

Brussels, May 25 2005

## **25 May : a European strategy to protect the rights of the child**

For several years now, the Commission acts in favour of children in a number of areas, be it with legislative initiatives or financial support, within the Union as well as outside.

The objective consists also in a reflection on prevention strategies to be promoted and adopted in close collaboration with authorities in charge of education, social policy, justice or police. In annex, two tables present a comprehensive picture of the initiatives taken so far by the Commission. This mapping exercise allows the reader to notice that each fundamental right having a direct link with children, are tackled by at least one initiative. The Commission is proud of this investment and is committed to pursue it.

This summer, the Commission should adopt two communications :

### **a communication on the participation of civil society in the search for missing and sexually exploited children :**

The Commission recently funded a study on the phenomenon of missing and sexually exploited children. This study analysed three components :

1. the extent of the phenomenon within the European Union ;
2. the existence, the role and the statute of civil society organisations involved in the prevention and the fight against these phenomenon ;
3. the study of the legal modalities of a cooperation between civil society and law enforcement authorities in the different Member States.

The outputs of this study will allow the Commission to present concrete proposals to the Council. Amongst these, one finds :

- a directory presenting national situations in 22 countries and the description of 265 organisations acting in favour of missing or sexually exploited children and young people ;
- a European Protocol model of cooperation between civil society and law enforcement authorities in view of establishing a legal framework and an adequate breakdown of tasks ;
- the shortage of national or European data quantifying these phenomenon pleads for a swift set up of both a methodology and a structure for the collection of comparable data to take place throughout the European Union.

For more information (national data, directory, etc.), please access the website <http://www.childscope.net>.

**The second communication will propose ways to strengthen the fight against trafficking in human beings (notably children).**

Over and above these two concrete initiatives, the Commission will propose, end of 2005, beginning of 2006, a strategy as comprehensive as possible in favour of the protection of the rights of the child. It should present an improved overall consistency of the various on-going actions and it will suggest new avenues in view of a "Pact for the child"

The main advantage of such an initiative will be to stimulate Member States and the main stakeholders to act in a coordinated and collaborative manner in favour of children. The global objective of such a "Pact" would be to assist Member States in the implementation of their children policy, be it with legislative or financial support, or by an exchange of existing good practice.

**ANNEXES :**

1. Table presenting the community actions in favour of children by policy area ;
2. Table presenting community actions in favour of children, by fundamental rights as they read from the Charter.