

Endorsed by the General Assembly, 26 June 2013

## SUMMARY

**Eurochild is a network of organisations and individuals working in and across Europe to promote the rights and well-being of children and young people. Our work is underpinned by the UNCRC.**

Our Vision: A society where children and young people grow up happy, healthy and confident and respected as individuals in their own right

Our Mission: To promote the rights and well-being of children and young people in Europe

Our Values: **Integrity - Good Governance - Partnership & Participation**

- ⇒ We are committed to putting children's rights and well-being at the core of all our work.
- ⇒ We are membership-driven. Members inform us, help us define our priorities, and enable us to achieve our goals.
- ⇒ We are a learning organisation. We continually monitor and evaluate what we do and strive for excellence in all our work.
- ⇒ We work in partnership. We seek external alliances to enhance our impact on the lives of children and young people.
- ⇒ We are a listening organisation. We want the voices of children and young people to be heard, as well as those of people who are working with, and caring for, them.

Our Goals:

- ⇒ Putting children's rights and well-being at the heart of **policy making**
- ⇒ **Building a community of professionals** that integrate children's rights and well-being into their daily work
- ⇒ **Giving a voice** to children and young people
- ⇒ Changing the way **society** views and treats its children and young people
- ⇒ Developing the **Eurochild network** in order to deliver a powerful force for change

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<b>BACKGROUND</b>	<b><i>Who are we? Where do we operate? What is our target group?</i></b>
<p><i>Who are we?</i></p> <p>Eurochild is a network of organisations and individuals working in and across Europe to promote the rights and well-being of children and young people.</p>	
<p><i>Our geographical scope</i></p> <p>Eurochild is open to member organisations and individuals from all 47 member states of the Council of Europe. As the main focus of our advocacy work is towards the European Union (EU) institutions, a majority of our members come from the 28 EU member states.</p>	
<p><i>Our target group</i></p> <p>Eurochild is primarily focused on the rights and well-being of children aged 0-18 (as defined in the UNCRC). Most children aged 12 and above prefer to be considered as young people rather than children and therefore we consistently refer to the rights and well-being of children <i>and</i> young people. Furthermore, many Eurochild members work with young people over 18, particularly those who have particular care needs such as children leaving the care system or children with disabilities. Eurochild advocates for more integrated child and youth policies to ensure a smooth transition into adulthood.</p>	

<b>VISION</b>	<b><i>What is our vision of society as it should be?</i></b>
<p>A society where children and young people grow up happy, healthy and confident and respected as individuals in their own right</p>	

<b>MISSION</b>	<b><i>What is the particular contribution that Eurochild will make to achieve our vision?</i></b>
<p>Eurochild promotes the rights and well-being of children and young people in Europe</p>	

<b>VALUES</b>	<b><i>What are the underpinning values of the organization which determine how we to relate to ourselves and to others?</i></b>
<p><b>INTEGRITY</b></p> <hr/> <p>We are guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and work in respect of its underlying principles. The best interest of the child takes precedence over any organizational or personal interest.</p> <p>⇒ <b><i>We are committed to putting children’s rights and well-being at the core of all our work.</i></b></p>	
<p><b>GOOD GOVERNANCE</b></p> <hr/> <p>We ensure <b>transparency and accountability</b> in the conduct and delivery of our activities, including full disclosure of our funding sources and accounts. We operate in full <b>compliance with the governing laws and ethical standards.</b></p>	

We aim towards maximum **efficiency & effectiveness** by ensuring our resources are directed towards our mission of promoting the rights and well-being of children and young people.

We aspire to being a **learning organisation** that continuously monitors and evaluates the outcomes and impact of our work and endeavours to improve our way of working.

⇒ **We are membership-driven.** *Members inform us, help us define our priorities and enable us to achieve our goals.*

⇒ **We are a learning organisation.** *We continually monitor and evaluate what we do and strive for excellence in all our work.*

## **PARTNERSHIP & PARTICIPATION**

We apply principles of **equality and non-discrimination** with everybody we work with and for, ensuring respect for all people regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation or other status.

