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**9^{ÈME} REUNION DU GROUPE DE COMMISSAIRES “DROITS FONDAMENTAUX,
LUTTE CONTRE LA DISCRIMINATION ET ÉGALITÉ DES CHANCES”**

Mercredi 28 juin 2006, 14h30 – 16h00

Berlaymont, 13^{ème} étage, salle Hebdo

COMMUNICATION SUR LES DROITS DE L’ENFANT

Note d’information préparée sous l’autorité du Vice-président Frattini

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**9^{EME} REUNION DU GROUPE DE COMMISSAIRES “DROITS FONDAMENTAUX,
LUTTE CONTRE LA DISCRIMINATION ET EGALITE DES CHANCES”**

(28.06.2006)

NOTE D’INFORMATION DU VICE-PRESIDENT FRATTINI

COMMUNICATION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

The protection of the Rights of the Child within the European Union and the mainstreaming of children's rights within its policies constitutes one of the structural monitoring tasks attributed to the Group of Commissioners on Fundamental Rights. This issue was already discussed on four occasions in the Group:

- On 16 February 2005, the elements for a policy strategy were presented to the Group. A consensus on the general approach was reached and President Barroso concluded by inviting Vice-President Frattini to present an issues paper identifying all relevant contributors within the Commission and an operational agenda.
- On 27 April 2005, a global table summarising the contributions received from other Commissioners and services was presented and discussed. The Group supported the general approach with a view to preparing a “Pact for the Child”. The added value of Europe would be to enable the exchange of good practices, and to launch common actions aimed at upgrading the protection of the child.
- On 23 November 2005, the Group gave its general support to an outline of the draft Communication, confirming that it should be an ambitious text and include both the internal and the external dimension.
- On 26 March 2006, President Barroso and Vice-President Frattini underlined the significance of the proposal for a Communication and confirmed their attachment to an ambitious political strategy covering the internal and the external dimension of the rights of the child. It was also agreed that the communication will be presented as a common initiative, involving the members of the Group and any other Commissioners concerned.

State of play :

Following the last discussions in the Group, a number a working meetings were held with all services concerned to finalise a draft text. These working meetings have been essential to the launch of the interservices consultation. This latter was addressed to 28 DGs, due to the very transversal nature of the subject and 12 DGs answered with “Favourable opinion” or “No observation” and 16 DGs with a “Favourable opinion” with comments or modifications.

The modifications suggested and the comments were included in a final text which is circulated today (see Annex).

This communication can be presented as one of the successes of the present Group of Commissioners. A coordination effort involving 15 DGs resulted in a commonly owned document.

It also allowed for the elaboration of a preliminary inventory of the EU actions affecting children's rights which amounts, so far, to as many as 75 instruments, be it legislative, non-legislative or financial.

Concerning the Coordinator of the Rights of the Child, the following clarification may be helpful. It was never meant to be a political mandate. It is an administrative position. The function of such a coordinator is neither to interfere with policy competences, nor to become a "passage oblig  " for the external partners of the Commission's services. The aim is to ensure a proper coordination between these various competences and services to deliver an improved impact of our activities. Its administrative nature is to be a "chapeau" and a facilitator. For the sake of illustration, some examples of the activities that such a Coordinator would do are :

- To chair the formal inter-services group and make it an effective tool;
- To report to the CG4 Group of Commissioners;
- To coordinate the assessment of the impact of our various policies on children's rights in view of the public debate;
- To coordinate the *common* drafting of the Green Paper;
- To ease the communication about *all* Commission activities affecting children towards children, in particular (child-friendly website), and the public, in general (communication strategy). He/She would refer the public to the appropriate service when necessary.

Calendar :

A possible calendar for the follow-up of this communication on the short term could be:

In 2006

- To set up the necessary coordination mechanisms :
 - To establish a formal inter-service group to coordinate the implementation of the strategy;
 - To appoint a Coordinator of the rights of the child
 - To complement the "preliminary inventory" of EU actions affecting children's rights in view of the impact assessment;
 - To set up the European Forum for the Rights of the Child;
 - To set up the e-platform of communication (notably with the assistance of RTD);
 - To draft the terms of reference of a communication strategy (notably with COMM);
 - To maintain the preliminary webpage on children's rights that will be issued on *europa* simultaneously to the communication.

In 2007

- To proceed with the assessment of the impact of our existing instruments affecting children's rights;
- To design adequate indicators in view of a collection of comparable data on children;
- To adopt and launch a communication strategy, including a website, on children's rights.