Press Release

Anniversary of the 'Investing in Children Recommendation' and Launch of the Alliance for Investing in Children

European networks unite for Europe's Children

Brussels, 20th February 2014

A year ago today the European Commission adopted the Recommendation *Investing in Children – Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage*, which called for concerted efforts across Europe to end child poverty and promote child well-being.

The European Commission's approach, which places children's rights, the best interests of the child, equal opportunities and support for the most disadvantaged at the centre of efforts to combat child poverty was particularly welcome.

However, the situation for children across Europe is getting worse. Latest Eurostat figures estimate more than one in four children are experiencing poverty and social exclusion, while 2012 reports highlight an increase in homeless families. Organisations working with children and families are witnessing escalating demand at a time when governments at all levels are cutting public investment in services and welfare support.

The Recommendation stresses the importance of preventative measures aimed at breaking the cycle of disadvantage in a child's early years, and proposes a comprehensive strategy based on three interconnected pillars: access to adequate resources for children and their families, access to affordable, quality services and children's participation. It also promotes a universal approach benefiting and involving all children, coupled with targeted measures to the most vulnerable.

"Children have been disproportionately affected by rises in poverty and social exclusion since 2008. Our societies cannot afford to let children grow up without the opportunity of continued access to quality education and good support services necessary for them to reach their full potential. We therefore welcome the initiative of so many EU networks to join forces in support of implementing our Recommendation on Investing in Children. We owe it to our children and society as a whole – to ensure our common future" said **László Andor**, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

On the anniversary of the adoption of this landmark Recommendation, several European networks whose members are active in tackling child poverty and promoting children's well-being have agreed to work together in the framework of an EU Alliance for Investing in Children. They are joining forces - building on their respective areas of expertise - to support the implementation of the Recommendation at national,

regional and local levels. The networks' members are uniquely placed to influence their respective governments on decision-making and resource allocation that is in children's best interest.

As well as supporting cooperation at EU level, the EU Alliance will pilot national alliances in Spain and the UK coordinated by the Spanish National Committee for UNICEF and Children in Wales respectively. *"*We have *been voicing concerns about child poverty in our country for years: research shows that children are the group most affected by the economic crisis, with 2.5 million at risk of poverty. Nowadays, the rate of child poverty in Spain is one of the highest among industrialised countries. This initiative brings additional support from the EU and enables us to link up with like-minded organisations to deliver real change for our children"* **Gabriel González-Bueno Uribe**, Domestic Policy and Advocacy Officer at the Spanish National Committee for UNICEF, said.

"*Though there has been an emphasis over the past years on tackling child poverty, there is a gap between rhetoric and reality across the four jurisdictions in the UK*" said **Catriona Williams** OBE, Chief Executive of Children in Wales. "*This Alliance can help us promote a child rights approach and bring attention to the reality on the ground for children and young people*."

The Alliance will continue to strengthen joint advocacy efforts and build capacity to ensure that the Recommendation translates into positive and lasting change for all children and their families in Europe, especially those most at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

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Members of the EU Alliance for Investing in Children include:

- Eurochild
- Alliance for Childhood
- ATD Quart Monde
- Caritas – Europa
- COFACE – Confederation of family organisations in the European Union
- Dynamo International – Street Workers Network
- EAPN - European Anti-Poverty Network
- EASPD - European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities
- ENSA - European Network of Social Authorities
- EPHA – European Public Health Alliance
- ESN European Social Network
- Eurodiaconia
- EuroHealthNet
- European Child Safety Alliance
- FEANTSA - European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless
- Mental Health Europe
- PICUM – Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants
- SOS Children's Villages International
- UNICEF EU Office
- Save the Children EU Office

More:

- Link to European Commission **Recommendation "Investing in Children"**
- Information about the **EU Alliance**: info@eurochild.org, +32 (0)2 2 11 05 53