We are committed to work in **partnership**, believing that our aim of improving children and young peoples' well-being is better achieved through cooperation rather than competition. Therefore we seek to build alliances and partnerships with organisations that share our values where it will enhance the impact of our work on the lives of children and young people.

In all our work we seek to **listen to, respect, and take account of the views and opinions** of all those we work with and for, including children, young people and their families, as well as professionals and researchers. In particular we seek to promote ways in which children's and young people's voices are heard and taken seriously in decisions that affect them.

⇒ **We work in partnership.** *External alliances can enhance our impact on the lives of children and young people.*

⇒ **We are a listening organisation.** *We want the voices of children and young people to be heard, as well as those of people who are working with, and caring for, them.*

## **GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

***What will we therefore aim to achieve in the next 5-years?***

**GOAL 1 : CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES' RIGHTS AND WELL-BEING ARE AT THE CENTRE OF PUBLIC DECISION-MAKING AT EU, NATIONAL AND SUB-NATIONAL LEVELS**

⇒ ***Putting children's rights and well-being at the heart of policy making***

### **EXPLANATION**

This goal will be measured according to outcomes of decision-making at different governance levels.

The European Union institutions are the primary focus of the Eurochild secretariat advocacy. In addition Eurochild will respond flexibly to both membership demand and opportunities to raise awareness of children's rights and well-being in EU policy more broadly. Eurochild works with all EU institutions but more particularly the European Commission and European Parliament.

Eurochild will increasingly focus its advocacy efforts on supporting members to influence decision-making at national and sub-national levels. Support may be offered in the form of: campaigns (as under the "Opening Doors for Europe's Children" launched in June 2013); templates; as well as training and capacity building. To measure our impact at national and sub-national level we rely on membership sharing information.

**MID-TERM OBJECTIVES (2016)**At EU level

- The EU adopts a new comprehensive framework for EU legislation, policy and programmes to promote and protect children’s rights and well-being in Europe.
- The EC Recommendation “Investing in Children: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage” is properly followed-up and implemented at EU level. Children’s well-being is increasingly visible in Europe 2020 governance tools, EU Presidencies and in monitoring the use of EU structural and pre-accession funds. The EU retains and reinforces the tools to support member states efforts to implement the Recommendation, including the Social Open Method of Coordination, development of child well-being indicators, peer reviews, and other mechanisms for mutual learning.

EU & national

- The EC Recommendation “*Investing in Children: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage*” positively impacts on member state policy through strengthening national-level advocacy, partnerships and awareness and use of EU funding and policy tools.
- Deinstitutionalisation reforms are undertaken in several countries & supported by EU policy & EU structural funds.
- There is increased national investment in quality child and family services, also by making best use of EU funding sources. This will increase provision of family and parenting support (based on a child-rights and strengths-based approach), high quality early childhood services, and better, more individualised child protection and alternative care services.
- Child participation is more widely understood and implemented in policy and practice at EU, national and sub-national levels.

National

- Eurochild members are supported in national advocacy efforts to promote children’s rights and well-being for example through implementation of the DI campaign “*Opening Doors for Europe’s Children*” and through support to the national partner networks.

**Target audience:** Policy makers and decision makers at EU, national and sub-national levels.

**GOAL 2 : PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH AND FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE UNDERSTAND AND APPLY A CHILD-RIGHTS APPROACH IN THEIR WORK, ENABLING THE EMPOWERMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES**

⇒ ***Building a community of professionals that integrate children’s rights and well-being into their daily work***

**EXPLANATION**

This goal will be measured according to the participation and reported benefits of practitioners’ involvement in mutual learning, exchange, training and capacity building activities. Researchers and academic institutes are also expected to be actively involved. In the long-term we also want to measure and monitor reported benefits for children.

In the frame of the next strategic plan, particular attention will be given to the development of training and capacity building activities, better exploiting the wealth of expertise existing in the network.

