



# COMBATting CHILD POVERTY

by Ruth Sciberras



APPOGG

## Ratification of international instruments related to children

<u>Convention / Treaty / Protocol</u>	<u>Status</u>
European Convention on the Adoption of Children	Signed and ratified 1968
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child	Signed and ratified 1990
European Convention on Recognition and Enforcement of Decision concerning Custody of Children and on Restoration of Custody of Children CETS No: 105.	Signed 1994, Ratified 1999, Entered into force 2000.
European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights.	Signed 1999.
ILO Convention 183 and Recommendation No 190: Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour.	Ratified 2001.
Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (1980).	Ratified 1991, Convention entered into force in 2000.
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on children in armed conflict.	Signed 2000, Ratified 2002.
Convention on Contact concerning Children (Council of Children.	Signed 2003.
Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in respect of Intercountry Adoption (1993).	Ratified 2004, Convention entered into force in 2005.
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.	Signed 2000.

## Legislative Milestones

- In 2002, new amendments to the Criminal Code introduced ill treatment of children by commission or omission as a criminal offence;
- Simultaneously, amendments were made to the Police Act whereby the protection of witnesses was undertaken through the provision of a Witness Protection Programme, including the hearing of minors by means of video conferencing;
- In 2003 the Commissioner for Children Act was enacted; The Council for Children was set up;
- In 2004, regulations were issued by virtue of the Data Protection Act regarding the processing of personal data in cases where the protection of minors is necessitated; These regulations allow for information to be processed by professional people or persons acting *loco parentis* where it is deemed to be in the best interest of the child;
- The enactment of the Social Work Profession in 2004 and the Psychology Profession Act in 2005 ensures high standards in the course of these professional interactions;

*... cont*

- In 2005 the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity amended the Children and Young Persons (Care Orders) Regulations (Legal Notice 49 of 1985) in view of developments within service provision;
- In 2006 the Maltese Government enacted the Domestic Violence Act. The protection of children as victims of domestic violence has been strengthened through the introduction of various legal measures including the protection and restraining orders. It has also introduced the protection of unborn children in the context of domestic violence;
- The Fostering Act was enacted in 2007 to provide for the supporting structures for the fostering provision in Malta. It set up the administrative framework such as the Central Authority and Fostering Board as well as regulate voluntary agencies;
- The Adoption Administration Act shall come into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2008;

## Other Important Milestones

- In 2002 the Family Court was set up. The role of the Children's Advocate was introduced;
- In 2006 a National Conference was held; *Children and the Media: Quality Children's Programming*;
- During 2004-2007 Appogg had benefited from consultancy from the Commonwealth Secretariat. Consultants amongst others were Prof Jane Aldgate and Wendy Rose (Open University);
- In 2005 a National Seminar was held entitled *Giving Children a Voice*;
- In 2006 a National Conference was held entitled *Children with very Challenging Behaviour*. The research reports together with the proposals were presented to the Prime Minister;
- Following this Conference Kids In Development (KIDS) a residential therapeutic programme for children between 5 and 10 years was set up:

*...cont*

- **The Eurochild annual conference-*Preventing social exclusion of children and Young children in Europe: Participation and early intervention*- was held in Malta in November 2007;**
- ***International Foster Care Organisation (IFCO) annual conference was also held in Malta November 2007;***
- **The Commissioner for Children's Office has chosen Looked After Children as one of the focus areas for the next three years;**
- **National Policies and Procedures on Looked After Children under the age of eighteen and their aftercare -2008, are under consultation process;**
- **National Standards of care for residential care have been drawn up- 2008 are also under consultation process;**

# Government Budget 2008

- **Extension of paid maternity leave from 13 to 14 weeks;**
- **A cost of living increase of €3.49 per week;**
- **Revision of tax bands; These changes should translate in maximum tax savings of €794 per annum for those applying the joint computation and 536 for the single computation;**
- **Stipends: A stipend scheme is being set up for Maltese resident students who undertake studies for an undergraduate degree at a foreign university;**
- **Refund of VAT on sports facilities expenditure;**
- **Vat exemption on art classes;**

