
Eurochild Child Participation Strategy



Eurochild
Putting children at
the heart of Europe

Eurochild Child Participation Strategy

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1.1. Eurochild's Mission on Child¹ Participation

Eurochild is a network that works for and with children across Europe and is advocating for putting children's rights at the heart of EU policy-making.

Eurochild **aims**²:

- To put children at the heart of Europe
- Giving a voice to children and young people
- Building a community of child rights advocates

The **key thematic areas** Eurochild focuses on are:

- Child poverty and well-being
- Mainstreaming children's rights
- Strengthening families and ending institutional care
- Better public spending and investing in children
- Child participation

As a child-rights network we advocate for the right of the child to be heard in all decisions that affect them. However, child participation is not currently embedded into the way Eurochild plans and delivers its work, nor are there any standards required for membership in how they involve and engage with children. Eurochild therefore aims to **develop child participation standards, which will embed children's participation into its working structures**. This will provide visibility to Eurochild as a child-participatory organisation when influencing policies, developing strategic planning and organising major events.

At the same time Eurochild will support child-led and youth-led initiatives, as well as peer-to-peer work and children acting as researchers, service providers and community educators (e.g. children delivering sexual health education), children as advocates/influencers. In this way, children themselves will be able to set agenda's. For example, when children want to get engaged in a specific campaign or project, Eurochild can support these children or children's organisations as long as the campaigns and projects are linked to Eurochild's thematic objectives.

The basis for Eurochild's Child Participation Strategy is the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** and in particular Article 12 on child participation and General Comment 12. Eurochild aims to empower children by making them aware about their rights and creating a safe environment in which they can exercise their rights.

¹ When a reference is made to children or children and young people in the Child Participation Strategy, the definition of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 applies '*a child means every human being below the age of 18 years*'.

² Eurochild's strategic objectives are included in its strategic multi-annual planning 2014-2018.

All children involved in Eurochild activities, projects and programmes have the right to have their health, safety and well-being, and their best interests considered as top priority. Eurochild has a **Child Protection Policy**, which ensures the highest standards of professional behaviour and personal practice to ensure no harm occurs in any situation to children and young people during their involvement in Eurochild activities, projects and programme. Eurochild's Child Protection Policy is the basis for all the work undertaken to implement the Child Participation Strategy.

Eurochild aims to implement children's participation based on the **nine requirements for meaningful, safe and inclusive children's participation**:

- **Transparent and informative** - Children need to be given as much information as possible, so that, should they get involved, they know what they are getting into.
- **Voluntary** - Children should always have the right not to participate and to opt out.
- **Respectful** - All participants, adult and children, respect each other and other people's ideas.
- **Relevant** - Children have to be involved in decisions that are relevant to them.
- **Child friendly** - Everything should be designed in a way that allows children to contribute.
- **Inclusive** - All children are treated equally and are given a chance to participate.
- **Supported by training** - Training should be offered by adult staff.
- **Safe** - Children are not exposed to situations that make them vulnerable³.
- **Accountable** - Adults keep their promises, and children can let them know if something is not working.

As ultimate goal, Eurochild aims to achieve a '*gold standard*' in participatory practice by 2020.

To embed child participation standards in Eurochild's working structures, a **mid-term strategy for the period 2017-2018** is being developed.

1.2 What is a "Child Participation Strategy"?

- It is a document that presents the steps that we need to take in order to make child participation happen or improve. The strategy needs to be flexible and able to adapt to changing circumstances, both within Eurochild and in Europe.
- It is a plan for the future, a commitment, an agreement, a set of principles to achieve a goal.

³ Eurochild's Child Protection Policy is the basis for all the work undertaken to implement the Child Participation Strategy.

1.3 Structure of Eurochild's Child Participation Strategy

1

Local Level

Children at local level will be asked to tell us their ideas and opinions on different things.

These will feed into the work of the National Eurochild Forums (pt.2) that will be set up around Europe. High importance will be given to involving as many children and young people as possible and from different backgrounds, especially from minorities that often do not have the opportunity to have their voices heard.

2

National Eurochild Forums - NEFs

National Eurochild Forums (NEFs)* will collect ideas and opinions from children at local level and feed them into the work of the Eurochild Children's Council (ECC) (pt.3). The NEFs will be made up of groups of 15 to 25 individuals aged 10-18. These individuals will be selected by young people in their country and will be supported by Eurochild's members (see page 17). **Each Forum should include children from different backgrounds, with different experiences.** NEFs will also be asked to reach out to children that do not belong to the supporting organisation to ensure they represent different groups.

**National Eurochild Forums will be piloted in 3 countries during 2017: Bulgaria, Estonia and Malta. After a piloting period, their experience will be used to set up NEFs in other countries.*

3

Eurochild Children's Council - ECC

Eurochild Children's Council (ECC) will collect ideas and opinions from NEFs to make sure children can have a say across Eurochild's work. Special focus will be put on influencing work, strategic planning and events organisation. **The ECC will feed back to NEFs about any outcomes.** Once NEFs have been set up in more countries, each of them will select one child to represent them in the ECC. Each representative will work on the ECC for a two-year term. **For the period 2017-2018, the ECC will be made up of 10 - 12 individuals aged 10 - 18.** Each of the pilot countries (pt.2) will select one member of the first ECC, and children from other countries will be added.