Eurochild will continue its mutual learning and exchange activities, primarily through thematic working groups (TWGs). Currently there are three TWGs focused on early childhood, family and parenting support, and children in alternative care. New thematic working groups may be proposed by members. Eurochild may lead or partner in projects which facilitate transfer of knowledge and practice.

**MID-TERM OBJECTIVES (2016)**

- Eurochild member organisations and other professionals participate in mutual learning and knowledge sharing activities that contribute to new projects, improvements in child and family services and benefits for children and young people.

**Target audience:** Member organisations, researchers, other professionals providing services to children and young people

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**GOAL 3 : CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE MORE AND MORE ENGAGED IN DIALOGUE WITH ADULTS, PARTICIPATING ACTIVELY AS EQUAL PARTNERS IN SHAPING DECISIONS THAT IMPACT THEIR LIVES**


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⇒ *Giving a voice to children and young people in Europe*

**EXPLANATION**

This goal will be monitored through the involvement and engagement of children in Eurochild activities as well as through feedback from members on their child participation activities. It is also inherently linked to both Goals 1 & 2, as it effective dialogue with children and young people requires significant change to policy and practice.

**MID-TERM OBJECTIVES (2016)**

- The views & experiences of children and young people themselves are reflected in Eurochild's policy work through their direct involvement in our activities
- Policies and funding programmes at EU and national level encourage and facilitate children's participation

**Target audience:** Children and young people in Europe

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**GOAL 4: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE RECOGNIZED AND RESPECTED AS RIGHTS HOLDERS ACROSS ALL LEVELS OF SOCIETY**


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⇒ *Changing the way society views and treats its children*

**EXPLANATION**

This goal is linked to overall public perceptions of children and young people and is much harder to measure. The contribution of Eurochild may be measured by monitoring our communication and media activities and their impact. It can also be monitored by the level of interest and uptake of our vision and approach (e.g. the Learning for Well-being Charter). Specific activities may be developed to identify, celebrate and publicise initiatives or policies that achieve this goal.

**MID-TERM OBJECTIVES (2016)**

- More & more organisations (not necessarily child specific) support the vision of Eurochild and contribute to change the way children and young people are viewed and treated in society
- Eurochild is recognized as a key interlocutor on child rights and well-being within Europe and as a valuable source of expertise and information

**Target audience:** Public opinion

## GOAL 5: THE REACH, EXPERTISE AND INFLUENCE OF EUROCHILD MEMBER ORGANISATIONS, AND THEIR ENGAGEMENT IN THE NETWORK, CREATE AND DELIVER A POWERFUL FORCE FOR CHANGE

⇒ *Developing the Eurochild network in order to deliver a powerful force for change*

### EXPLANATION

This is an internal goal for Eurochild monitored by the breadth and depth of its membership in Europe. Specific targets will be set for recruitment, engagement, capacity building, value-for-money and brand.