*...cont*

- **Personal deductions for Sport Activities; Parents, will benefit to a deduction against their taxable income which can reach a maximum of €100.**
- **Children's Allowance: Government adapted numerous measures amongst which:**
  - **the allowance granted in respect of the second and any other subsequent child under the age of sixteen shall be doubled;**
  - **the minimum annual reckonable income shall, be deducted from €6,452 to €4,658;**
  - **the minimum children's allowance payable shall be increased from**
  - **€121.12 to €250 per annum per child;**

## Service Development

- Appogg, formerly known as Social Welfare Development Programme was set up in 1994;
- On the 18 May 2001 the Agency was launched as Appogg;
- The Agency started off with 2 services in 1994 and now comprises of 34 services all focusing on addressing the needs of children, families and communities;



# COMBATTING CHILD POVERTY

Today APPOGG forms part of the Foundation for Social Welfare Services together with Sedqa, Support and lately the Ability Centres.

## Foundation for Social Welfare Services



## **Vision**

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**THAT PEOPLE IN NEED FIND ACCESS TO,  
AND ARE PROVIDED WITH,  
PROFESSIONAL CARE AND SUPPORT**

## **Mission Statement**

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**TO PROVIDE DEVELOP AND PROMOTE QUALITY  
SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICE IN A COHERENT  
AND INTEGRATED MANNER, REFLECTING REAL  
AND EMERGING NEEDS OF THE SERVICE USERS,  
IN ORDER TO ENABLE THEM TO ENHANCE THEIR  
POTENTIAL**

Support Line 179

Leaflets

MFSS

FSWS



## APPOĠĠ



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GO

## WELCOME TO APPOGG.GOV.MT

Welcome to the Appogg website, the national social welfare agency for children and families in need.

Here you will find information about the more than 25 specialised services for the community, updated information about the local situation and activities related to the agency, and more importantly information on how to ask for help and contact us back.

Please take your time to browse through our sections, and remember to come back since the website will be regularly updated with all our events, news and information about the latest happenings related to the agency.

