



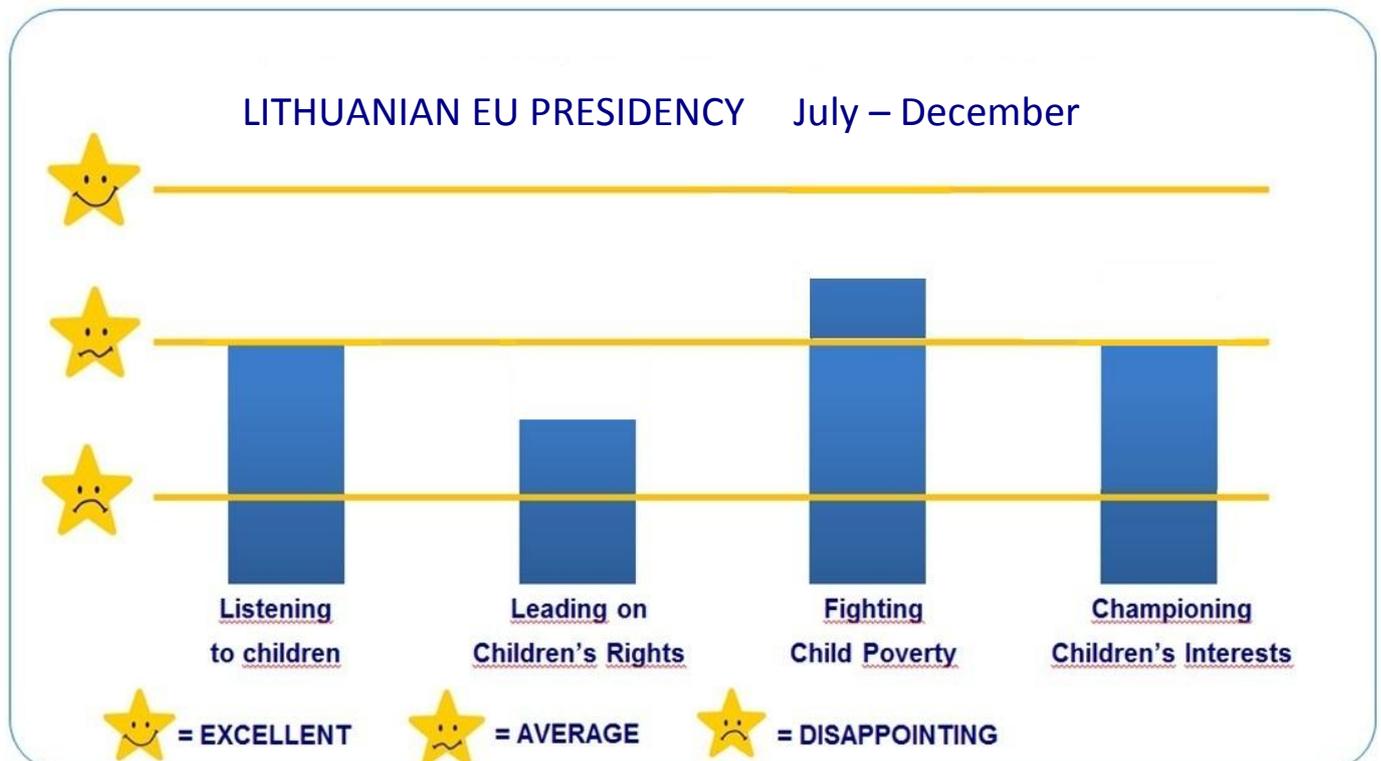
EU PRESIDENCY SCORECARD

Performance assessment of the Lithuanian EU Presidency from a Child Rights perspective

During the Lithuanian Presidency the Council concluded some important pieces of legislation relevant to children's rights and well-being.

The adoption of the EU's long-term budget 2014-2020 (MFF) was a milestone in late 2013. It provides a crucial opportunity to invest resources that promote children's well-being, even though regrettably the agreed overall resources are fewer than initially foreseen for all financial instruments relevant for children. In particular the approval of the European Structural and Investment Funds and financial programmes for the promotion of fundamental rights and citizenship, including children's rights and child protection are welcome.

Overall the Presidency voiced its strong support for the implementation of the Commission Recommendation "Investing in Children: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage" by dedicating an informal EPSCO Council meeting to this issue.