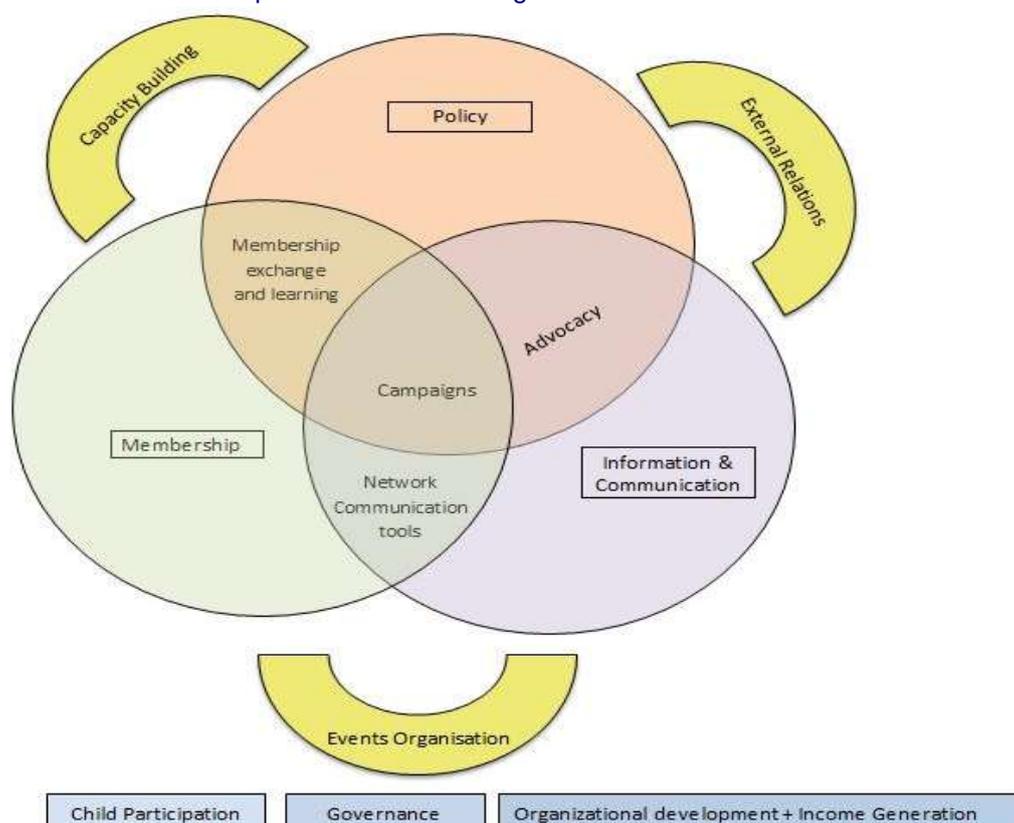
### MID-TERM OBJECTIVES (2016)

- Members have ownership and responsibility for Eurochild advocacy at national level, primarily through strengthening the collaboration with, and capacity of, national partner networks
- Eurochild is a powerful network of actors coming from a range of different sectors and from different backgrounds (research, practice, advocacy and training)
- All Eurochild members share common values and their membership contributes to the legitimacy and overall reputation of the network
- Eurochild offers clear added-value to members
- Members feel strong ownership of Eurochild due to its democratic governance structures and participatory working groups
- Build the Eurochild brand and publicise the network's achievements

### ACTIVITIES

*What will we do in order to achieve our goals?*

Eurochild's activities are grouped around 3 main pillars: policy, information and communication, and membership. How these areas of activities overlap is illustrated in the figure below.



## ORGANISATION & INTERNAL GOVERNANCE

### *How will we organise the work of the network to ensure delivery of our values?*

#### OPERATING VALUES OF THE NETWORK

In addition to the underpinning values of the organization, as a network Eurochild needs to apply the following operational values. These are also applied to the 'national partner networks' in membership of Eurochild.

- **Representativity:** Our membership structure and eligibility criteria are clearly defined, enabling us to be transparent about who we represent.
- **Legitimacy & credibility:** The network is considered a legitimate and credible partner by public institutions because of their knowledge, reach to organisations operating at grassroots level, and representativity.
- **Independence:** The network's overall strategic direction and broad line of activities is determined by its members and is independent of the funding sources. When public money is the principle source of income this does not compromise the network's ability to be critical towards government policy and programmes.

#### GOVERNANCE

The legal statutes underpin Eurochild's work. These are complemented by internal rules (A members charter was adopted in 2009. This will be reviewed in line following adoption of the strategy to develop more comprehensive internal rules by the General Assembly 2014).

The General Assembly has overall decision-making authority. The GA appoints a management board to oversee implementation of the agreed strategy.

#### WORKING STRUCTURES

Eurochild has the following working structures:

**Policy Steering Group:** comprises representatives of the 'national partner networks' in Eurochild membership. Where no NPN exists, a national organization may be appointed. The PSG provides a vital link between EU and national advocacy and campaigning work. Its aim is to ensure:

- Eurochild's policy influencing and advocacy at EU level is relevant to, and is influenced by, the reality at the national level;
- Member organisations make use of policy & legislative developments at EU level as well as Eurochild's EU advocacy tools, to support national/sub-national level advocacy on child rights and well-being.

