

# Eurochild 2026 Conference on Child Protection Systems

## #EurochildConf Programme

**16-17 June 2026, Aliathon-Resort, Paphos, Cyprus.**

The conference is co-organised by Eurochild and its member, the Pancyprian Coordinating Committee for the Protection and Welfare of Children (PCCPWC), and hosted by the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The conference is co-moderated by representatives from the Eurochild Children's Council and **Bruce Adamson**, Vice-President of Eurochild.

Tuesday 16 June	
10h00	<p><b>Conference Opening</b> Moderated by <b>Sabine Saliba</b>, Secretary General Eurochild</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The President of the Republic of Cyprus will be represented by the Minister of Education, Sport and Youth, <b>Dr Athena Michaelidou</b>.</li> <li>• Deputy Minister for Social Welfare <b>Clea Papaellina</b>, Cyprus</li> <li>• <b>Ewa Kopacz</b>, Vice President of the European Parliament (Video address)</li> <li>• <b>Ninetta Kazantzis</b>, PCCPWC President</li> <li>• <b>Tanya Ward</b>, CEO of the Child Rights Alliance Ireland and Eurochild President</li> </ul> <p><b>Inspirational speeches</b> by two young people: <b>Elisabet</b> from Estonia, former member of the Eurochild Children Council; and <b>Michalis Tsangarides</b> from Cyprus, former Cyprus Children's Parliament and Eurochild 2018 Conference Young Advisory Group member.</p>
11h00	<p><b>Introductory Session followed by interactive discussions</b> with participants moderated by Bruce Adamson, Vice-President of Eurochild and children from the Eurochild Children's Council and a <b>Networking</b> exercise with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Macarena Céspedes Quintanilla</b>, Vice-President of Plataforma de Organizaciones de Infancia; Global Director of Advocacy and Social Research at Educo; ChildFund Alliance representative in the Technical Content Team of Joining Forces</li> <li>• <b>Julien Vangeertsom</b>, Former Chair of the Management Board of the Belgian Federal Administration for Social Integration</li> <li>• <b>Vasylyna Dybaylo</b>, Director, Partnership for Every Child</li> <li>• <b>Ulla Siimes</b>, Executive Director of Central Union for Child Welfare Finland</li> <li>• <b>Lucija Vejmelka</b>, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb; President of Steering Committee at FICE Croatia</li> </ul>
13h00	<i>Lunch</i>

14h00	<p><b>Four Interactive Parallel Workshops</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p><b>1. Sustaining Child Protection and Care Reform Through Policy and Practice</b> <i>Led by Irina Papancheva, Altin Hazizaj, Anouk Moser and Rima Pušić</i> <i>Hope and Homes for Children, CRCA/ECPAT Albania, LUMOS and CCF Moldova</i></p> <p>This workshop explores how EU policy and funding frameworks and the accession process can drive child protection and care reform, with a focus on promoting family and community-based care through tools like the European Child Guarantee and Enlargement Reports. It also strengthens participants' advocacy skills by examining how global and EU instruments can be used strategically to influence reforms, drawing on country examples and personal experience, and identifying practical next steps.</p> </li> <li> <p><b>2. Our digital world: how the online space is perceived from a child's lens</b> <i>Led by the Eurochild Children's Council</i></p> <p>This is an interactive, child-led workshop hosted by the Eurochild Children's Council (ECC). Using quizzes and scenario-based games to engage the audience, the session introduces ECC members' lived experiences of the digital world. It highlights what they see as most important online - from AI and digital addiction to mental health - and translates these insights into concrete recommendations for better laws to protect children, followed by an open discussion.</p> </li> <li> <p><b>3. Recovering Childhood: The Challenges Ukrainian Adolescents Face Today and Solutions That Support Their Emotional and Psychological Wellbeing</b> <i>Led by Artem Mazur and Yaryna Volosko</i> <i>Kids of Ukraine Charitable Foundation</i> <i>Ukraine</i></p> <p>In this workshop, we invite participants into an open dialogue - sharing experiences, exchanging perspectives, and finding common ground. Together, we'll explore the key challenges Ukrainian adolescents face today and the approaches that truly support their emotional and psychological recovery. Through a short quiz, a brief talk, and small group discussions, we'll leave with practical insights and simple next steps for working together more effectively.</p> </li> <li> <p><b>4. Legal intervention to ensure access to justice for children and enforcing their rights</b> <i>Led by Louise King and Chris Callender</i> <i>Children's Rights Alliance and Just for Kids Law</i> <i>England, the United Kingdom</i></p> <p>This workshop examines how systemic failures in child protection persist despite existing legal frameworks, drawing on real litigation and policy experience to highlight gaps in the protection of children's rights. It explores how strategic litigation (through judicial review, compensation claims, and engagement with domestic and European courts) can be used to enforce children's rights and drive systemic reform.</p> </li> </ol>
15h30	<i>Coffee break and networking time</i>

