

BUILDING A EUROPE FOR AND WITH CHILDREN



COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

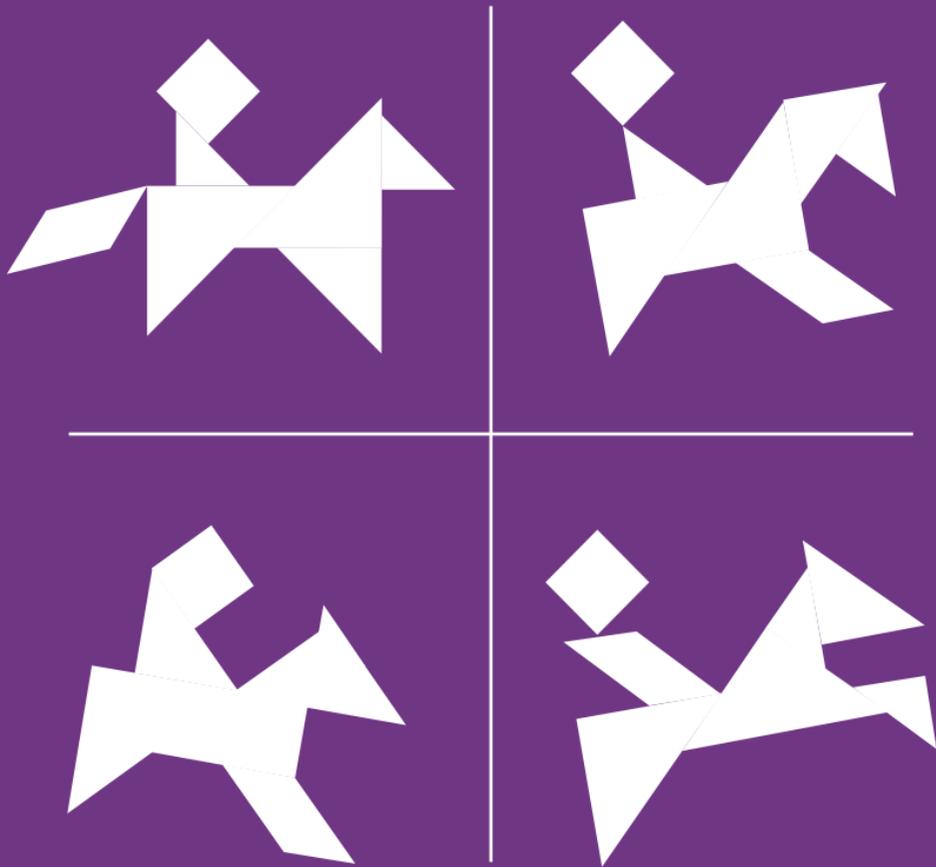
ENG

Also available in other languages: www.coe.int/children

- ▶ Conception: Graphic Design Unit, Council of Europe
Produced by the Documents and Publications Production Department (SPDP)
© Council of Europe, August 2006
Reprint – December 2006, April 2008, April 2009, March 2010
Printed in France