The effectiveness of the PSG in steering Eurochild strategic agenda is evaluated in a bi-annual basis.

**Thematic Working Groups** are established on the initiative of Eurochild member organisations in order to share good practice within the network. The TWGs bring together member organisations from different perspectives of policy, research and practice. As well as creating a space for exchange and learning, TWGs must have a clear link with EU-level policy debate and initiatives. Currently, three TWGs exist at Eurochild: Family and Parenting Support, Early Years and Children in Alternative Care. The TWGs undergo regular evaluations once per 2-year working plan. Establishment of new TWGs can be proposed by members to the PSG if this is warranted by emerging issues underpinned by the core aims of Eurochild, and can be matched by Eurochild human resources within its Secretariat.

**Eurochild Expert Groups** are established for a definite period of time on the initiative of the Eurochild management board and work towards delivering clear tangible outputs. These groups are open to nominations from members but may also involve external experts.

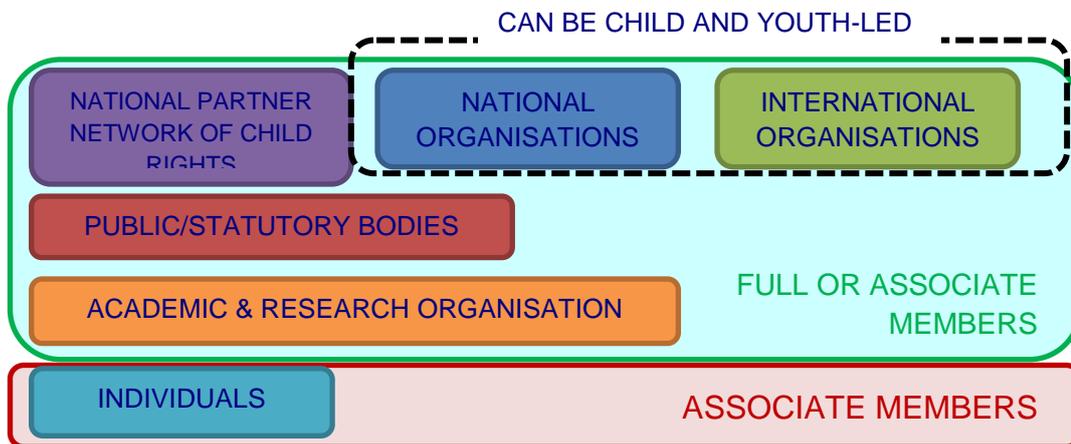
In 2012-2013 two groups are in operation:

- ⇒ The **Expert Group on Children’s Rights** was created to increase the organisation’s understanding of the potential of the EU legislative and policy framework for Eurochild advocacy for children’s rights, support Eurochild capacity building activities and advise on future actions on child rights, including campaigns (June 2012-June 2013).
- ⇒ Reference group on **Participatory Methods** for the inclusion of all children focuses on child participation how we can improve our practice within Eurochild and build a body of good practice within Eurochild membership (September 2012-end 2013).

## MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE

At the GA2012, members agreed a new membership typology, comprising 5 types reflecting the different types of organizations in membership of Eurochild. This is illustrated in the figure below. Within the statutes there are 3 official membership categories: Full, Associate and Honorary.

Each type of member has a specific membership ‘package’ outlining expected benefits and contribution. Fees are set according to income level of the organization except for academic & research bodies and public / statutory bodies where a flat rate fee may be applied (in cases where the annual income of the department involved in Eurochild is not disaggregated from the wider public body or academic institute). Every full member has one vote



Individual member organisations who are also member of a national partner network are eligible for a 25% reduction in their annual membership fee in order to encourage their membership of NPNs.