<p>16h30</p>	<p><b>Five Interactive Parallel Workshops</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p><b>1. Access to Justice and Effective Remedy for Social Protection</b> <i>Led by Prof Ann Skelton; Laura Marchetti</i> <i>Leiden University</i> <i>The Netherlands</i></p> <p>This workshop explores how access to justice and effective remedies are essential to making social protection systems truly rights-based, accountable, and responsive to children’s lived realities, with a focus on the justiciability of socio-economic rights. Bringing together leading experts and research, it examines legal frameworks, accountability mechanisms, and practical pathways to strengthen children’s rights, while engaging participants in identifying how these approaches can drive reform across European contexts.</p> </li> <li> <p><b>2. Strengthening Families, Preventing Poverty: Advancing Integrated Child Protection Systems in Europe</b> <i>Led by Zuzana Konradova; Evgenia Toneva; George Bogdanov; Iskra Stoykova, Eurochild; Know-How Centre Bulgaria, National Network for Children, Trust for Social Achievement</i> <i>Bulgaria</i></p> <p>This interactive workshop will bring together European and national perspectives from Bulgarian members to explore how family strengthening and prevention can be placed at the heart of child and social protection systems. Drawing on practical experience from family and community-based programmes, as well as research and policy expertise, the session will highlight how early intervention and integrated support services can help prevent child poverty, reduce family separation, and improve long-term outcomes for children and families.</p> </li> <li> <p><b>3. The local programme builder for local costed planning of (child)care reform: a digital enabler of the Ukraine Better Care Reform</b> <i>Led by Francesca Stuer and Professor Bohdan Malyniak,</i> <i>Maestral International and the West Ukrainian National University</i> <i>Belgium, Ukraine</i></p> <p>This workshop presents the Local Programme Builder, a digital tool supporting Ukraine’s de-centralised care reform by helping local authorities align planning with the national strategy for ensuring children grow up in nurturing family environments. It shares evidence on costing and planning models in child care reform, and engages participants in exchanging experiences and identifying effective approaches to improving the quality and coherence of de-centralised implementation.</p> </li> <li> <p><b>4. Future Voices: Now it’s our turn! Turning Children’s Voices into Policy Action</b> <i>Led by Lena Budach and Finn Reinhart</i> <i>Bertelsmann Stiftung</i> <i>Germany</i></p> <p>This workshop explores how children and young people’s needs and perspectives can be meaningfully integrated into decision-making processes, drawing on insights from the peer-to-peer “Future Voices: Now It’s Our Turn!” conference model co-designed by Bertelsmann Stiftung and its Young Experts Team. It demonstrates how inclusive, peer-led participation formats can empower children and provides practical methods, facilitation tools, and insights for translating children’s voices into local policy and practice.</p> </li> </ol>
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	<p>5. <b>A better alternative to banning social media for children under 16 – older children teaching younger children how to behave safely and responsibly when they are online</b> <i>Led by Aurel Graur</i> <i>The ICAM Network</i> <i>Italy, Romania, Spain, United Kingdom</i></p> <p>This workshop presents a peer-led alternative to banning social media for children under 16, based on the ICAM partnership’s peer-led, risk assessed, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive education programme. With built-in use of assistive technologies to reduce language barriers and improve learning outcomes, this programme shows how older students, trained and supported by staff, deliver workshops to build younger children’s social and emotional skills for safe, critical, and balanced online engagement, while addressing risks such as manipulation, bias, and over-dependence on digital technologies. It has been supported by the Daphne-CHILD programme and the ICAM partnership is seeking other Eurochild members to form an alliance to implement the <i>ICAMcsr programme</i> in all European countries.</p>
20h00	Conference Dinner