MENTORS: After the young people finish their 2 year term in the ECC, **they will be given the opportunity to become mentors to newer members** participating in the ECC. *(It is also encouraged that NEF participants become mentors after they finish their term).*

4

Eurochild's Members, Management Board and Secretariat

Eurochild's **Members** are all the organisations and individuals that are members of Eurochild. The **Management Board** consists of 7 people that are elected by Eurochild's members and takes decisions on the direction of work done within Eurochild. The **Secretariat** is the people that work at the Eurochild office in Brussels.

The Child Participation Strategy is visualised in the graph in the following page.

1.4 Aims of the Eurochild Child Participation Strategy

The Child Participation Strategy (CPS) aims to set out:

The standards that Eurochild is aiming to achieve that are specific & measurable in relation to child participation in the work of the Secretariat, National Partner Networks and the wider membership (as potential input to the next 3-year strategic plan). These standards will focus on three aspects of Eurochild's work:

- 1. Influencing:** How will Eurochild and its members involve children and young people in their advocacy (*influencing*) work?
- 2. Strategic Planning:** How will children and young people be involved in the preparation of the organisation-wide 3-year strategic plan which is due to be renewed in 2018 for the period 2019-2021? The 3-year strategy itself should include goals around child & youth participation.
- 3. Event Planning:** How will children & young people be involved in the planning & delivery of Eurochild's biannual flagship conference in July 2018?
- 4. Supporting child led initiatives:** Eurochild will act as a resource to support child and youth led initiatives and organisations, which will reinforce Eurochild's advocacy work for children's rights at European, national and regional level.

The strategy will identify within all four areas of work, the resources needed to fulfill these goals and it will indicate how Eurochild would succeed in securing the resources. Resources can be funding or staffing or other means that are needed to support children participating in the four areas of work.

2. Children's Involvement in Eurochild's influencing work

Eurochild's key activity is to influence decisions with an impact on children's rights of the European Union and national governments. An influencing process is made up of different steps, which can include preparing a campaign, preparing policy papers, identify allies, target audiences, communication strategies, etc.

At national level a range of Eurochild members across Europe⁴ do already involve children in national, regional or local advocacy work or are willing and planning to involve children in their advocacy work at national and European level. Involving children and their opinions and expertise in advocacy work is believed to contribute to stronger messages.

⁴ Including (but not limited to) France, Kosovo, Croatia, the Netherlands, Romania, the UK, Spain, Sweden, Estonia, Slovenia, Cyprus, Greece, Czech Republic.

In which steps of the influencing process, in preparing a campaign or policy, will children be involved?

There are three possibilities for children to get involved in Eurochild's influencing work: Firstly, they can be **consulted**, which means that they are asked for advice. Secondly, they can **collaborate** with adults, which means that they will cooperate with adults on an equal level. Thirdly, they can take the lead, which means that children and young people will take the initiative for an activity and take the lead in this. These **child-led** activities can be supported by adults.

Within Eurochild's influencing work, different stages in campaigning for new policies or for example to get child rights champions in the European Parliament, can be identified. **Within these different stages, children will be able to have different roles** (consulting, collaborative, child-led or leave it fully to adults). Overall, children will be involved from the beginning (the design of an influencing campaign) to the implementation phase and evaluation phase. They will be **supported by training** and trained adults.

2.1. With regard to the different stages of Eurochild's influencing work, it is important to identify at the **development stage of a campaign or influencing strategy** the level of children's involvement throughout all the different stages. Children and young people – particularly those who have first-hand experience of certain issues – need to be involved from the point of **defining the issues** and building a strategy. To the extent possible this initial stage should take place in a collaborative way between children and adults. In order for children to identify and prioritise issues, support from trained adults is needed to help them through the different steps of an advocacy process. Important is that **children should also be able to come up with their own proposals!**

2.2. Adults, given their specific expertise, will be in charge of **gathering allies and identifying the target audience** (e.g. governments, MEPs).

2.3. Building the campaign, as well as **raising awareness**, will be a shared process (collaboration) **where adults and children will work together** to draft documents, organise meetings with decision-makers, and spread the word about the campaign (both face to face and via social media).

2.4. Children will be given the opportunity to take part in the **evaluation process of influencing campaigns**, since Eurochild focuses on children's rights and issues related to their implementation, children will help evaluate whether a campaign or a policy has had any tangible impact. This will also contribute to a better understanding of the results and avoid frustration that is a possible risk in influential work.

Regardless of each specific stage of a given campaign or influencing activity, a continued dialogue between children and adults is of fundamental importance.

2.5. Eurochild is involved in numerous advocacy campaigns, which are all linked to its strategic objectives and **aim to put children at the heart of Europe.**

Due to the amount of time influencing campaigns will take from children and young people as well as staff and members and due to budgetary limits, **children and young people will get involved in a minimum of one campaign per year in 2017 and 2018**. This means that they will be involved from the start of the EU's legislative process. In addition, children and young people can be involved in shorter campaigns, for example when the European Commission organises a public consultation on a certain subject of interest to children and young people or linked to a EU Presidency event or activity.