SEVEN GOOD REASONS FOR

BUILDING
A EUROPE
FOR AND WITH
CHILDREN

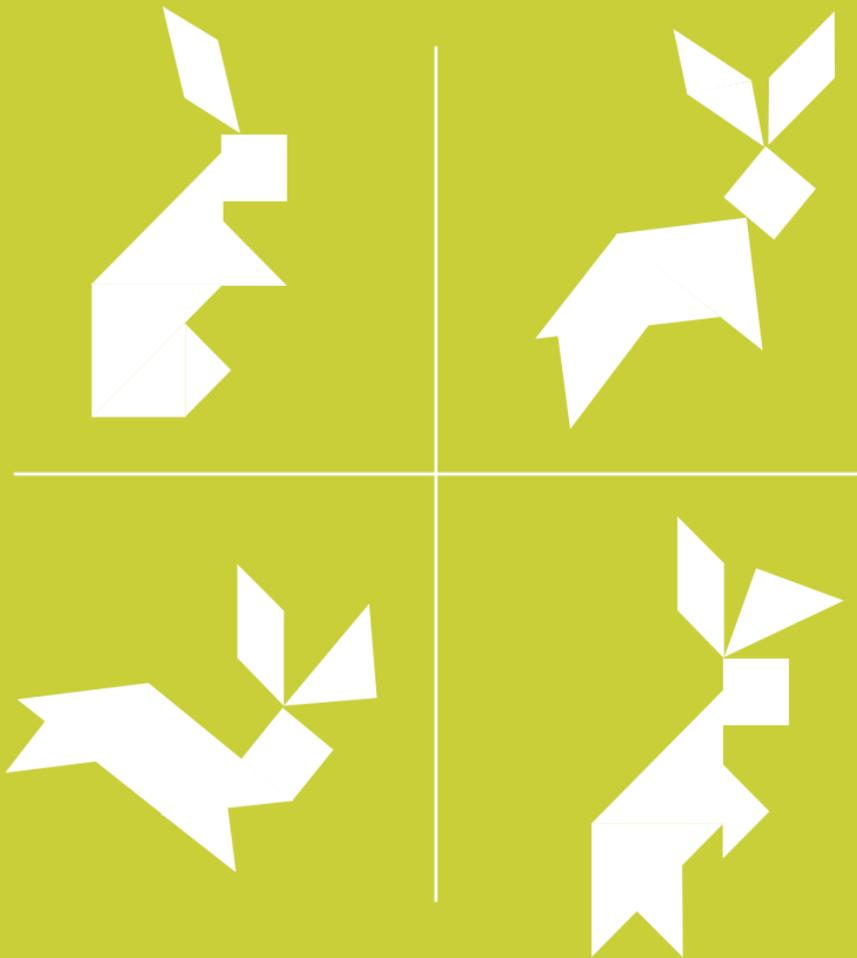


1. Children are not mini-human beings with mini-human rights

Children have rights. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises children as holders of many essential rights. In Europe, children's fundamental rights are further protected by the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Social Charter. Just a few examples of these are: the right to life, the right not to be submitted to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, protection against forced labour or slavery, respect for private and family life, the right to protection from danger and the right to education.



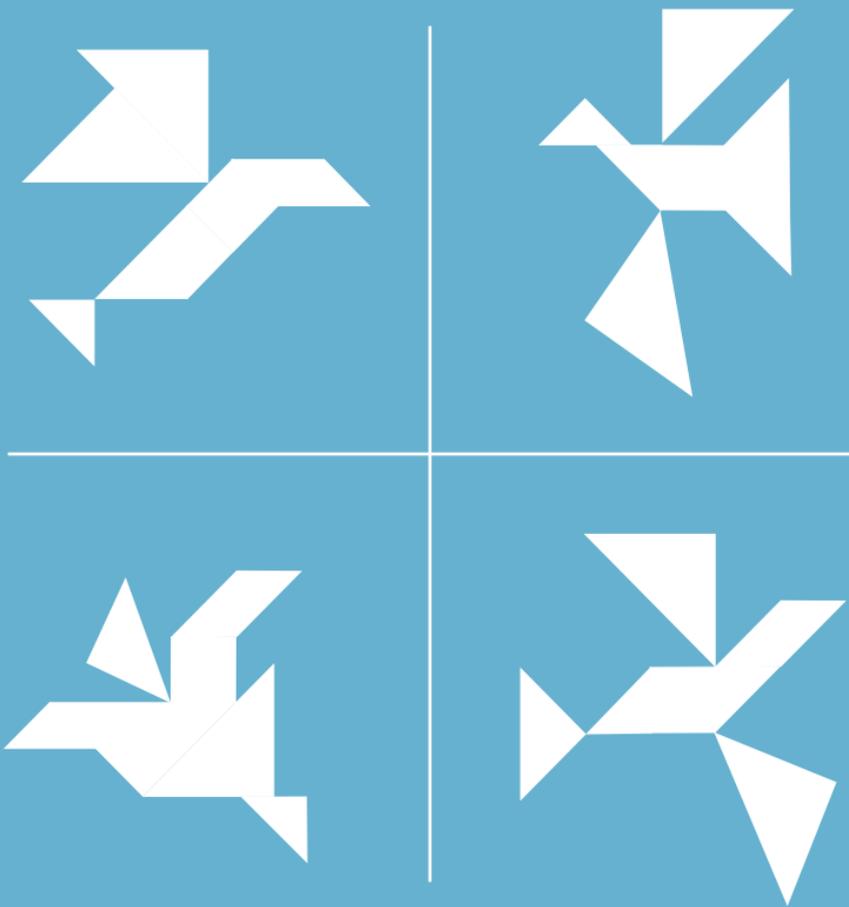
"Building a Europe for and with children", a Council of Europe programme, seeks to ensure respect for children's rights throughout all countries in Europe.



2. Children are vulnerable. They need more protection, not less

Children are victims of many forms of violence. Children are used as slaves, as soldiers, as workers. Children are neglected, abused, mutilated, killed. This happens in the street, at school, in hospitals, on the Internet, in detention centres, in the media, at home and in other places where children are supposed to be safe. Children are vulnerable and depend on adults for most things. They cannot defend themselves and their voices are the last to be heard. Special measures need to be taken to counteract children's vulnerability.