Wednesday 17 June	
09h00	<p><b>Human Library</b> (15 books in 3 sessions of 30 minutes)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>‘The Childhood that chose me’</b> - Rima Puşic, CCF, Moldova</li> <li>2. <b>‘Starting where trust lives: talking about family separation in Roma communities’</b> - Eleonora Chorbazhieva, Spring Impact &amp; Our House Foundation, Bulgaria</li> <li>3. <b>‘Every starfish counts’</b> - Beatrice Darie, Fundația Serviciilor Sociale Bethany, Romania</li> <li>4. <b>‘Child Friendly Company: When business chooses Children and Strengthens Social Protection’</b> – George Bogdanov, National Network for Children, Bulgaria and Donjeta Kelmendi, Coalition of NGOs for Child Protection, Kosovo</li> <li>5. <b>‘From a Small Town to a Strong Voice’</b> – Mathias, Estonian Union for Child Welfare, Estonia</li> <li>6. <b>‘Do children’s rights change systems – or do systems change children’s rights?’</b> - Carly Elliott-Scott, Together Scotland, United Kingdom</li> <li>7. <b>‘Children’s rights on the European Parliament’s agenda. Activities of the EP Coordinator on Children’s Rights’</b> – Monika Jagiello, European Parliament, Belgium</li> <li>8. <b>‘Book series: Play and Learn with Linos and Flora’</b> - Nikos Papadopoulos, Cyprus Red Cross Society, Cyprus</li> <li>9. <b>‘The Right to Origins of Adopted Persons: what social protection systems still struggle to see’</b> - Rosalba Mirci, Italy</li> <li>10. <b>‘Poor children in a prosperous country’</b> - Helen Portal, Ombudsman for children, Luxembourg</li> <li>11. <b>‘Child Participation: is it real?’</b> – Cyprus Children’s Parliament, Pancyprian Coordinating Committee for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Cyprus.</li> </ol>

	<p><b>12. 'Listening to grassroots voices: 17 Stories of combating violence against children across Europe'</b> – Zsofia Karetka, Daphne-Child and Terre des Hommes, Hungary.</p> <p><b>13. 'Inclusive Physical Activities for Children with Disabilities as a Community-Based Social Protection Measure'</b> - Laura Kazilionė and Gintaras Kazilionis, Auto Moto Group, Lithuania</p> <p><b>14. 'Why I Take the Hard way out'</b> – Marta Manniste, Estonian Union for Child Welfare, Estonia</p>
11h00	<i>Coffee break</i>
11h30	<p><b>Five Interactive Parallel Workshops</b></p> <p><b>1. GUIDE: Stories of Guardianships</b> <i>Led by Mariia Pavlova and Stefanos Alevizos</i> <i>Imago Foundation and IASIS</i> <i>Poland, Greece</i> This interactive workshop presents the GUIDE project and its findings on guardianship systems across 5 countries. Through videos and a participatory listening circle, participants will engage with real-life stories and reflect on the challenges faced by unaccompanied children and guardians. The session will highlight best practices, foster exchange among Eurochild members, and facilitate the sharing of key learnings and materials. It aims to inspire collaboration and contribute to recommendations that strengthen child protection systems.</p> <p><b>2. From Children's Voices to Action: Strengthening Trust in Child Protection Systems</b> <i>Led by Helen Saarnik &amp; Anneli Valner; Co-host and Anna Tiili.</i> <i>Estonian Union for Child Welfare, Central Union for Child Welfare</i> <i>Estonia, Finland</i> This workshop explores child participation as a strategic tool to strengthen trust, legitimacy, and responsiveness in child protection and social protection systems, particularly in contexts of mistrust and polarisation. Drawing on the CHIPS initiative across the Baltic region, it presents practical approaches for ethically collecting and translating children's voices into actionable policy, using interactive case-based methods and a "Human Library" format to share real-world dilemmas and solutions.</p> <p><b>3. When Collaboration Gets Messy: Working Across Disciplines for Children's Well-Being</b> <i>Led by Diederik van Iwaarden &amp; Francesca Stuer</i> <i>Dynamics of Youth, Utrecht University and Maestral International</i> <i>Netherlands, Belgium</i> This workshop explores what meaningful transdisciplinary collaboration looks like in practice when working to improve social protection systems for children and young people, acknowledging the real challenges of working across sectors, disciplines, and organisational cultures. It creates a reflective space for Eurochild members to share honest experiences, learn from difficulties as well as successes, and strengthen cross-sector relationships to improve collective impact for children's wellbeing and resilience.</p>