Resources needed to support the ECC in their influencing work (2017-2018)

Staff

Eurochild staff	Child Participation Officer, Head of Advocacy and Senior Policy and Advocacy Officers responsible for specific influencing campaigns.
Members' staff	To support the children and young people in their influencing work at national level.

Funding

Travel costs for children and young people to participate in meetings with policy and decision makers at national level and one meeting at the EP in November	Children and young people in 8 countries participate in the ECC: € 500,00 for national travel and meeting costs per country.
Translate EU documents into accessible language	€ 2.000,00
Prepare supporting documents for the CYP	€ 1.000,00
Provide training to CYP on advocacy	Webinars or other tools

3. Children's Involvement in Eurochild's Strategic Planning

Eurochild has a Strategic Plan, which includes its key objectives for four years. The current Strategic Plan finishes in 2018. Therefore a new Plan will have to be developed for after 2018. The current Strategic Plan includes Eurochild's *vision, mission, values* and *goals* until 2018.

Eurochild's Secretariat is starting to think about its new post 2018 Strategic Plan. Eurochild members will be involved in the development of the new Strategic Plan, which will be adopted in 2018.

The **key dates and steps** for the new Strategic Plan will be:

- January 2017 – Management Board meeting: decisions were made on how to write the next Strategic Plan and the timeline.
- April 2017 – General Assembly: consultation with members and the European Children’s Council on what the key issues are, in order to put them on paper.
- June 2017 – Strategic Planning Meeting: brainstorming between the MB and the Secretariat to discuss the next Strategic Plan and how to consult members.
- September – November 2017: Consultations with Eurochild’s members.
- Jan 2018 – Management Board meeting: presentation and discussion of the first draft of the Strategic Plan.
- April 2018: discussion with members on the final draft of the Strategic Plan.
- End of 2018: adoption of the new Strategic Plan.

3.1 How will children be involved in developing Eurochild’s Strategic Plan for the next three years?

1. Children and young people should be involved in the overall process and in most steps of the strategic planning if this is meaningful for them.

2. ***Children’s involvement in Eurochild’s governance structure***

The ECC and NEFs will be involved in Eurochild’s governance structures, which include the Management Board and the General Assembly.

- a. ***Management Board:***

Children’s formal involvement in the Management Board will be further developed when preparing the next Eurochild Strategic Plan 2018 and beyond.

For the period 2017-2018 cooperation between the ECC and the Eurochild Management Board will be sought:

- By having one or two ECC delegates present in the Management Board meetings for points on the agenda which will be of interest and relevant to the ECC, for example on strategic discussions for Eurochild – this can be done virtually (skype) or in person. These ECC delegates will be supported by Eurochild staff. (*In the future ECC delegates could take over this supporting and mentoring role for new ECC delegates*).
- A minimum of one Management Board member will be responsible for children’s participation and will be invited to parts of ECC meetings (virtually or in person).
- Reports of ECC meetings will be shared with the Management Board and child-friendly versions of the Management Board reports will be shared with ECC.
- The ECC will be supported and receives training on the governance structure and decision-making processes in Eurochild.

b. General Assembly

- The Eurochild Children’s Council will be invited to participate in Eurochild’s General Assembly and contribute to the discussions on the Strategic Plan. The possibility should be explored within the Eurochild Statutes to give a membership status to ECC including voting rights⁵. In this way the National Eurochild Forums will be represented by the ECC at the GA.

3. Flexible but concrete Strategy

Apparently the current Eurochild strategy is too general. While it is important that it is flexible and adaptable, it needs to be more specific and concrete. This can be achieved by organising meetings between the Secretariat and child experts. The Eurochild Children’s Council will be able to participate in all members’ consultation rounds on the Strategic Plan and in addition will meet with the Eurochild Secretariat to discuss the Strategy (*before or after the June 2017 brainstorm meeting*).

Resources needed to support the ECC in their strategic planning work (2017-2018)

Staff

Eurochild staff	Child Participation Officer, Executive Assistant/Conference Coordinator, Policy staff responsible for specific thematic areas within Eurochild, Communications staff
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Members’ staff	To support the national children and young people.
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Funding

Travel costs for CYP to participate in meetings (GA, a consultation meeting with Secretariat staff) in Brussels	12 Children and young people plus accompanying adults to travel to BRX x 2 at rate of € 300,00 = € 14.400,00 Accommodation (2 nights x 2) at rate of € 80,00 = € 7.680,00
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Prepare supporting documents for the CYP in a child-friendly manner	€ 3.000,00
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⁵ Currently, according to Eurochild Statutes, the Eurochild Children’s Council is not able to vote at the General Assembly, since only full members are allowed to do so.

4. Children's Involvement in Eurochild's Events Planning

Eurochild organises its flagship conference every two years: the next conference will be held in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 2018. In 2016 Eurochild organised a conference with the active involvement of a children's advisory group for the first time. The learning from the involvement of children in the 2016 conference is taken into account in Eurochild's Events Planning. The conference aims to have a minimum of one third child and young delegates.

