

EU urged to create children's budget ^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

A conference was told that the EU 2020 strategy provides an opportunity to give a "new impetus" to the fight against child poverty in Europe.

The event also adopted a resolution calling on the EU to establish a dedicated EU children's budget.

The conference was organized by Eurochild, a Brussels-based organisation representing the rights of children at EU-level.

Speaking at the event in Cardiff, Maria Herczog, president of Eurochild, said, "The financial crisis has hit public finances hard but governments must not allow children and families to bear the brunt of austerity cuts that will only create bigger problems in the long run.

"Children and families must be kept high on the agenda. Local, regional and national authorities must work together on national programme planning and lend their support for a better targeting of European structural funds."

Her comments were echoed by Mieke Schuurman, acting secretary general of Eurochild, who added, "We specifically recommend that a child-rights approach be taken and that children and families have access to adequate resources, good quality services and opportunities."

Schuurman said, "Europe is facing difficult times but the turmoil must not jeopardise investment in children and families otherwise the losses in human and social capital will be unquantifiable.

"We should not risk long term investments for short term gains."

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The assembly was told that the EU's long awaited recommendation on 'child poverty and well-being' - which is scheduled for 2012 - should provide a "clear framework" for the EU and member states.

Schuurman added, "We urge European and national politicians to give this issue priority attention.

"Eurochild and its members will continue campaigning for a dedicated EU children's budget.

"We - repeatedly - call for a monitoring framework that facilitates up-to-date data collection on a regular basis."

-reprinted from the Parliament

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