

## **European Forum on the Rights of the Child created to look to the future**

*Brussels, Belgium - 4 June, 2007*

The European Commission, today, is launching, in cooperation with the German Presidency of the European Union, a Forum on the Rights of the Child. This Forum, the first of its kind, will involve children and bring together stakeholders to exchange information and practice and take positive action for children and young people.

'Towards and EU strategy on the rights of the child,' adopted by the Commission on 4 July 2006, was the first step in the Commission's work on Children's rights. Today's Forum, in Berlin, is a further step. Vice-President Franco Frattini, Commissioner responsible for Justice, Freedom and Security, said: 'I welcome today's Forum. Children and the future are interlinked.'

Children make us face up to the future and tackle the issues facing our society from demographic challenges to crime and climate change. This first forum will focus on child pornography and paedophilia. These require urgent attention. The number of internet sites with child sexual abuse material, increased 1500 percent from 1997-2005. New technology brings new challenges including how we guide and protect our children when they often are more knowledgeable, certainly IT literate, than parents.'

The Forum brings together key players – Member States, the German Presidency, the UN, the European Parliament, the Council of Europe, Interpol, Unicef, national observatories on childhood, Ombudspersons for children, civil society and other stakeholders. How to ensure children's effective participation, as they will come to future forums, will be discussed.

Placing children at the heart of decision making and the positive opportunities this brings, for example, in education, integration and external relations will be a key theme. Children make up a third of the population in Europe - this is a lot of voices to exclude. This Forum aims to develop and implement strategies to promote the rights of children at national and international levels. Especially for the effective implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the European Union Strategy on the Rights of the Child.

The Forum will include an opening address and Declaration from Vice President Frattini, research by the German Presidency on violent video games, and the high level discussion on child pornography and paedophilia. This will include tracing credit cards used to access pornographic material, something discussed at the recent G8 of Justice and Interior Ministers in Munich.

For further information on the activities of Vice-President Frattini, please visit his website at: [http://www.ec.europa.eu/commission\\_barroso/frattini/index\\_en.htm](http://www.ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/frattini/index_en.htm)