The organisation of the conference involves a wide range of activities, in which children can participate. **Overall children and adults will be able to collaborate in all stages of Eurochild's conference planning.**

4.1 Overall coordination and planning

- **Core Team:** a team made of members from both the Secretariat and the hosting organisations, organising meetings and calls to discuss overall coordination of the event, as well as technical details (e.g. finance). Since this team is quite technical children will not participate directly in this, but will be kept informed on outcomes of the core team meetings and consulted on key decisions relevant for the contents of the conference. There will be a close cooperation between the Core Team and the Children's Advisory Group to ensure children and young people's needs are taken into consideration.
- **Children's Advisory Group:** A call is sent out to all members to gather twelve children and young people who will help planning, organising and facilitating the conference. At least two children from the hosting organisation in Scotland will be selected for the young people's advisory group, as well as two from the Eurochild Children's Council on the child participation strategy and eight others from amongst the Eurochild membership. The Children's Advisory Group is involved in key aspects of the conference planning, including selection of themes, titles, preparation of speakers, co-moderating sessions, communications and media, ensuring the conference is child-friendly and fun activities.
- **Programme Advisory Group:** a group made up of key decision makers and stakeholders in the country that is hosting the conference. Information sharing and collaboration between the Children's Advisory Group and the Programme Advisory Group will be sought with representatives of the Children's Advisory Group participating in the Programme Advisory Group and vice versa.
- **Broader Consultations:** membership is usually asked to consult on the date and the theme of conference.

4.2 Content and Programme Planning

- This phase revolves around **designing the conference**: What should the theme be? **What** title? Who should be invited to speak? How should the programme look like? How to make the event participatory?
 - Children and young people will be involved in this phase, together with staff from Eurochild and the host organisation.
 - Children will be asked to take part in **briefing keynote speakers** by making skype calls, to ensure they know how to talk to a young audience. This could be done by other children than those of the conference Children’s Advisory Group.
- Once a **concrete schedule** is developed, invitations need to be sent to keynote speakers; other contributors are selected for the other activities happening during the conference (e.g. workshops, study visits, etc.); sessions are planned (some co-facilitated by children); background papers are drafted.
 - Children **will be invited and prepared to co-moderate sessions** together with adults.
- Conference **outputs**: in the planning phase, Eurochild needs to decide what the outputs of the conference might be (e.g. Written Declaration).
 - Children will be involved in this decision as well as contribute to the **conference** outputs.

4.3 Communications and social media

- The conference as well as its outcomes have to be promoted via social media
- Technical decisions have to be made: e.g. logo and visual identity of the conference
 - Children, both from the Children’s Advisory Group and other children from member organisations should be involved in this stage.
 - **Visual identity**: Children could be asked to submit drawings for the visual identity of the conference. These could, for example, be used to create one single picture, which should become the logo of the conference.
 - **Social media**: The Children’s Advisory Group and children and young people from the wider network should be involved. However, adults should use their expertise to help with the media coverage of the conference.
 - All child participants at the conference should be given the possibility to help with certain tasks, such as pictures, videos and interviews.

4.4 Logistics and fun activities

- Part of the organisation of the conference involves liaising with hotels, caterers, booking venues, as well as taking care of the online registration for the participants, preparing welcome pack, decorating the venue.
 - Most of this work will be taken care off by Eurochild staff and the conference hosts.
 - Children will be involved in the logistics of the conference only to ensure that the language and the environment are child-friendly.

- Fun activities and study visits to learn about the work of our partners need to be planned.
 - Local children should be involved and coordinate with the Children’s Advisory Group, particularly in terms of suggesting fun activities and excursions for the participants, as they have expertise on the location.
 - New ways of keeping the audience entertained should be explored: having a lot of speeches means that sometimes the audience gets distracted – each session could include an energiser.

Resources needed to support the Conference Children’s Advisory Group in the organisation of the conference in 2018 (2017-2018)

Staff

Eurochild staff	Child Participation Officer, Executive Assistant/Conference Coordinator, Senior Policy and Advocacy Officer on Child Participation, Policy Officers responsible for themes to be discussed at the conference, Communications staff
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Members’ staff	To support the children and young people
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Funding

Travel costs for CYP to participate in 2 preparatory meetings (as well as participation in conference itself)	<i>Separate Conference Budget</i>
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Communication material in accessible language	<i>Separate Conference Budget</i>
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5. Supporting child led initiatives

Eurochild will act as a resource to support child and youth led initiatives and organisations, which will reinforce Eurochild’s advocacy work for children’s rights at European, national and regional level.

Eurochild’s commitment to support child led organisations and initiatives might involve providing information, sharing training material and resources, providing advice, supporting influencing/lobbying and access to EU and Council of Europe level policies. Eurochild will provide the space for child and youth led organisations through the NEFs to be involved at national level and allow them space to provide input according to their own agenda.

6. The Eurochild Children's Council

A **Eurochild Children's Council (ECC)** will be developed within Eurochild, starting from grassroots level: Eurochild member organisations (including National Partner Networks) will engage with children and young people on their national/local levels, which will form **National Eurochild Forums**. The National Eurochild Forums will select among themselves one representative who will participate in the Eurochild Children' Council.

The Eurochild Children's Council will be **involved in Eurochild's influencing activities and campaigns, strategic planning and events**, as described above. The ECC will be selected for a period of two years, with half of the child and young representatives changing every year to ensure continuity.

