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1999



2004

Session document

4 July 2001

B5-0483/2001 }
B5-0490/2001 }
B5-0495/2001 }
B5-0496/2001 }
B5-0506/2001 }
B5-0513/2001 }
RC1

JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 50(5) of the Rules of Procedure by

- Van Hecke, Banotti and Hermange, on behalf of the PPE-DE Group
- van den Berg, on behalf of the PSE Group
- Thors, Nicholson and Ries, on behalf of the ELDR Group
- Wuori, Frassoni, McKenna, Maes and MacCormick, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group
- Maset Campos, Boudjenah, Kaufmann, Eriksson, Cossutta, Figueiredo and Koulourianos, on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group
- Ribeiro e Castro, on behalf of the UEN Group

replacing the motions by the following groups:

- Verts/ALE (B5-0483/2001),
- PPE-DE (B5-0490/2001),
- UEN (B5-0495/2001),
- PSE (B5-0496/2001),
- ELDR (B5-0506/2001),
- GUE/NGL (B5-0513/2001),

on the EU positions in the Special Session on Children of the UN General Assembly

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European Parliament resolution on the EU positions in the Special Session on Children of the UN General Assembly

The European Parliament,

- recalling its previous resolutions on children's rights, such as the resolution on child soldiers of 17 December 1998, the resolution on the protection of families and children of 28 January 1999 and the resolution on child trafficking in Africa of 17 May 2001,
 - having regard to the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was ratified by 191 countries,
 - having regard to the EU-sponsored resolution on the rights of the child, which was adopted by the UN Commission on the Rights of the Child on 25 April 2001 (UNCHR resolution 2001/75),
 - having regard to the UN General Assembly's Special Session on the rights of the child to be held in New York in September 2001,
 - having regard to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, in particular Article 24 thereof, the Charter being a breakthrough for children's rights in the EU,
- A. whereas at the World Summit for Children in 1990 world leaders adopted a plan of action on behalf of the children of the world which contained far-reaching goals aimed at improving the health and development of children, including reducing mortality rates and malnutrition, and improving access to safe drinking water and sanitation,
- B. whereas new international standards and instruments enhancing child protection have been adopted, such as the Mine Ban Treaty of Ottawa, the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court, the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on (1) the involvement of children in armed conflict and (2) the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and ILO Convention 182 on the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour,
- C. whereas, although the Convention on the Rights of the Child is almost universally ratified, its implementation leaves a great deal to be desired,
- D. whereas, in spite of the International Convention, the situation of children continues to deteriorate in many countries, including some in the EU,
- E. whereas 10 million children under five years of age die every year of preventable diseases and malnutrition, and whereas sexually transmitted infections, including HIV,

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affect millions of children, especially adolescent girls,

- F. whereas over 110 million children of primary school age, the majority of them girls, are not enrolled in school, millions are taught by untrained and underpaid teachers in overcrowded, unhealthy and poorly equipped schools, and one third of all children fail to complete five years of schooling,
- G. whereas millions of girls are victims of female genital mutilation,
- H. whereas UNICEF estimates that two hundred thousand children are sold yearly in Western and Central Africa, to be employed as unpaid labourers in households, on cocoa and cotton estates or in the sex industry,
- I. deeply concerned at the growth of sexual exploitation of children, prostitution and child pornography,
- J. whereas on 25 May 2000 the UN General Assembly adopted an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict,
- K. whereas the new Protocol establishes 18 as the minimum age for participation in armed conflict, for compulsory recruitment and for any recruitment or use in armed conflict by armed groups,
- L. whereas, while to date 79 countries have signed the Optional Protocol, including all 15 EU Member States, it has only been ratified by 4 countries - Andorra, Bangladesh, Canada and Sri Lanka - and whereas the Protocol cannot come into force until it has been ratified by 10 countries,
- M. whereas millions of children have been killed in wars over the last ten years and tens of thousands of children continue to be involved in armed conflict,
- N. whereas the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Children, which will take place in New York in September 2001, provides a good opportunity to find ways and mechanisms for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child,
- O. whereas a wide range of children's rights – including civil rights and freedoms and the right to protection from abuse, economic and sexual exploitation and violence – have become widely recognised and should be reflected in the Action Plan of the Special Session,
1. Calls on the EU and its Member States to work actively together to ensure that the outcome of the Special Session:
- reinforces the Convention on the Rights of the Child and hastens the full implementation of the Convention;
 - supports universal ratification and implementation of the key new treaties developed during the past decade which strengthen the protection of children's

rights;

- reflects in its goals the importance of the critical rights of children to protection from violence, exploitation and abuse, as well as to health, education and nutrition;
- ensures that strong mechanisms are put in place to monitor government obligations and commitments, including meaningful participation by non-governmental organisations and civil society;

2. Expresses its support for the proposal to adopt a Common Strategy on the Rights of the Child and calls on the Council to work on this common strategy as a priority;
3. Calls on the EU and its Member States to insist that the outcome document proposes measures to protect developing countries from the negative impact of globalisation, including the development of global trade rules that work for the benefit of all children and encouragement of greater corporate social responsibility for children by global companies;
4. Calls on the EU Member States to make the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the ratification and implementation of key new treaties developed during the past decade which strengthen the protection of children's rights and the implementation of the commitments agreed during the 2001 Special Session a national and European priority in the light of Article 24 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights;
5. Urges the Council and Member States to ensure that strong and meaningful mechanisms are put in place to monitor government obligations and commitments made at the Special Session;
6. Calls on the Council to nominate an EU Special Envoy charged with coordinating EU activities in the area of children's rights and ensuring full respect for and implementation of a future EU common strategy on children's rights;
7. Calls on the EU Member States to establish an independent body to monitor the implementation of the outcome document of the Special Session and to adopt a comprehensive national action plan, with specific, time-bound and measurable objectives;
8. Calls on the Council to make the ratification of the new treaties by third countries a priority in its political dialogue with these countries, and to make the ratification and implementation of these treaties an important element in talks with applicant countries;
9. Calls on the Commission to ensure that EU policies and programmes contain a children's rights and protection perspective and are subjected to child-impact analyses in order to assess their potential implications for children;
10. Calls on the Member States at the next Intergovernmental Conference to include a legal base in the EU Treaties for the promotion of a child perspective and compliance with the

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UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;

11. Asks the Council and Commission to ensure that the rights of the child are part of the negotiating process on human rights in accordance with the Copenhagen criteria for accession and calls on the Commission to make an assessment of all the candidate countries from the point of view of children's rights in the annual progress reports;
12. Calls on the Presidency to report to the European Parliament on EU efforts and priorities for the 2001 Special Session as expressed during the UNGASS Prepcom;
13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Assembly, the Chairs of its inter-parliamentary delegations, the national Parliaments of the EU Member States, the UNGASS secretariat, UNICEF and the national delegations at the UN General Assembly's Special Session on Children.