## RELATIONSHIPS

*With whom will we cooperate and how?*

### STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS<sup>1</sup>

Eurochild strategic partners are organisations with whom we develop joint activities with a commitment of resources from both parties over a period of minimum one year (usually two years). Partnerships are sought not only as a means of securing the necessary resources to deliver our goals, but also as a means of accessing complementary experience, expertise and influence. The partnership must be governed by a Memorandum of Understanding. Strategic partners must be subject to due diligence to ensure alignment of values, objectives and expectations from the partnership. Memoranda of Understanding must be signed by the President and Secretary General.

<sup>1</sup> Eurochild has a strategic partnership with the European Commission through the PROGRESS Programme of the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities covering the period January 2010 to December 2013. Its continuation is subject to an open call for proposals that will be published under the EU’s new financial framework.

At the time of adoption of this strategic plan, Eurochild has developed (or is developing) the following strategic partnerships:

[Hope and Homes for Children](#) UK and Eurochild have signed an MoU governing their strategic partnership for the period February 2013 to January 2015. The purpose of the partnership is to implement a pan-European campaign on deinstitutionalization.

The [Universal Education Foundation](#) and Eurochild are developing a strategic partnership to develop and promote the Learning for Well-being (L4WB) Charter. The L4WB Charter is expected to provide an advocacy platform that will bring together the health, education, social welfare and media sectors around a common vision of children and young people's well-being and how this can be achieved through appropriate policy interventions. The five principles of the Charter are included in Annex to the strategic plan. A working proposal for its further development, promotion and impact will be subject to members review through a specific reference group.

## **ALLIANCES & COALITIONS**

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Eurochild seeks to develop alliances with other European networks and international organisations to better achieve its objectives. Alliances are usually temporary e.g. joint events and do not require any formal agreement. Eurochild takes an active role in EU-level coalitions and partnerships where this serves our vision, mission and goals. Currently this includes:

- Child Rights Action Group – a informal grouping of NGOs committed to strengthening children's rights in EU legislation, policy and practice
- European Expert Group for the transition from institutional to community-based care –a broad coalition gathering stakeholders representing people with care or support needs including children, people with disabilities, people experiencing mental health problems, families; as well as service providers, public authorities and intergovernmental organisations.
- Ad-hoc group on child poverty – bringing together European networks to push for the implementation of the EC Recommendation "Investing in Children"

## **EXTERNAL MEMBERSHIP**

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Eurochild is member of several platforms and networks which can help Eurochild achieve its vision, mission and goals by joining forces on common agenda. Our current memberships include:

- Social Platform – the largest civil society alliance fighting for social justice and participatory democracy in Europe. It comprises 47 pan-European networks of NGOs and campaigns to ensure EU policies are developed in partnership with the people they affect, respecting fundamental rights, promoting solidary and improving lives.
- European Anti-Poverty Network – a network of 29 national networks of voluntary organisations and grassroots groups, in addition to several European organisations concerned with the fight against poverty and social exclusion.
- Child Rights Connect (formerly the NGO Group) - a global network of 86 international and national non-governmental organisations committed to ensuring that all children fully enjoy their rights as defined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).
- International Forum for Child Welfare an international non-governmental organization dedicated to the promotion of the rights and well-being of children globally which recognizes the contribution of effective leadership.
- Federation of European and International Associations established in Belgium (FAIB) - a non-profit, non-political association that promotes and defends the interests and activities of its Members.
- European Public Health Alliance (membership pending endorsement of EPHA general assembly in September) - Europe's leading NGO advocating for better health. We are a dynamic member-led

organisation, made up of public health NGOs, patient groups, health professionals, and disease groups working together to improve health and strengthen the voice of public health in Europe.

## MONITORING & EVALUATION

***How are we going to measure our outcomes and impact?***

***How do we integrate the learning into our daily work?***

Eurochild activities will be organized through annual work programmes that are designed to achieve the goals and objectives outlined above. For each annual work programme, Eurochild sets performance indicators. Performance indicators are both output and outcome oriented.

Outcomes are more difficult to measure. However, particularly with regards to Eurochild advocacy, we will develop tools to measure our impact. In the first instance this will be measured according to official policy documents and the extent they reflect the views and opinions of the Eurochild network. Eurochild will also explore ways to more directly measure the impact of the network on the lives of children and young people, by information shared by both members organisations and where possible by children and young people directly.