The European Children's Council (ECC) will also **interact with Eurochild's Management Board (MB)**. *See above in section 3 Children's involvement in Eurochild's strategic planning.*

The ECC will receive input from NEFs and provide feedback on the influencing work, strategic planning and events organising.

The Role of National Eurochild Forums

The role of National Eurochild Forums is:

- To influence the EU; national advocacy; to contribute to the Eurochild strategic plan and the delivery of the Eurochild conference in 2018.
- Serve as a platform where children are able to share opinions and to learn about European topics.
- To discuss problems that children face within their countries and communicate these to the ECC.
- To suggest possible actions from Eurochild towards the EU or Council of Europe bodies.
- To promote the UNCRC to children and young people, governments and the public
- To investigate experiences of children and young people on European issues to feed into European policy making.
- Collect views of children that have already been collected at local level or by specific organisations and bodiesⁱⁱ.
- A platform where children learn to become stronger advocates for children's rights
- A platform where children will learn from each other.

6.1 Selection of Children

Involving children in Eurochild's activities means that we need to put in place specific processes and procedures to decide how to **select** the children and young people that act as advocates and experts within Eurochild; how to **prepare** them to take part in advocacy, strategic planning and events; how to **ensure communication** between the children and young people, as well as between Eurochild and its young experts when they are not physically in the same place; how to **include children and young people in Eurochild's Work Programme**; how to **recognise and certificate their work**.

6.1.1 Selection of Children – Eurochild Children's Council (10-12 children)

Transition period (2016 – 2018)

Regarding the selection of children for the first **Eurochild Children's Council**, the children who have been selected for the Children and Young People's Advisory Group for the development of the Child Participation Strategy will initially form the ECC. With support from the Eurochild Secretariat, they will be responsible for setting up the Eurochild Children's Council and develop any internal guidelines for its functioning. They will be involved in the influencing work of Eurochild (issues to be agreed with the Secretariat), the development of the Eurochild Strategic Plan and two delegates of this group will be selected to be part of the conference children's advisory group supporting the organisation of the Eurochild Conference in Scotland in 2018.

6.1.2. Selection of Children – National Eurochild Forums (15-25 children)

The setting up of **National Eurochild Forums** will need time and therefore it is suggested to **start with three pilot countries/members**. Eurochild members in Estonia, Bulgaria and Malta have been asked to pilot the setting up of National Eurochild Forums according to the principles of the Eurochild Child Participation Strategy. At the end of the two-year transition period three National Eurochild Forums will be established, as well as a report on the process of setting up the Forums and their activities that have been carried out.

National Eurochild Forums will be formed with support of national Eurochild members, including National Partner Networks or other members actively engaging with children and young people. The National Eurochild Forums will mainly provide national level advice and will be feeding into EU level and Council of Europe policy as well. National Eurochild Forums can take different forms and can build on existing national children's councils or parliaments. For example, NEFs can be specific working groups within national children's councils or parliaments focussing on European issues.

The country pilot reports will be evaluated together with the three organising countries and the Young Eurochild Advisory Group. The outcomes will be used to support other countries/members to set up National Eurochild Forums.

a. *Guiding principles for selection*

- Children will be informed about what is expected and what the time requirements will be.
- Participation is voluntary and is guided by the 9 child participation principles (see *section 1.1 on page 3*).
- **Diversity is fundamental:** for the ECC, Eurochild will aim to include children from across Europe (geographically balanced), gender-balanced and with children from different backgrounds.
- National **Eurochild Forums will aim to include children with different backgrounds** (ethnic groups, religion, social status, disabilities, age groups, etc.).
- Eurochild will ensure that **language does not become a barrier:** at national level, children will be able to participate and contribute to Eurochild's activities with support from member organisations and in their own languages.

b. *Selection Criteria for National Eurochild Forums*

- The **selection of children will be facilitated by national Eurochild member organisations**, in particular National Partner Networks (NPNs) and their members and other national or local Eurochild members. **Ensure that Eurochild members working with specific groups of disadvantaged children are involved.**
- **Children will carry out the election** of children for NEFs.
- Children will be elected for a **period of 2 years** (every year half of the children will be replaced).
- In particular, children involved in **child/youth led organisations** should be asked to participate in NEFs.
- All children interested in participating in NEFs should be able to do so, but only a limited number (15-25) can participate in its physical meetings. Other children can feed in ideas to the NEF via the elected representatives or via online media – virtual platforms.
- Meetings of NEFs should be **accessible to physically disabled children** and where needed specific support for disabled children should be organised (e.g. sign language interpreter).
- **Children participating in NEFs should be representing other bodies, such as an organisation, school, and community**, so that they can represent the voice of other children and young people that they are connected with - including disadvantaged groups of children. Selection can take place with the involvement of these bodies.
- Children participating in NEFs could be asked to connect with a specific group of children and represent them within NEF.
- Selection criteria should include **individual criteria (e.g. gender, age) and group criteria** (e.g. representing ethnic groups, children with physical or mental disabilities, children who have experienced violence, children from particular vulnerable backgrounds, etc.)
- **Children with experience in children's participation** should be among those selected.
- **Children with experience in influencing work** should be among those selected.
- Social media can be used to get in contact with children, who are interested in participating in the NEFs.

