused on the hard-won ex-ante conditionalities on compliance with the CRPD and on the transition from institutional to community based care in the Regulations on the European Investment and Structural Funds for 2014-2020. This was seen by all as an excellent example of change in regulation to forward the human rights agenda. Also highlighted was the work already done in Bulgaria to co-ordinate different EU funds to deliver a national action plan to get children with disabilities out of institutions and into community or family-based alternatives. The use of EU enlargement and neighbourhood funds to support deinstitutionalisation processes was highlighted with examples given from Montenegro and pre-accession Romania. This is in spite of there being no specific mention in the regulations for these funding streams of deinstitutionalisation as a funding priority.

Discussion 2: Towards Deinstitutionalisation as a Global Funding Priority

██████████ of DG DEVCO, European Commission stressed the core importance of children's rights in the EU's external co-operation policy and highlighted Uganda and Cambodia as two countries where there could be significant interest in developing more actions related to deinstitutionalisation as work had already started there. ██████████ of the European External Action Service introduced the relevant mechanisms which could be used to ensure that policy and funding directed outside the EU is fully consistent with human rights principles and could potentially include a prioritisation of deinstitutionalisation projects. She highlighted in particular Human Rights Dialogues and the European Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy which is being finalised this year.

██████████, CEO of the World Childhood Foundation and ██████████ CEO of the Global Alliance for Children introduced the Global Alliance for Children. The Global Alliance for Children is an alliance of philanthropic, multilateral and government funders working to improve the lives of young children in low- and middle-income countries. It formed in 2013 as a direct response to (1) currently fragmented efforts to address young children's essential needs (e.g., health, nutrition, cognitive stimulation, positive parenting and protection from abuse); and (2) a scarcity of evidence-based solutions linking early child development, family care and child protection. The growing list of

Alliance Members now includes the GHR Foundation (US), Lumos Foundation (UK), World Childhood Foundation (Sweden), UBS Optimus Foundation (Switzerland), World Bank (multilateral), USAID (bilateral), US Department of Labor (government agency), Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (observer; bilateral), EIM Group (global investment firm), Save the Children (global NGO) and Maestral International (US). The GAC is in the process of selecting 6 countries around the world in which to implement the Action Plan as pilot examples – working closely with government and other stakeholders. This means that those countries, if they wish to be involved, will receive greater support to implement their reform programmes for children. Work is underway in Cambodia and in the European region, Moldova is being explored as an option. More information from: www.globalallianceforchildren.org

██████████ Counselor for Political Affairs of the US Mission to the EU reaffirmed the importance of deinstitutionalisation as a tool in development as it produced results and led to quality of life improvements across many different sectors. The US Mission would be ready to support this process and co-operation with EU colleagues if that would be helpful.

██████████ of the European Foundation Centre highlighted that it was also important to engage international foundations in this area. EFC will be setting up a working group on Deinstitutionalisation this year and hopes to build knowledge and understanding of the importance of only funding projects that help the transformation from an institutional to a family or community-based model of care. There is potential, she said, for public and private donors to work together to build models of good practice in this field.

Additional contributors from World Vision, Oak Foundation and UNICEF all welcomed this initiative and stressed the importance of targeting all relevant stakeholders. Oak Foundation suggested that these should include celebrities and faith based donors, volunteers and existing bodies which focus on sharing good practice on child protection.

Discussion 3: Practical steps for future co-ordination

The final session was co-ordinated by ██████████ CEO of Lumos. It was agreed that there was significant interest in exploring the need for coherence among different funding mechanisms so that institutions or orphanages are no longer funded by international aid and that aid is channelled instead towards funding support for families and community based services. A dedicated working group with clear parameters was suggested as a next step. Lumos agreed to communicate with interested parties about taking this idea forward.

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