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Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

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DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

for the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

on towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child
(0000/0000(INI))

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs calls on the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its report:

1. Welcomes the Commission's proposal to establish a European Strategy to promote and safeguard children's rights effectively; welcomes the affirmation in the Commission communication that children's rights issues are a priority for the European Union; regrets that the communication does not indicate minimum standards, clear targets or timelines to which the European Union should commit;
2. Welcomes the proposed establishment of new structures to enhance cooperation at European level that will lead to a comprehensive and consistent approach, such as a Children's Rights Unit within the Commission, a Coordinator for the Rights of the Child, a Commission Inter-service group, a European Forum for the Rights of the Child and a web-based discussion and work platform;
3. Emphasises the importance of fully implementing existing international commitments, in particular those under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and ILO conventions on child labour, by Member States and candidate countries;
4. Believes that mainstreaming children's rights in EU policies is of paramount importance for the success of this European Strategy; calls on the Commission to include in its impact assessments on relevant policy issues specific provisions regarding children's rights; points out that the European Union and the Member States, when developing their policies, should take into account the diversity of children and their different needs, depending on their geographical location, age, gender, ethnicity, religion, culture, language, disability or family structure;
5. Underlines the importance of the active involvement of the children themselves in every procedure in which their rights are at stake; considers that participation should be open to all children, regardless of their ethnicity, legal status or any disability;
6. Recognises that active participation is closely linked to information; welcomes the establishment of a communication and information strategy that will publish EU measures in a child-friendly manner, accessible to all.
7. Regrets that the communication does not indicate specific measures regarding the situation of children with disabilities; underlines the need to mainstream disability within the Commission's strategy, in order to ensure the full and equal participation and inclusion of disabled children;
8. Stresses that, according to recent studies, one in five children are at risk of poverty in the European Union and that children and young people are particularly vulnerable to social exclusion; welcomes the urgent measures proposed in the communication against child poverty, underlining the fact that child poverty is a persistent problem; believes that priority attention at EU and Member State level should be given to the prevention and elimination of child poverty; regrets that the communication sets no clear quantitative

targets on eradicating child poverty;

9. Regrets that the Communication does not point out the situation of immigrant, asylum seeker and refugee children in particular; believes that specific mention should be made of these groups that are even more vulnerable to poverty, social exclusion and various forms of exploitation;
10. Calls for a more comprehensive approach to measuring the multi-dimensional nature of child poverty, having regard to children's well-being and not merely to an income-based analysis;
11. Draws attention to the issue of street children and calls on Member States and the Commission to take measures, such as better the monitoring and mobilisation of responsible services;
12. Takes the view that children's rights should be taken into account fully in the conciliation of work and family life and working time issues.