	<p><b>4. Concurrent Planning: a way to deinstitutionalisation in early childhood</b> <i>Led by Jessica Manjón</i> <i>Asociación Estatal de Acogimiento Familiar (ASEAF)</i> <i>Spain</i></p> <p>This workshop presents the ESF+ pilot project “PSDP” (Concurrent/Parallel Planning) in Spain, which aims to address delays in permanency planning for children in care and reduce reliance on institutional care, particularly for children aged 0-6. It proposes a paradigm shift in child protection practice by working simultaneously with biological families and planning alternative family-based care options, in alignment with the European Child Guarantee, to ensure faster, more child-centred and permanent solutions.</p> <p><b>5. From Basic Needs to Holistic and Lasting Impact: Practical Pathways to Preventing Generational Poverty</b> <i>Led by Diana Yovcheva-Koparanova, Desislava Petkov, Bogomila Veleva, Zhaklina Andonova</i> <i>Concordia Austria, Concordia Bulgaria Foundation</i> <i>Austria, Bulgaria</i></p> <p>This workshop will be youth-led, grounded in a personal story – showing what prevention and early support can mean in real life. Through shared experience, participants will see how accessible and trust-based services along long-term and consistent support and work with the child, the family and the institutions, can lead to measurable outcomes such as improved well-being, stronger family stability, and sustainable connection to school and community.</p>
13h00	<i>Lunch</i>
14h00	<p><b>Including Me</b> Interactive Plenary Session on how to create inclusive child-friendly documents with children, inspired by the work of the Eurochild Children’s Council and Learning for Well-Being (led by Laure Pailleau, <i>Child Participation and Policy Officer at Eurochild</i> and Darren Bird, <i>International Children’s Rights Consultant</i>)</p>
14h50	<b>Closing ceremony by Eurochild Children’s Council</b>
15h05	<p><b>Closing Panel Discussion moderated by children from the Eurochild Children’s Council and Bruce Adamson</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sonia Vila Nuñez</b>, Cabinet expert, on behalf of the Vice-President Commissioner Mînzatu</li> <li>• <b>Anne Kayser-Attuil</b>, Secretary to the CDENF at the Council of Europe</li> <li>• <b>Sandra Aigner-Accardo</b>, Project Manager at European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights</li> <li>• <b>Elizabeth Canavan</b>, Assistant Secretary General in the Dept of Taoiseach, Ireland - Representing the Irish EU Presidency</li> </ul>
15h55-16h00	<b>Closing remarks by Sabine Saliba</b> , Eurochild Secretary-General
<b>Excursion and Dinner</b>	
18h00	Departure from Aliathon Resort
18h15	Guided tour and walk (UNESCO-listed Paphos Mosaics, Harbour & Castle)
19h50	Departure for dinner at the Chatziomorfos Tavern in Mesogi



**Eurochild**  
Putting children at  
the heart of Europe

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22h00	<b>Bus – Return to the Aliathon Resort</b> Participants will need to make their own arrangements to travel back to their accommodation after our return.
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For further information, bios of speakers and descriptions of the human library sessions,  
please visit [eurochild.org/event/eurochild-conference-2026](https://eurochild.org/event/eurochild-conference-2026)



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