

# **Permanent Intergovernmental Group Europe de l'Enfance**

## **Terms of reference for the**

### ***Name***

The Permanent Intergovernmental Group Europe de l'Enfance.

### ***Type***

Informal meetings on a regular basis for EU-ministers and/or high-level officials holding responsibility for childhood policies.

### ***Background***

Children<sup>1</sup> are not a concrete element of the EU's sphere of authority, but many decisions made by the EU affect the lives of children directly or indirectly, such as legislative instruments related to many aspects i.a. social protection, the labour market, the media, health, justice, the environment as well as consumer and food issues.

### ***Objective***

Against this background, ministers and/or high-level government officials need to meet and exchange strategies, viewpoints and best practices on children's issues in the context of EU policies and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Group will work for the introduction of mainstreaming of children's policies and the rights of the child in all policies of the Union.

In view of his objectives the Group maintains links of exchange and cooperation on a European and an international level.

### ***Powers and procedures***

The Group cannot adopt binding declarations, as Europe de l'Enfance does not have official status. The meetings will fall outside the formal EU framework between ministers of the EU countries or government officials with responsibility for childhood policies. Summaries of meetings held by the Presidency will be prepared. The other countries can then submit their comments to the summary within a time limit set by the Presidency.

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<sup>1</sup> By childhood is understood: " Children up to 18 years of age"

The Presidency holding the meeting can select topics or continue discussions of issues from previous meetings. Workshops, study trips and conferences can also be organised to address selected issues in greater detail.

L'Europe de l'Enfance maintains information exchange with ChildONEurope, may ask and give suggestions to ChildONEurope on the activities undertaken and the subjects dealt.

### ***Participants***

The ministers of the EU countries and/or high-level government officials with responsibility for childhood policies. Every member country appoints a contact person who coordinates its participation in the meetings.

In addition, the individual Presidency holding the meeting may invite candidate countries, children, the EU Commission, the Council of Europe, NGOs, research institutes, the network and other relevant participants as observers.

### ***Meeting frequency***

At least one meeting will be held in each Presidential period. However, each Presidency can decide whether the meeting is for ministers or government officials.

L'Europe de l'Enfance meetings last a minimum of one day and a maximum of two.

The agenda and other documents to be used at the meeting will be sent to participant countries no later than 3 weeks before the meeting. The agenda shall include the item "any other business".

### ***Organisation of proceedings***

The activities of the Group are coordinated by the Bureau. The Bureau is composed of 5 members: the representative of the actual presidency, the representative of the previous presidency, the representative of the subsequent presidency, the president and the coordinator of the secretary of ChildONEurope.

In order to contribute to the continuity of the work of the Group, the missions of the Bureau are the one being given by the Group. The Bureau is especially in charge of partly preparing the meetings of the Group and of documenting the works achieved by the Group (especially by Internet).

Beyond the meetings of the Group, the Bureau meets at least once each half year.

### ***Financing***

As a minimum, the Presidency defrays the cost of holding the meeting. Participant countries pay transportation and accommodation expenses of their participants.

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### ***Language***

As a minimum, it must be possible to speak French and English at the meetings and as a minimum, written materials (agenda, summaries, etc.) should preferably also be available in English and French.

***Duration***

These terms of reference apply until such time when the Group decides to change them. Unanimity is required to change the terms of reference.

Prague, 7 April 2009