



Plenary sitting

B9-0179/2019

20.11.2019

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and the Commission

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on children's rights on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the UN
Convention on the Rights of the Child
(2019/2876(RSP))

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B9-0179/2019

European Parliament resolution on children rights on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (2019/2876(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) of 1989,
 - having regard to Article 24 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
 - having regard to Directive 2011/93/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography¹,
 - having regard to General Comment No 14 (2013) of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration,
 - having regard to the Council and Commission statements on children’s rights on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Article 1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that ‘a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier’, and whereas the preamble affirms that children need special care and protection, ‘including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth’;
- B. whereas the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is one of the most widely ratified international human rights treaties, having been ratified by all Member States, and establishes clear legal obligations to promote, protect and uphold the rights of every child in their jurisdiction;
- C. whereas approximately 100 million children live in the EU, accounting for 20 % of the population; whereas in developing nations children make up approximately 40 % of the population;
- D. whereas the fertility rate across the EU of 1.6 children per woman is far below replacement levels, and is giving rise to a dramatic demographic winter; whereas children are therefore under pressure, since they are beacons of hope for the future of Europe;
- E. whereas millions of European children are lost to abortion, which has multifarious

¹ OJ L 335, 17.12.2011, p. 1.

negative psychological impacts on all brothers and sisters who were ‘wanted’, as well as on parents and society more broadly;

- F. whereas, nearly one in four victims of trafficking in human beings recorded in the EU is a child trafficked within the EU, including within their own Member State; whereas girls are disproportionately targeted and trafficked for sexual exploitation²; whereas in some cases the smuggling of migrant minors can lead to human trafficking, since exploitation and abuse may start during transit or at their destination, even if consent is given initially;
- G. whereas child sexual abuse and exploitation online constitute a serious violation of the fundamental rights of children, which results in enormous trauma and long-lasting harmful consequences for the child victims that can continue well into adulthood, and are an evolving phenomenon; whereas new forms of crime, such as ‘revenge pornography’ and sextortion, are on the rise on the internet and need to be addressed with concrete measures by the Member States; whereas, according to the latest figures, the number of images depicting child sexual abuse material (CSAM) online has increased dramatically and at an unprecedented pace with the widespread use of the internet, with reports of more than 45 million images and videos flagged as child sexual abuse³;
- H. whereas education is one of the best ways to impart values such as peace, understanding of human dignity and justice via formal, non-formal and informal education methods within the family and in state schools, and whereas the main responsibility for a child’s education always lies primarily with their parents;

General comments

1. Considers that the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child provides a unique opportunity to ensure its full implementation in policy and in practice, and to take additional measures to ensure full respect for the rights of every child everywhere, especially the most vulnerable;
2. Urges Member States to deliver practical measures that enable children to enjoy their childhood years without being forced to feel alarm about the global climate, military conflicts or other frightening events and issues reported on by the media;

End all forms of violence against children

3. Condemns all forms of violence against children, including physical, sexual and verbal abuse, online violence, forced marriages, child labour, prostitution, trafficking, migrant-smuggling, torture, abortion, other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, honour killing, female genital mutilation, the use of child soldiers and of children as human shields, deprivation, neglect and malnutrition; considers that

² https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-security/20181204_data-collection-study.pdf

³ <https://web.archive.org/web/20190928174029/https://storage.googleapis.com/pub-tools-public-publication-data/pdf/b6555a1018a750f39028005bfdb9f35eace4b947.pdf>

tradition, culture, political ideology or religion should never be used to justify violence against children;

4. Urges the Member States to act decisively in the fight against child sexual abuse by investing in preventive measures, identifying specific programmes for potential offenders and providing effective support to victims;
5. Calls on the Member States to fully implement Directive 2011/93/EU and its resolution of 14 December 2017 on the implementation of the directive⁴;
6. Deplores all forms of violence against girls, and calls on Member States and religious leaders to act to end child marriage and female genital mutilation;

Investing in children

7. Calls on Member States to invest in improving the quality of family life by countering negative stereotypes of stay-at-home parents, and by offering tax and other financial incentives to allow families to prioritise family over workplace according to their own schedule;
8. Notes that the future of Europe lies in our ability to have children; calls on Member States to foster a family-friendly culture, which prioritises funding for the promotion of the natural family and enables young couples to have many children so as to prevent demographic decline, and to divert resources away from promoting mass replacement migration and the promotion of childless same-sex relationships;
9. Stresses that it is essential to protect the fundamental rights of the child during every stage of their development; notes also that the Commission's comprehensive approach to sexual reproductive health and rights, which cost EUR 572 million from 2014 to 2016, is in breach of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which aims to protect children in the womb; urges the Commission to reverse this policy, prioritise the rights of parents, and invest these sums in genuine maternal healthcare;

Education

10. Highlights that excellence and innovation should be the guiding principles for education and training in the digital age;
11. Believes that the primary right of parents to educate their children must be upheld in all forms of cooperation between parents, teachers and school authorities, and particularly in forms of participation designed to give parents a voice in the running of schools;
12. Calls on Member States to invest in improving quality standards in education in general, and specifically to do so in the official language of the region concerned, thus not only conveying knowledge in a more meaningful and accessible way, but also passing on cultural heritage to the next generation;

⁴ OJ C 369, 11.10.2018, p. 96.

13. Stresses that children raised in an intact home with a mother and father⁵ are markedly more likely to achieve educational success, report higher levels of happiness, mental and physical health overall, and are less likely to engage in impulsive behaviour, receive counselling or mental health therapy, or suffer from depression or have suicidal thoughts⁶; notes that the French National Academy of Medicine issued an official statement on 21 September 2019 which affirms that ‘every child has a right to have a father and a mother’ especially because it is ‘fundamental for the personality of the child’; encourages policies, therefore, that promote stable nuclear families in the best interests of children;

Vulnerable children

14. Stresses the need for Member States to vigorously combat all forms of violence against children, tackling the root causes that make them vulnerable, including family break-up, removal of children from one or both of their parents, economic migration, reliance on childminders and digital babysitting, and drug or alcohol abuse;
15. Encourages Member States to research and make policy decisions on the negative consequences on families of children lost to abortion (‘post-abortion survivor syndrome’), as this has been shown to be a leading cause of child and adult depression worldwide;
16. Encourages Member States to adopt a policy where fifty-fifty shared parenting is the default when the trauma of family break-up occurs, and to prosecute any discrimination against fathers, which leaves millions of children effectively fatherless, and fathers depressed and suicidal;
17. Calls on the Member States to effectively combat child poverty;

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18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

⁵ Anderson, J., ‘The impact of family structure on the health of children: Effects of divorce’, *The Linacre Quarterly*, 81(4), 2014, pp. 378-387.

⁶ Regnerus, M., ‘How different are the adult children of parents who have same-sex relationships? Findings from the New Family Structures Study’, *Social Science Research*, 41(4), 2012, pp. 752-770. (<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0049089X12000610>)