c. *Timing - Timing is fundamental*

- Eurochild will organise and prepare events and activities requiring children's participation well in advance to allow children from various backgrounds and ages to participate.
- Eurochild will ensure that member organisations will be informed timely about events and influencing activities where children can be involved. The member organisations are responsible for ensuring that this information reaches as many children as possible, in order to give everyone a chance to participate and ensure diversity.
- Eurochild will ensure that where possible such events and activities do not clash with children's other commitments (e.g. school, exams).

d. *Online Database*⁶

- An online database will be set up, including a list of children that have worked or are willing to work with Eurochild and its member organisations and will include children involved in the ECC. This list could be joined by any other children willing to become advocates for Eurochild. The list will be used by Eurochild to send out mails with specific information or requests for the children.
- The database can only be used by the Eurochild Secretariat and will not be shared with third parties.
- Children and their parents/carers will be informed about the online database and how it will be used by Eurochild. Children below the age of 16 (according to EU General Data Protection Regulation 2016 Article 8) and their parents/carers have to give consent to the use of their information to Eurochild and they have a free choice to complete the information and can decide what information they would like to have included in the database. They can at any moment ask Eurochild to take out their personal information.
- Personal information that will be asked for the database includes name, address, email, phone, age, gender, language preference, level of education.
- Personal information that will be asked for which children and their parent/carer have to give **explicit consent** include any ability they wish to report, ethnicity, of migrant origin, religion, years in care, sexual orientation, etc. (*see EU General Data Protection Regulation 2016 Article 9*)
- The online database can be used as a mailing list, but to each child an adult (parent/carer or organisation) is connected and receives the same mails.
- The online database will have to adhere to Eurochild's Child Protection Policy and the EU 2016/679 General Data Protection Regulation.

⁶ The online database will be subject to **EU Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data**, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation), entering into force on 25 May 2018.

Article 8 of the EU Regulation 2016/679 stipulates the '**Conditions applicable to child's consent in relation to information society services**': *'the processing of the personal data of a child shall be lawful where the child is at least 16 years old. Where the child is below the age of 16 years, such processing shall be lawful only if and to the extent that consent is given or authorised by the holder of parental responsibility over the child'. 'Member States may provide by law for a lower age for those purposes provided that such lower age is not below 13 years.'*

6.2 Preparation

a. *Providing Child-friendly Information:*

- Eurochild will provide children who want to become advocates or want to get involved in strategic planning or events planning with accurate information on what is required of them and what they are asked to commit to.
- Eurochild will provide background information on the specific issues children will be asked to work on.
- All of the information and data provided to children will be presented in a child-friendly way, which means it will be presented in a clear way and where possible visuals, infographics, bullet points, and videos will be used.

b. *Training Packages:*

Eurochild's Secretariat, *with support of experts and members*, will develop a training pack for its members on how to engage with children and set up National Eurochild Forums. However, the training package can be used more widely by members at national level working with specific groups of children and/or families.

These training packages will include:

- Training on **child participation principles** as well children's rights for children and for supporting adults.
- Training on **child safety and child protection**.
- Training for children and young people **on influencing/advocacy (how to design/implement a campaign)**, which will be linked to the issue that will be selected to influence (one EU influencing issue will be selected to start with – *for example the development of a European law on work-life balance*). This can include, but is not limited to: **how to make an argument**; how to **deliver a message** to different audiences (MEPs, media, write press releases, etc.); what type of activities can be organised to deliver messages and **influence decision-making processes**; who needs to be influenced (as such information is fundamental to decide how to design a campaign); how does the decision-making process work; communication skills; presentation skills, training on EU and Council of Europe institutions.
- **Children themselves will be involved in the delivery of trainings** – in particular at a later stage young mentors with previous experience in the ECC or NEFs can be asked to support or deliver trainings.
- Trainings will be provided by either the Secretariat or member organisations, depending on the type of activity.

Resources needed to set up the Eurochild Children’s Council and Eurochild National Forums

Staff

Eurochild staff	Child Participation and Network Development Officer, Senior Policy Officer on Child Participation, Communications Staff
Members’ staff	Supporting staff for children’s participation, Staff responsible for coordinating and supporting the National Eurochild Forum (including the selection of children and young people and reporting)

Funding

Training material (development of material, delivering of trainings)	€ 2.000,00
Organisation of National Eurochild Forums (travel, accommodation, subsistence costs)	€ 2.500,00 per country (3 pilot countries – total of € 7.500,00)

7. Communications

The selection and preparation stages of the Eurochild Children’s Council are fundamental: the selected children are committed to get involved and will be provided with adequate preparation by Eurochild national members and the Eurochild staff. This ensures that the children are willing to keep in touch and communication will be more effective.