Eurochild engages an external evaluator to review Eurochild performance and strategic direction on an annual basis. Every year the external evaluator presents her findings to the Eurochild management board. The new strategic plan takes account of the recommendations made in previous evaluations.

Eurochild has also engaged an external consultant to support implementation of the DI Campaign “Opening Doors for Europe’s Children”. The external consultant is support the Eurochild secretariat and national coordinators of the campaign set realistic advocacy goals that are specific, measurable and achievable.

## FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

***What income, costs and investments does this lead to?***

***What funds do we need and how do we secure them?***

Our ability to deliver this strategic plan depends on our securing a strategic partnership agreement with the European Commission (2014-2017) – which may provide up to 80% of our running costs. This is subject to our being successful in replying to a competitive call for networks expected mid-2013.

Eurochild is developing an income generation strategy which will enable the network to ensure its long-term sustainability. This includes:-

- Securing on-going core funding with the EC
- Building long-term partnerships with Foundations / partner funding organisations
- Building corporate relationships
- Facilitating private donations & individual supporters
- Applying for project grants - EC / other public sector to deliver on our strategic goals
- Developing training, capacity building and consultancy services

## ANNEX

### DRAFT LEARNING FOR WELL-BEING CHARTER

To contribute to children and young people's well-being, policy makers need to move away from the silo approach to policy making. It requires a fundamental shift in the way children are viewed and treated in society. We need to build a multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary platform which can challenge policy makers to ensure policies are mutually reinforcing and achieve the best outcomes for children.

The L4WB Charter promotes five underlying principles that need to underpin how policies are developed, implemented and monitored.

1. **Children are to be treated as competent partners.** This requires that an adult's role is primarily to nurture the child's individual agency and personal responsibility. Choices and decisions affecting children's lives must take account of the child's own perspective, specific needs and experience. It requires a fundamental re-think about adult/child relationships and a shift in the way adults view and treat children. It also requires investment in organisations, systems and practices that facilitate children's empowerment and allow them to contribute to the way services are delivered and the way policies are developed and implemented.
2. **Achieving well-being is understood as a process not an outcome.** To live fully, children need to be supported in recognizing and expressing their own unique qualities, thus enabling them to develop their own sense of meaning, purpose and direction in life. Well-being is closely associated with resilience and ability to exercise control over one's life. Learning is key to achieving well-being, and learning is understood not simply as cognitive but as engaging the full range of human experience, with opportunities to develop physically mentally, morally, spiritually and socially. Poverty and material deprivation stand as major barriers to well-being. Nonetheless it is not enough to provide only for children's material needs.
3. **Health is much more than disease prevention or treatment.** The World Health Organisation's definition of health as the "*complete state of physical, mental and social well-being*" provides a more holistic perspective. Even in situations where children are living with chronic illness or disability, it is possible for them to live 'healthy' lives by drawing upon and nurturing their innate strengths and capacities. Such an approach does not question the importance of specific medical intervention or support. However it does emphasise the importance of considering the whole child, rather than seeing the child through the lens of the illness or disability.
4. **Education needs to nurture the individual capacities of every child.** As stated in the UNCRC (Art 29), education should be directed to the "*development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential*". Standardised approaches to education need to be challenged to fully embrace diversity and respect differences – whether due to the child's cultural, social or physical circumstances or whether they relate to different patterns of processing, learning and communicating. It is critical to ensure children have access to specific resources or support but labels should never be used to stigmatize or marginalize children.
5. **It is the quality of relationships that matters most to children's well-being.** Learning primarily takes place through interactions with other people – family, peers, teachers and other adults. The quality of those relationships has a profound and lasting influence on children's emotional, social and cognitive development. Children learn not only through their own relationships with others, but also as observers of those around them. Adults are role models for children and as such have a responsibility to build relationships based on respect, mutual trust and cooperation.