## Latest News & Press Releases

**Eurochild 2007 – how children and young people ...**  
23 November 2007

**Tiftah Konferenza Ewropea dwar it-Tfal f'Malt ...**  
22 November 2007

**Trauma in the child's early development stage ...**  
21 November 2007

## Forthcoming Events & Activities

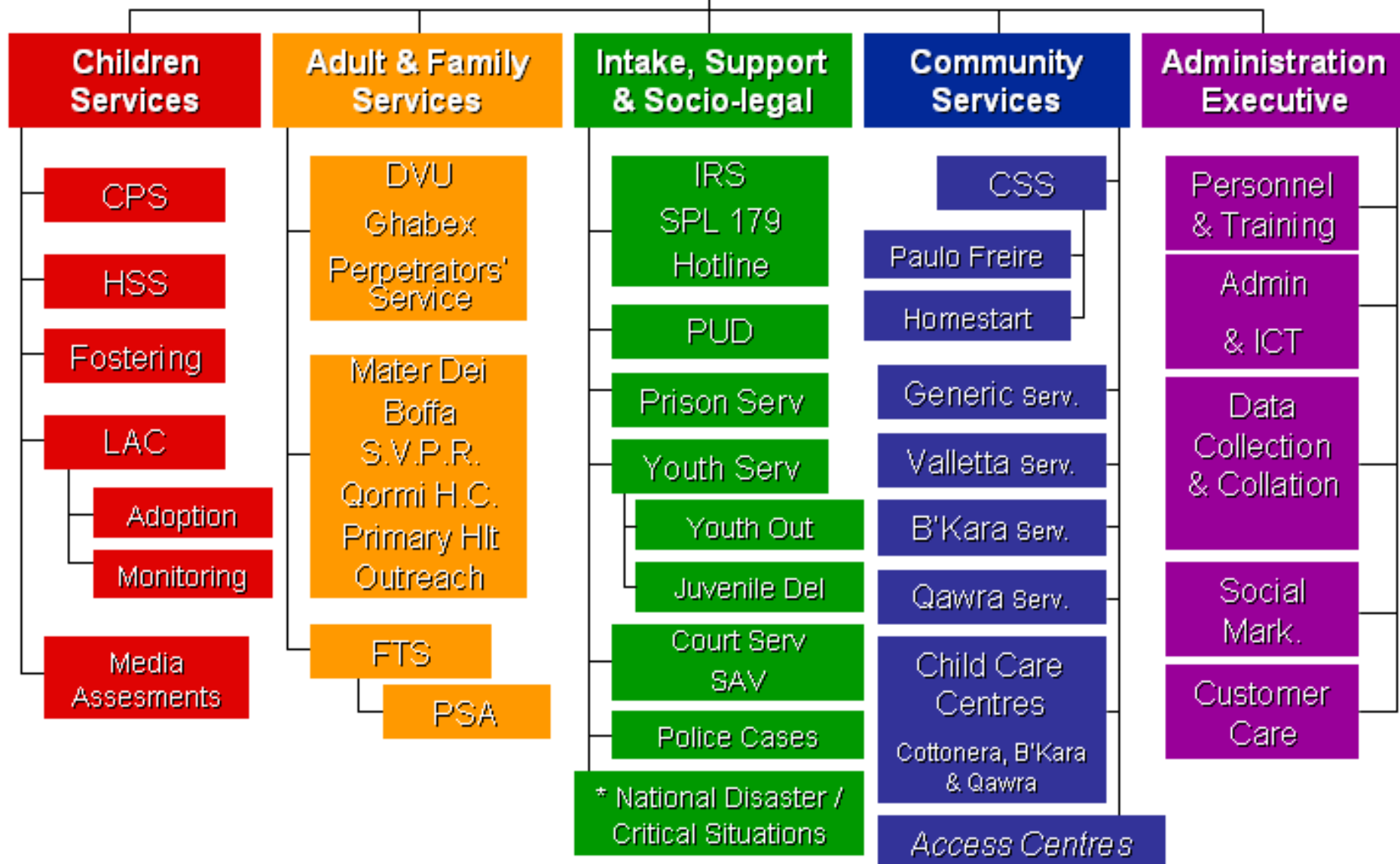
**Agenzija Appogg is Looking for Volunteers ...**  
16 January 2008