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During their 6 month tenure of the EU Presidency, Member States have an important responsibility to ensure that the rights and well-being of children remain high on the EU political agenda. Children represent 20% of our present, but 100% of the future. Strong, genuine commitment to children's rights and well-being is an investment in the future; it is also an obligation to which all member states have signed up under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is the seventh in a series of assessments of EU Presidencies. It assesses performance on 4 criteria: Listening to children, vision and leadership for a strong children's rights strategy, action and cooperation at EU level to fight child poverty, and children's interests in the Presidency programme.

DID THEY LISTEN TO CHILDREN?



In September 2013 Vilnius hosted an EU Youth Conference, under the general theme of social inclusion of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs), which had over 250 youth representatives from all over the EU in attendance. The conference closed with the adoption of [Joint Conclusions](#).



In October the Presidency hosted the [Eastern Partnership Youth Forum](#) in Kaunas in conjunction with the International Youth Cooperation. The event was aimed at strengthening cooperation with youth in the Eastern Partnership countries.

DID THEY LEAD ON THE EU CHILD RIGHTS AGENDA?



The [Council recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the member states](#), adopted in December, calls upon Member States to put in place measures to guarantee Roma children's right to education as per article 28 of the UNCRC, including increasing the access to, and quality of early childhood education and care.



[Conference of European child safety experts](#) met in December in Vilnius where the Lithuanian Minister for Health helped to launch the European Child Safety Alliance's [Child Product Safety Guide: Potentially Dangerous Products](#).



[EU Education, Youth, Culture and Sports Council](#) (EYCS) meeting, held in November, was dedicated to education in an increasingly digital and globalized environment, the social inclusion of youth and the prospective EU youth work plan. The Education Ministers present adopted two [Council conclusions](#) on effective leadership in education and the global dimension of European higher education.

DID THEY STRENGTHEN EU COOPERATION TO FIGHT AGAINST CHILD POVERTY?



An [informal meeting of ministers for employment and social affairs](#) took place in July in Vilnius focusing on, among others, the problem of youth unemployment and the social dimension of the Economic and Monetary Union. During a separate [meeting](#) the Ministers of Trio Member States (Lithuania, Greece, Italy) met with representatives of the European Commission and the Social Platform to discuss the Commission Recommendation "Investing in Children: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage" as a part of the Social Investment Package.



The Permanent Representatives Committee of the Council approved concluded negotiations on the [Fund for European aid to the most deprived](#) which is intended to replace the Food Distribution Programme and will see the distribution of EUR 3,5 Billion to Member States over the next seven years. While it does not specifically mention child poverty, the fund will focus on food distribution and social inclusion of the most deprived and should continue to contribute to the lives of some of the most disadvantaged children in Europe.

DID THEY CHAMPION CHILDREN'S INTERESTS THROUGHOUT THEIR PROGRAMME?



The [Conference "Mental health: challenges and opportunities"](#) was an expert event of the Presidency, held in October, where attention was given to children's and adolescents' mental health development. The conference's [conclusions](#) invited Member States to continue taking action on investing in the good mental health and well-being of children and youth, improve the responsiveness of health systems to address the needs of disadvantaged children; and ensure that all children can make full use of their universal right to healthcare.



The [Multi-annual Financial Framework 2014-2020](#) (MFF) was adopted by the Council in December, bringing to a close the two-year negotiation process, which unfortunately sees a 3,5% reduction in resources. The reduction will impact all headings and reduce available funding for children.



In addition, [the cohesion policy package for 2014-2020](#) was adopted by the Council and regrettably, the minimum share of the European Social Fund was reduced from 25% to 23,1%. Yet there will be more opportunities than previous years to promote social inclusion and combating poverty, including child poverty, through the EU Structural and Investment Funds in particular due to the minimum share for the investment priority on social inclusion. Furthermore, explicit references to deinstitutionalisation are now included in the Regulations on the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund, which are pivotal for ending institutional care for children in Europe.



In December, the [Council adopted the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme](#) for the period 2014-2020. The Programme will have a budget of over EUR 439 million aimed at financing actions to promote the rights of European citizens, the rights of the child, the principles of non-discrimination and equality between women and men.

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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 guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and work in respect of its underlying principles.