- **Communication with the Eurochild Children’s Council**
 - **Personal communication** is most important via physical meetings, google hangouts/click meetings.
 - **Google Hangouts** will be organised with the Eurochild Children’s Council on a regular basis, facilitated by Eurochild’s Child Participation Officer. One child member will be asked to take on the role of co-chair. Each meeting a person will be appointed as the minute taker. Eurochild will write a one-pager with guidelines on how to use Google Hangout, as well as on a Code of Conduct for using Google Hangout.
 - **Social media** can play a role, taking into account age limitations of some social media such as Facebook (which cannot be used by under 13 year olds): Facebook could be used to create a closed group for children to allow them to keep in touch with each other (moderated by an adult) and another group for children and adults. Facebook could also be used to share Eurochild’s work. Due to the limitations of Facebook, Eurochild will look into alternatives that aim to ensure an inclusive system for all children and which is accessible for all children.

- **Team-communication** could be facilitated by using a new online communication platform Slack, which also has an app. It brings together people working in separate places, you can separate discussions by #, add files, allow for comments, and sensitive material can be separated for few team members: <https://slack.com/is> Since it has an app, it might be something useful for the children and young people who prefer using their phone for such work.
 - **One Annual physical meeting** will be organised to share what the different National Eurochild Forums and Eurochild have been active in and what the plans for the next year are.
 - **Teams** of child & adult experts will be created on different topics: including a team on influencing; a team on strategic planning and a team involved in the conference planning.
 - **Google Docs** has been selected as the best platform to keep the conversation going. Documents will be shared via Google Docs and child & adult experts will have access to them, make comments and read what others have said.
 - **Survey Monkey** could be used to send out questionnaires on specific topics/issues, but specific support needs to be provided to ensure inclusive participation for children whose literacy levels preclude them from participating.
 - The possibility of setting up a **private Wikipedia page** could be explored.
- **Communication with National Eurochild Forums and children across Europe**

Internet could be used to solve two main issues:

 1. It is hard to reach children from all over Europe
 2. Many children do not know about Eurochild and those who do, might not know that they can be involved in its activities and decision-making processes.
 - **Online platforms:** Children in the National Eurochild Forums will have closed online forums to share ideas. Their ideas will be shared with the Eurochild Secretariat, the Eurochild Children's Council and Management Board. Moreover, Eurochild will prepare information packs, surveys and questionnaires to be sent to members, who could then submit them to or discuss with children and young people.
 - **Child-friendly Information about Eurochild activities:** For children to be able to participate meaningfully they need to be well informed. Member organisations often do not pass information to children, or are not aware of Eurochild's activities. Children need to be more aware of what Eurochild is doing – it would be important to promote the use of social media tools that children and young people are using including Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. With regard to the social media platforms a special hashtag will be created *#ECC+event*. Eurochild's policy work will require significant 'translation' in order to be understood by children and young people. A small group of children and young people's team could run this work together with Eurochild communications and advocacy staff.
 - **Local and national communication by children and young people:** Children from the Eurochild Children's Council and the National Eurochild Forums will be active by involving their schools and communities to spread the word – local/school radios, newspapers (special section/columns).
 - The previously mentioned **Database** (3.1.1. d) and online platforms could be used to send out information and/or newsletters directly to children.

Resources needed for Communications

Staff

Eurochild staff	Communications Staff, Child Participation and Network Development Officer, Senior Policy Officer on Child Participation
Members' staff	Supporting staff for CYP, Communications Staff

8. Recognition and Certification

- a. **Certificates:** Children taking part in Eurochild's activities will receive an official certificate, which recognises and values their participation. They could add the certificate to their school curriculum. *With regard to the certification process cooperation will be sought with CATS partners.*
- b. **Sharing experiences – Child or Young Ambassadors:** Children who collaborate with Eurochild as experts and advisors and know about Eurochild and its activities are asked to share their experiences in their countries, with their own organisations, at school, youth councils and parliaments and with the National Children's Forum when these are set up. They will collect ideas from other children within their countries, and report back to Eurochild, effectively becoming "Child or Young Ambassadors". These ambassadors could create surveys and questionnaires for their peers in their communities or organise meetings with them, targeting children who are not part of Eurochild's membership too. They can also be active in recruiting children for the National Eurochild Forum. Child or Young ambassadors, once they move on, could become mentors for other children, or be assigned to other tasks (e.g. promoting Eurochild's activities on social media).
- c. **Mentoring:** Children who have been involved in Eurochild's activities for a long time and have been child or young ambassadors will become mentors in their own countries, and train younger generations to become child experts. Eurochild will provide a platform in order for former child or young ambassadors and new generations of child experts to share their experiences and learn from each other.

Resources needed to set up the Eurochild Children's Council and Eurochild National Forums

Staff

Eurochild staff	Communications Staff, Child Participation and Network Development Officer, Senior Policy Officer on Child Participation
Members' staff	Supporting staff for CYP/mentors and ambassadors

Funding

Development and printing of Certificates	€ 500,00
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9. Monitoring and Evaluation

A monitoring & evaluation system helps with keeping track of the steps that we have taken, and how successful they have been. It is important because, if we do not monitor our activities, we have no way of finding out whether we have met our goals and made a difference.

