



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL JUSTICE and CONSUMERS

Directorate C: Fundamental rights and Union citizenship
Unit C.1 : Fundamental rights and rights of the child

5 July 2016
JUST.C1

Interservice group on the rights of the child

Meeting of 27 June 2016

5.A066 Orban

10h00-13h00

Summary record

1. PARTICIPANTS

Present: DG EAC, DG ECHO, DG EMPL, DG HOME, EU ATC Office, DG JUST, DG NEAR, DG RTD, SG

2. SUMMARY

The Chair opened the meeting and invited the [MYWEB project to present the results of their EU-funded \(DG RTD\)](#) project on the feasibility of carrying out EU-level longitudinal research on the wellbeing of children and young people. The floor was given to Prof G. Pollock from the Manchester Metropolitan University.

2.1. MY WEB project

The aim of the presentation was to discuss the result of the project and to identify possible options on how to implement a longitudinal study on child wellbeing.

The MYWEB project was conducted by researchers from 10 countries in order to identify the best policies and approaches to effectively promote the well-being of children and young people via longitudinal research. It consisted of:

- Data and literature review
- A Delphi survey of experts to identify key areas on the topic of wellbeing and of potential policy reform
- Interviews with children and young people to find out what issues are the most relevant for their wellbeing
- A pilot study of a set of survey questions in six countries with children aged seven and eight
- Working together with young people's advisory groups.

Prof G. Pollock introduced the project and underlined that young people should be the centre of research concerns. Researchers from other countries and institutions (UK, Germany, Spain, Croatia) presented various stages of the study such as the DELPHI survey, questionnaire development and cognitive testing, cost benefit analysis. Prof Pollock then presented the interim recommendations, which was followed by a Q&A session. Main points:

1. Children should be involved at the early stage of the potential study (design) to avoid inaccuracies.
2. Children from all types of socioeconomic backgrounds and ethnicities could be involved as sampling strategies can be adjusted, e.g. by way of sampling boosts, etc.
3. The value added of this survey is longitudinal data which are currently not available at EU level to any great extent.
4. From the cost-benefit standpoint, the project would be beneficial and feasible. The benefits gained would outweigh its costs.
5. Parental consent is still a challenge and yet to be worked out how to address the issue.
6. The costs of slotting onto other existing projects would be more expensive and could distort internal coherence.
7. More engagement of politicians and policymakers is needed to gain political support for such research.
8. This research is still in early stages of development. DG RTD noted that it would be a challenge to get Member States to commit to the project at this point in time. The impact and benefits of the project are not clear at this stage for non-researchers – more examples and case studies could be useful to raise awareness on the benefits of such research.

The research presentation is attached.

2.2. Inter-Service Group

The Chair reported on a visit to Greece to take stock of the situation of children in migration, and said that a similar visit to Italy planned for mid-July. The Chair presented current numbers on children in migration.

- Greece: As at late June, 800 unaccompanied children are on the waiting list for reception placements, of whom 266 are in detention ("protective custody") due to lack of places. Reception capacity is being increased, but demand far outstrips supply and the waiting list is growing fast, as pre-registration in Greece has resulted in more unaccompanied children coming to the attention of the authorities.
- Italy: faces more and more arrivals.
- Belgium: 400 unaccompanied children are waiting for a guardian to be appointed.
- Germany: currently 69 000 unaccompanied children
- Human Rights Watch reports on unaccompanied children in [Sweden](#) and [Italy](#); [UNICEF-Trajectoires](#) report on the situation of unaccompanied children in the North of France.

Protection gaps that need an immediate response:

- Transfer from detention to quality care and reception is needed.

- More adequate reception places need to be created for unaccompanied children in Greece.
- Living conditions on the Greek mainland and on Greek islands need to be improved; the conditions in informal and emergency camps are dire.
- The right of the child to education is an issue in several Member States.
- Children are still going missing.
- More focus is needed on children who do not apply, or who do not wish to apply, for asylum, e.g. in northern France, where very little is done to protect them.

Tour de table:

DG HOME – combating sexual abuse:

The Commission report on the transposition of the [directive on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography](#) will be published by the end of the year. DG HOME will present the preliminary findings to the European Parliament. Areas of concern include blocking, assistance to victims and issues around criminal records.

DG EMPL – child poverty and investing in children:

- A communication on the mid-term review of the [Commission Recommendation: Investing in children recommendation](#) will be published soon.
- The European Social Policy Network will update its 2014 [report on social inclusion](#) (should be available early 2017).
- On child poverty, DG EMPL mentioned the [EP written declaration on investing in children](#), which was signed by 428 MEPs.
- Regarding EU funding, DG EMPL reminded participants that funds are earmarked for child inclusion and poverty in the existing funds.

DG JUST added that only two or three EU MS received a 2016 country-specific recommendations related to children (e.g. on child care or on other measures to combat child poverty), although the European Commission has a Recommendation on investing in children.

DG JUST – Roma integration:

On Roma integration, DG JUST informed participants that the [EC Communication assessing the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies \(NRIS\) and the Council Recommendation on Effective Roma integration measures in the MS](#) was published on 27 June 2016. The Slovak Presidency and the Commission are organising a [High Level event on Roma youth empowerment](#) in Bratislava on 10-11 October 2016.

DG NEAR – children in migration and accession negotiations:

- DG NEAR informed participants that the special representative of the Council of Europe on migration and refugees (Tomáš Boček) (responsible for coordination of actions for children in migration) was appointed in February 2016.
- Work on the annual report on enlargement countries is in progress.

DG ECHO – children in migration – humanitarian response:

- Greece: €83 million was allocated for Greece, on life saving actions, including €11 million for child protection (shelters for unaccompanied children, legal counselling). A further €16 million will be allocated to emergency response projects.
- DG ECHO confirmed that living conditions on the Greek mainland are deteriorating.
- DG ECHO outlined what is funded under the humanitarian response.
- DG ECHO mainstreams child protection activities in their funding.
- Concerning access to education, DG ECHO informed participants that the Greek authorities are working on a plan to prepare all children (under 12 years old) recently arrived in Greece to enter the regular education system in 2017 (language lessons, writing skills, in a transition year, etc).

3. ISG ACTIONS IN FOLLOW-UP TO THE MEETING

- All DGs are invited to continue to inform DG JUST C.1 about upcoming actions to protect children in migration, so that the action list can be kept up to date.
- DG JUST C.1 will inform ISG members about any other developments on children in migration.