**Fid-Dinja Mzewqa Tat-Tfal – Children's Day Ac ...**  
28 November 2007

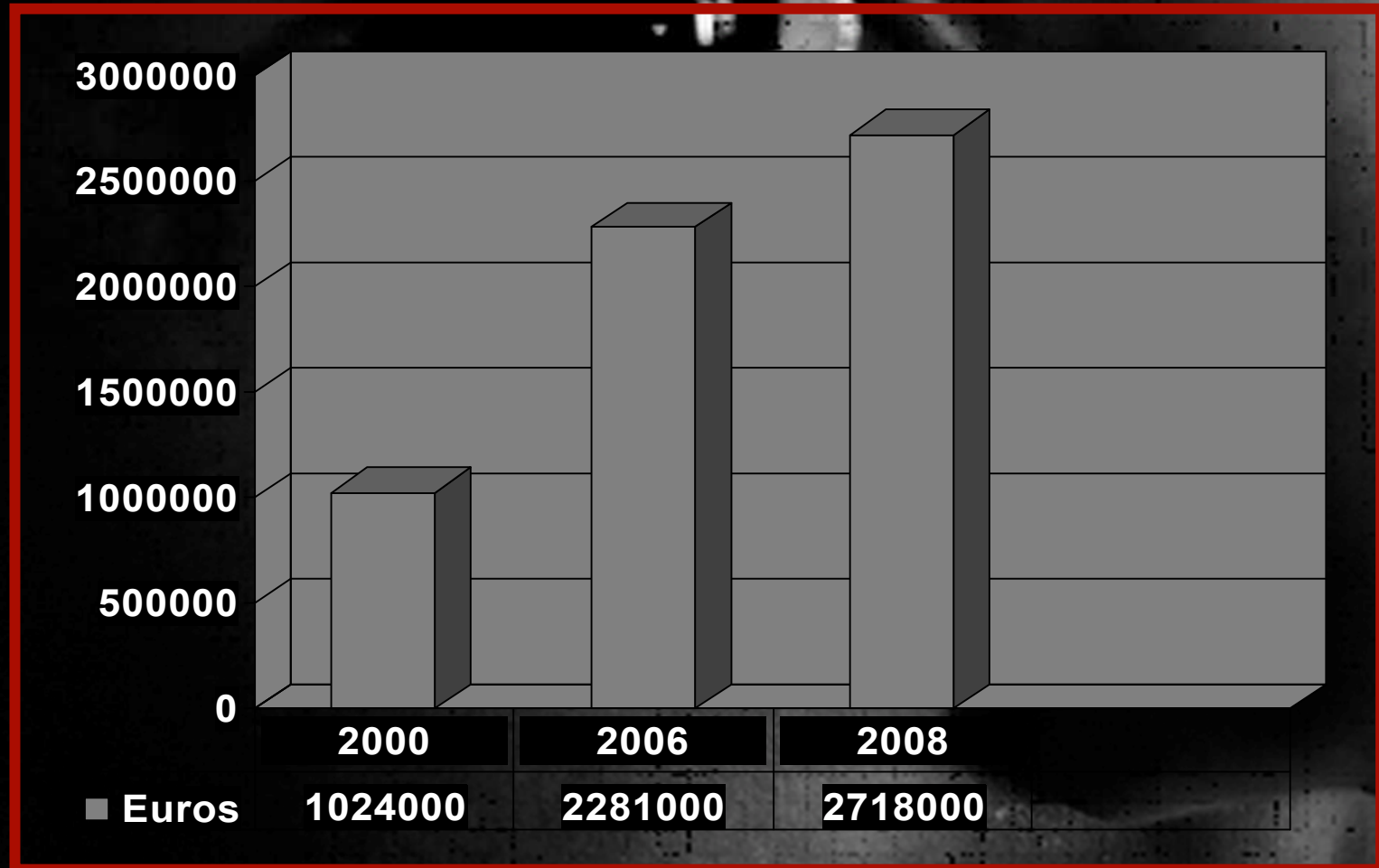
## Quick Links



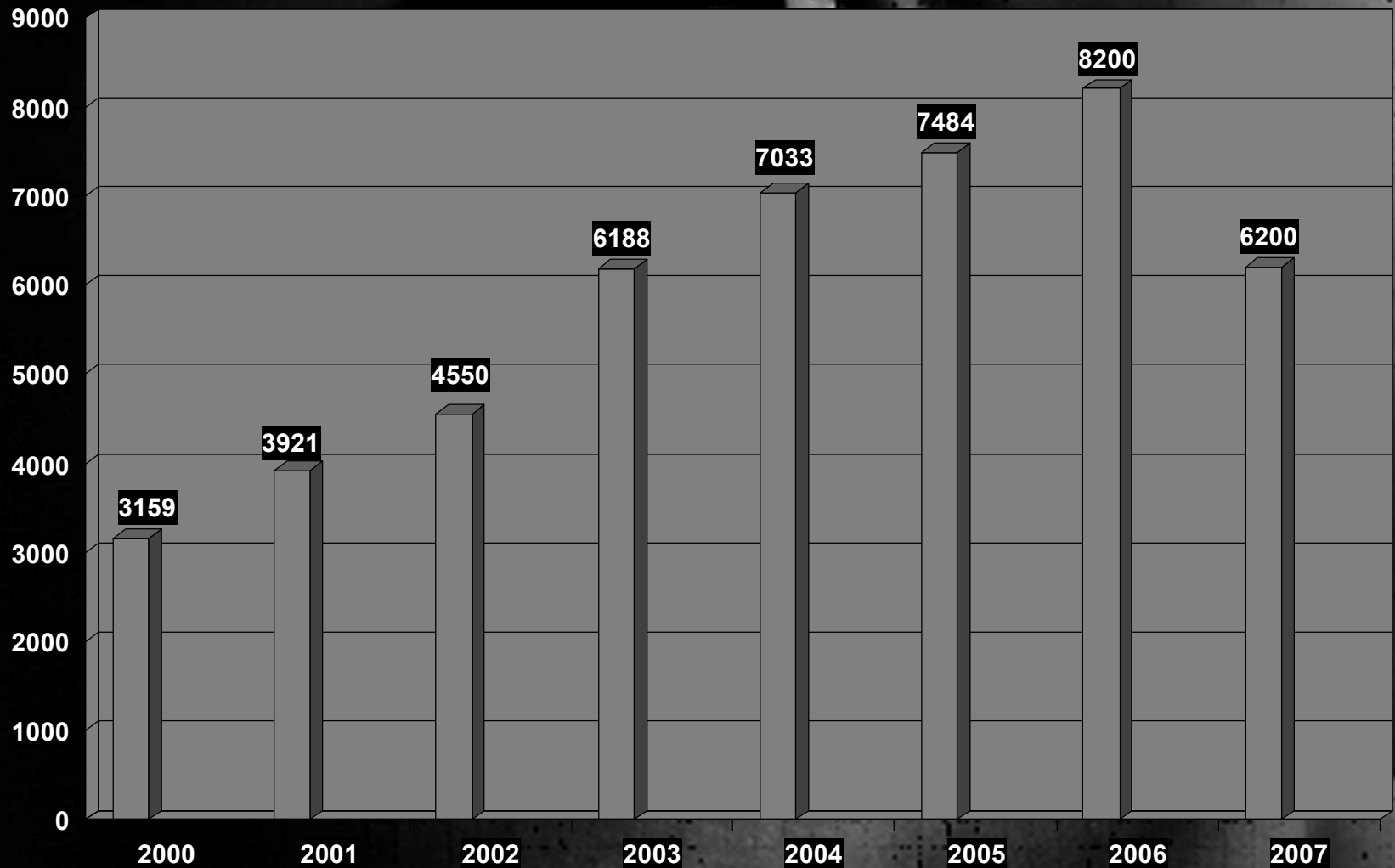
## Operations Director



## APPOGG BUDGET



## APPOGG Case Turnover



## Case Study

- **A baby boy was found abandoned in a shoe box a few hours after he was born;**
- **The nation was shocked. The mother is a single 19-year-old who did not disclose that she was pregnant and gave birth on her own;**
- **Child Protection protected baby with an Interim Care Order for 21 days and placed the baby in Emergency Foster Care;**
- **Mother was later on allowed to see her son under Supervised Access Visits and offered psychological help;**
- **Child Protection issued a full Care Order, the mother objected in court but lost;**

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- **Next-of-Kin foster carers were assessed and trained;**
- **Currently, they support the mother to look after baby. The Fostering Service and Cottonera Community Service support them;**
- **The Looked After Children Service follows and monitors the child and recommends the care plans to the Children's and Young Person's Advisory Board. The care plans are approved by the Minister;**
- **Appogg Children's Fund assisted financially in the care of the child;**
- **The boy is also followed by the Senior Paediatrician of Butterfly Centre at Appogg;**
- **Although, intensely followed and monitored mother and child were reunited and child did not end up in residential care;**

## The Way Forward

On a national level, to date we have pieces of legislation spread out here and there, but one hopes that The Children Act, will be placed before Parliament as soon as possible. The Children Act will incorporate all laws relating to children and will consolidate existing rules.



# 7 good reasons for building a better Europe for and with children

- **Children are not mini-human beings with mini human rights;**
- **Children are vulnerable. They need more protection not less;**
- **No violence against children is justifiable;**
- **All violence against children can be prevented;**
- **Protecting children calls for a strategic approach;**
- **Children's rights concern us all;**
- **Children's rights make Europe grow.**



Thank you for listening.