In order to monitor and evaluate child participation, it is necessary to first establish Eurochild's goals, as well as choosing indicators to measure whether we have achieved such goals. In the above sections of the Child Participation Strategy it has been indicated at what stages children and young people need to be involved in Eurochild's influencing work, its strategic planning and events organising. In general children and young people are involved in a **collaborative** way (*adults set up an initiative, but children are involved in the decision-making process*) in Eurochild' work, but in some instances children are involved in a **consultative** way (*adults set up an initiative and make all the decisions, but children are consulted*) and in some instances children can lead the process – the so-called **child-led process** (*children are supported by adults, but the process is led by children*).

For each of the above sections (influencing, strategic planning and events organising) an evaluation and monitoring matrix will be developed (*Annex I*).

Next to evaluating the levels of participation, the **quality of participation** is measured based on the **9 basic requirements for children's participation**, referred to on page 2.

Within the monitoring and evaluation framework for each of the 9 principles the following questions will be answered:

1. The principle has not been considered.
2. There is awareness of the principle but not reflected in practice.
3. Efforts are made to address the principle but there are no systematic procedures
4. The principle is fully understood by all staff/members involved, implemented and monitored.

See [Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit Booklet 3](#)

Resources needed for monitoring and evaluation

Staff

Eurochild staff

Policy and Advocacy Officer on Child Participation, Child Participation Officer, Head of Advocacy

ANNEX I – Evaluation and Monitoring Matrix

When do children begin to participate, and at what levels?⁷

	Children are not involved	Consultative	Collaborative	Child-led
1. Finding out what the problems are (situation analysis) e.g. organise a good conference		Children are asked to give their views	Children are asked to contribute to the process of finding out what problems they face in life	Children undertake their own research with other children to identify issues of concern
2. Deciding what to do (planning)		Planning takes account of the issues raised by children	Children are involved in deciding what programmes to prioritise and develop	Children decide for themselves what issues they want to work on
3. Taking action (implementation)		Children are invited to take part in the programme	Children work with adults to design and implement the programme	Children organise and manage the programme and have full responsibility for its implementation
4. Measuring what happened (monitoring and evaluation)		Children are consulted on whether they think the programme achieved what it planned to do	Children work with adults to decide how to evaluate the programme	Children determine what should be evaluated and, with adult support, do the evaluation of the programme
5. Acting on findings (dissemination and feedback)		Children are invited to make suggestions as to how to respond on the basis of the findings	Adults involve children in a joint discussion about the implications of the findings and explore how they should influence future programming	Children reflect on the findings and come up with proposals for the implications, which are then shared with adults.

⁷ The level of children's participation in the development of the Child Participation Strategy is highlighted (when two boxes are highlighted, both levels of participation are/will be used)

ANNEX II - Process for development of the Child Participation Strategy (CPS)

The Child Participation Strategy (CPS) has been developed with support from the Management Board, which appointed George Bogdanov as the responsible Board member. In addition, children and young people who have been involved in Eurochild activities or who have been active in local level participatory activities, as well as members of the child participation reference group, representatives of NPNs and the overall Eurochild membership contributed to the development of the Strategy. *The CPS has been adopted by the General Assembly on 5 April 2017.*

The process to develop the Child Participation Strategy started with a **Terms of Reference**, describing the aims of the CPS and setting out a timeline with different activities.

Selecting a children and young people's advisory group

The next step was an open call, which was sent out to all Eurochild member organisations with a request for children and young people to apply to participate in a children and young people's advisory group. We received 20 applications from eight different European countries. Applicants were aged 12 to 18. On the basis of their motivations, geographical balance and age and gender balance a selection was made by the Eurochild Secretariat of twelve children, representing eight countries⁸ and aged between 12 and 18 years old.

Selecting an adult advisory group

Next to the call for children and young people an open call was sent out to the Child Participation Reference Group and the wider Eurochild membership. That called for adult 'experts' (above 18 years old) with expertise on child participation to apply to become a part of the advisory group on the Child Participation Strategy. A total of eleven adults applied and were all accepted on the basis of their expertise, among them were two young people under the age of 21. In addition, several individuals expressed an interest to be involved in the development of the CPS, but were not able to attend the first brainstorm meeting. They were able to participate in online meetings in the first months of 2017.

Brainstorm Meeting in Brussels

The Child Participation Advisory Group, comprised of children, young people and adults met for one and half day on the 18th and 19th of November 2016 in Brussels. At this meeting, they discussed the three areas of Eurochild's work that would need to be included in the strategy. At the end of the meeting a first outline of the CPS was ready. This outline has served as a basis for the development of the Child Participation Strategy.

Consultations with Children and Eurochild Members

Consultations have been carried out on a draft Child Participation Strategy over a month. Specific questions were formulated for the children's advisory group, which discussed the draft Strategy in an online meeting, co-hosted by one the young people and a Eurochild staff member, and sent in written comments.

⁸ Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Malta, Slovakia, Slovenia, the UK

A questionnaire was shared with Eurochild members and other organisations we have worked with, which resulted in responses from both members as well as organisations, which carried out consultations with children.

Responses from children were received from 12 European countries, including Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Slovakia, the UK.

Responses from members came from 16 European countries, including Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Kosovo, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the UK.

ⁱ Kiili, J. and Larkins, C. (2017) Invited to labour or participate: intra- and inter-generational distinctions and the role of capital in children's invited participation *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2016.1274290>

ⁱⁱ *ibid*