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Building a child-friendly Europe: turning a vision into reality

**Conference on the Council of Europe Strategy
for the Rights of the Child 2012-2015**

Under the Presidency of H.R.H. The Princess of Hanover

Grimaldi Forum, Monaco, 20-21 November 2011

**CONCLUSIONS
For the Deputy Secretary general**



Royal Highness,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Le souffle de Monaco nous a inspiré, nous a transporté et ouvert de nouveaux horizons pendant les deux derniers jours!

We called for your cooperation and support and you have responded positively, with your strength, your enthusiasm and your outstanding ideas.

We feel right on track.

As revealed by the presentations during the high level session, significant progress in the member states has been achieved under the former strategy. All actors, governmental, intergovernmental and civil society have adhered to its vision and taken ownership of it through concrete action, be it in tackling violence against children, child friendly justice, social services and health care, focusing on children in vulnerable situations or on child participation.

This is progress to be welcomed.

The past two days have been rich, motivating and you have clearly indicated the need for a reinforced strategy for the next four years. The need to shift gears and to enter the implementation phase has come. I want to extend my gratitude to you for the active contribution in its drafting process. This support has not only improved it with clarification and new ideas but they will help us to map out the various avenues for cooperation with our member states, international organisations and civil society, in Europe and beyond. Our next challenge is to bring a draft strategy to the Committee of Ministers for its consideration and this we expect to do in January, under the leadership of Ambassador Anica Djamic, the Committee of Ministers' Thematic Co-ordinator for Children.

The afternoon session yesterday revealed the need and will to reinforce the capacity of the Council of Europe monitoring mechanisms to ensure the effective application of their standards and remedy violations of children's rights in the member states. The proposals for the way to progress was inspiring and showed the potential that lies ahead of us in the next phase.

Yesterday we started to find and put together some of the missing pieces of the puzzle and we highlighted the need to :

- fully implement the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights regarding children's rights; this full implementation requires to adopt positive measures to concretise the rights and

freedoms entailed in the convention and the implementation by anticipation, which means to take into account the judgements concerning all states parties and not only its own state; this is particularly relevant when it comes to access to the Court by children at domestic level and before the European Court of Human Rights.

- develop synergies and better coordination between the human rights bodies and monitoring mechanisms themselves thereby reducing possible duplications;
- enhance cooperation between these bodies and the UN bodies;
- improve the monitoring process within the Committee of Ministers;
- explore the possibility of streamlining children's rights perspectives in these bodies by appointing a dedicated rapporteur ;
- to flag to the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly challenges in implementation;
- exchange information, especially concerning serious violations of children's rights;
- collect reliable and comparable data to develop child friendly policies;
- and probably the most promising are the creation of a Children's Rights Commission within the Council of Europe and/or a Special Envoy of the Secretary General on Children Rights.

Despite the institutional obstacles linked to the respective mandates of these bodies there is room for cooperation to bridge the gap between internationally agreed standards and their effective implementation.

In addition, after the closing of this Conference, the first pillars of the Platform on children's rights should be further explored: that of the focal points, and of civil society.

- How can we reinforce their role?
- How can we communicate better with them?
- How can we create a real implementation community around the strategy?

You have started to enlighten us about the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead of us.

All participants see in the Platform on children's rights a promising forum enhancing multistakeholder dialogue and providing a unique opportunity to share knowledge, experience, expertise and good practices among all actors: authorities, professionals, the civil society and, of course, children. They expressed their readiness to contribute efficiently to reinforcing the platform by bringing their respective expertise to it, be it research, data collection, or sharing of good practice.

Madame, ladies and gentlemen, our strategy has grown and we feel ready to continue.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the authorities of Monaco for supporting us once again in the endeavour of protecting children's rights. Another milestone has been set, here in Monaco.

I would also warmly thank our rapporteurs, panelists and moderators for their precious contributions, as well the children of Monaco for their performance full of emotion.

Your Royal Highness, your commitment to our work gives it another dimension.

In another five years, times can change but with commitment such as yours, Your Royal Highness, and you, dear Ministers, we can continue to change mentalities and to build an even stronger Europe **for** and **with** Children.

Thank you.