



European Network of National Observatories on Childhood

**EUROPEAN SEMINAR PROGRAMME
"TOWARDS A CULTURE OF CHILD PARTICIPATION"**

31 January 2008

Istituto degli Innocenti, Florence

9:00 Registration

9:30 Welcome address

Sandra Maggi, Istituto degli Innocenti

Paolo Onelli, Department for Policies of Family, Italy

First Session – Plenary (first part)

Coordinator: Valerio Belotti, National Childhood and Adolescence Documentation and Analysis Centre, Italy

10. *Which vision of child participation in today Europe*, Susan Bissell

UNICEF's International Research Centre (UNICEF-IRC)

10.25 *Quality4Children Standards for Out-of-Home Child Care in Europe*, Oscar Germes Castro, SOS Children's Villages, Austria

10.40 intervention in mirror and discussion with the participants

11.00 Coffee break

First Session – Plenary (second part)

11.30 *Feelwellfeelbad*, Grazia Fallarini e Marco Bricco, C.I.S.A. Ovest Ticino and Stilema/Unoteatro, Italy

11.45 intervention in mirror and discussion with the participants

12.05 *To be a childfriendly neighbourhood*, Froukje Hajer, National Youth Fund Jantje Beton, The Netherlands

12.20 intervention in mirror and discussion with the participants

12.40 *We want 2 Hear*, Cath Larkins and Trudy Aspinwall, Ear 2 the Ground, UK

12.55 intervention in mirror and discussion with the participants

13.15 Lunch

Second Session - Working Groups on child participation in the daily life

15.15 Three Working Groups:

1 Family;

2 School;

3 local community life, leisure, culture and Sport

Third Session – Plenary

Coordinator: Rosa Clemente, Ministry For Labour and Social Solidarity, Portugal

17.00 Which vision of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the participation of children (art. 12 of the Convention and others), on the basis of the comparative study on the final observations concerning the reports of the Member States of the EU, *ChildONEurope Secretariat*

17.20 *Which practice of child participation in today Europe*, Euronet (Emilie White) and Eurochild (Michaella Savva, Avgi Loizides, Ninetta Kazantzis)

17.50 Debate

18.30 Outcomes and Future Steps - Conclusions

Coordinator: Benoit Parmentier, Observatory on Childhood, Youth, Help to Youth, French Community of Belgium



THE TOPIC

The European Seminar will provide an opportunity to share and discuss information on the basis of the experiences realised in the EU by the competent Ministries, International Organisations, NGOs and Universities, on policies, programmes, researches and best practices on child participation in daily life.

The definition of Participation

Participation means young people getting actively involved in different areas of social life (family, school, sport, culture and leisure, community and democracy) and at different levels (local, regional, national and international):

- by expressing and defending their needs, concerns, interests and ideas in discussion and decision-making processes;
- by planning common goals and projects;
- by being committed to achieving these goals;
- by acting responsibly.

Taking into consideration the importance of child participation as a core principle of the **Convention on the Rights of the Child**, in particular his **article 12**, and the attention given during the last years in the different EU Member States, the last ChildONEurope Assembly decided to choose "Child participation in daily life" as the next topic to be shared and discussed.

The contexts of Participation

The attention on child participation in daily life will be focused in the following contexts:

1.Family. Refers not only to the more traditional model of family consisting of both biological parents and their children, but also to other models more frequently found nowadays: lone-parent family, blended or stepfamily, family including adoptive or foster children, as well as three or more generation family). **Child participation in the family** refers to the possibilities for children and youths to frankly communicate their opinion and interests within their family, to be involved in decisions that concern themselves or the whole family and to assume some responsibilities at home according to their developmental level.

2.School. Refers to institutions (public or private) offering formal education at different levels (from infant school to University). **Child participation in school** includes diverse possibilities for children and youths:

- a.to communicate about subjects of their interest within the class group or in school assemblies;
- b.to get involved in decisions relative to the planning and organisation of the class, learning activities and projects, special events, break time, school order and safety;
- c.to get involved in the interior design of the own classroom and other school premises;
- d.to assume social responsibility by acting as mediators in peer conflicts, or by acting as class or school representatives in school committees and councils;
- e.to judge themselves the participation possibilities offered by their school (i.e. how satisfied they are with those possibilities, whether they would like more participation in specific areas, etc.).

3.Sport, culture and leisure. This is a very broad area of activities that children and youths can carry out in their free time, mostly with a recreational purpose, in diverse domains: sport, nature, arts (dance, music, theatre, painting...), media (filming, using new design, information and communication technologies), etc. Generally, youth associations and clubs (e.g. Boy or Girl Scouts) offer these activities. **Child participation in sport, culture and leisure** means that children and youths:

- a.are members of sport, cultural youth associations and clubs;
- b.get involved in the group activities offered by these associations;
- c.contribute to the planning and organisation of those activities;
- d.assume roles and responsibilities in the group and also representative functions in discussion and decision committees within the youth association or club;



e.give their opinion about the possibilities of getting involved in the youth association or club (e.g. whether they are satisfied with the present conditions of participation or they think these need some improvements).

4. Local community life. Community is meant here in a broad sense as referring not only to the people in the geographical area where the child or youth lives (i.e. community at a local level), but also to collectives at regional, national and international (EU) levels. Activities in community life are manifold, comprising projects aimed at improving people's living conditions, health and education (especially of minority and disadvantaged groups), or actions oriented towards nature conservation or the improvement of the environment (e.g. renewal of urban areas), among others. These activities can be carried out by self-organised groups or within existing participatory structures (e.g. NGOs, youth councils). **Child participation in local community life** it refers to child and youth commitment:

- a.to create self-organised groups in their community or to join already existing organisations acting at local, regional, national or international (European) level;
- b.to get involved in the development and implementation of initiatives, projects and activities in their community;
- c.to do voluntary work (e.g. through the European Voluntary Service);
- d.to express and defend their opinion and ideas in child and youth forums and conferences, or through communication media (press, radio, internet);
- e.to contribute to get support from the authorities, decision-makers and advisory or expert bodies for the implementation of their own projects and initiatives;
- f.to assume responsibilities and representative roles in committees and councils within or beyond the organisation;
- g.to get involved in representative bodies (youth councils, children's or youth parliaments) or to become a member of more informal political groups (e.g. for the defence of human rights and peace) and contributing to achieve its goals, at different levels (municipal, regional, national and EU);
- h.to judge themselves the participation possibilities available in their community (i.e. whether they are satisfied with the present situation or they think it needs some improvements and extensions).

THE STRUCTURE

The Seminar would have a part in plenary and another with working groups.

The plenary would comprise different sessions:

- a **first one** would be dedicated to **introduce the issues** dealt with by the seminar, in particular to the vision of the participation of children today in Europe and to 4 Communications selected among the 37 participants to the Call of Communication launched by ChildONEurope, aiming at giving an overview **of experiences** on child participation in family, school, culture, leisure, sport and local community life.
- a **second session** would be organised in **working groups** that could be focused on child participation in the following contexts:
 - a.family;
 - b.school;
 - c.culture, leisure, sport and local community life.
- a **third session** would be aimed at the **reporting of the working groups** in the plenary session followed by a debate and a final intervention focused on the synthesis of the working groups and on a closing reflection on possible guide lines of child participation in daily life.

THE TARGETS

The Seminar is addressed to the following groups:

- partners of the ChildONEurope Network;
- Representatives of the Intergovernmental Group *L'Europe de l'Enfance*;
- Researchers of the UE member States;
- Representatives of National and International Governmental and Non-Governmental Organisations working at EU level.