 *"Building a Europe for and with children" aims to eradicate all forms of violence against children. It is based on the four Ps: protection of children, prevention of violence, prosecution of criminals and participation of children. The programme pays special attention to particularly vulnerable children: children with disabilities, children living in poverty and children being raised without parental care.*



3. No violence against children is justifiable

In many European countries, society tolerates and even approves some recurrent forms of violence against children, in particular those inflicted in the family setting. However, no tradition, religion, belief, economic situation or “educational” method can ever justify hitting, smacking, spanking, mutilating, abusing, humiliating, or any other practice that violates children’s dignity. Europe must become a continent where practices such as corporal punishment (whether at home, at school or in institutions) no longer exist.

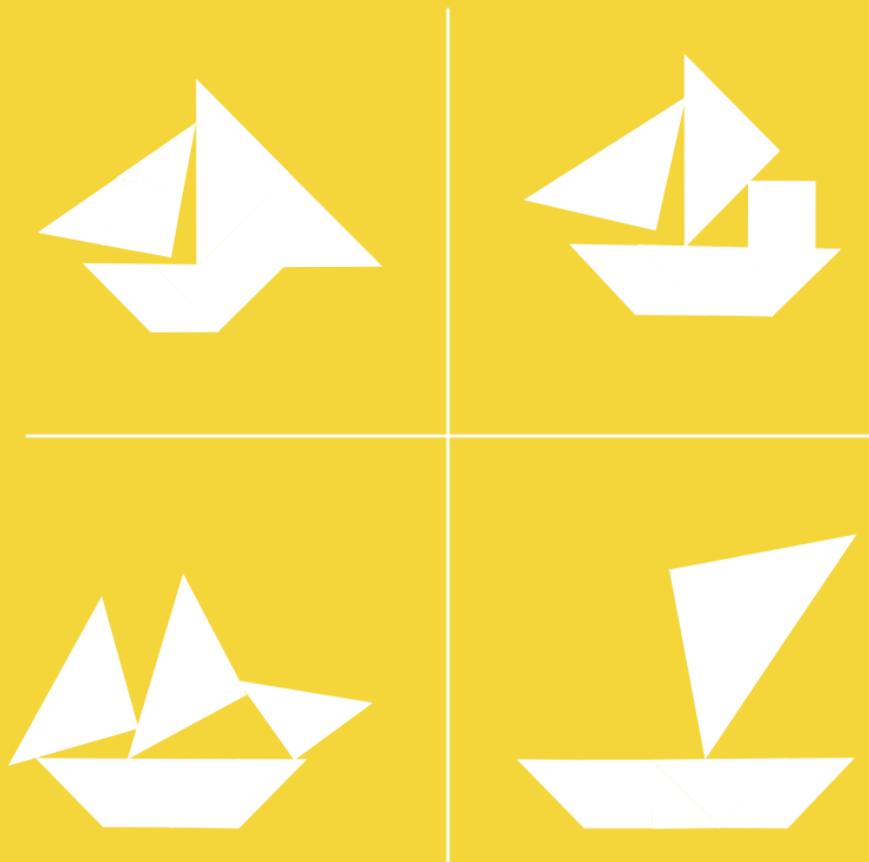
- ◻ *“Building a Europe for and with children” is campaigning to eradicate all forms of violence against children, focusing in particular on awareness raising, education, training and capacity building, to promote a culture of non-violence and reach a zero level of tolerance.*



4. All violence against children can be prevented

Most cases of violence against children remain invisible. This is because children are afraid to speak up and when they do, adults do not always follow up on reported cases adequately. A lack of data and research makes it difficult for governments to set up effective prevention policies.

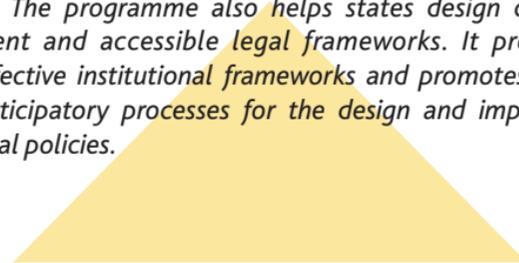
- ◆ *"Building a Europe for and with children" aims to help countries set up strategies for the prevention of violence against children. The programme works to improve systems that facilitate reporting through child-friendly services, support to families and early identification and professional documentation of cases. It seeks to provide authorities and professionals with the ability to respond quickly and adequately to reported violence. Special efforts are being made to eradicate sexual abuse and the exploitation of children.*

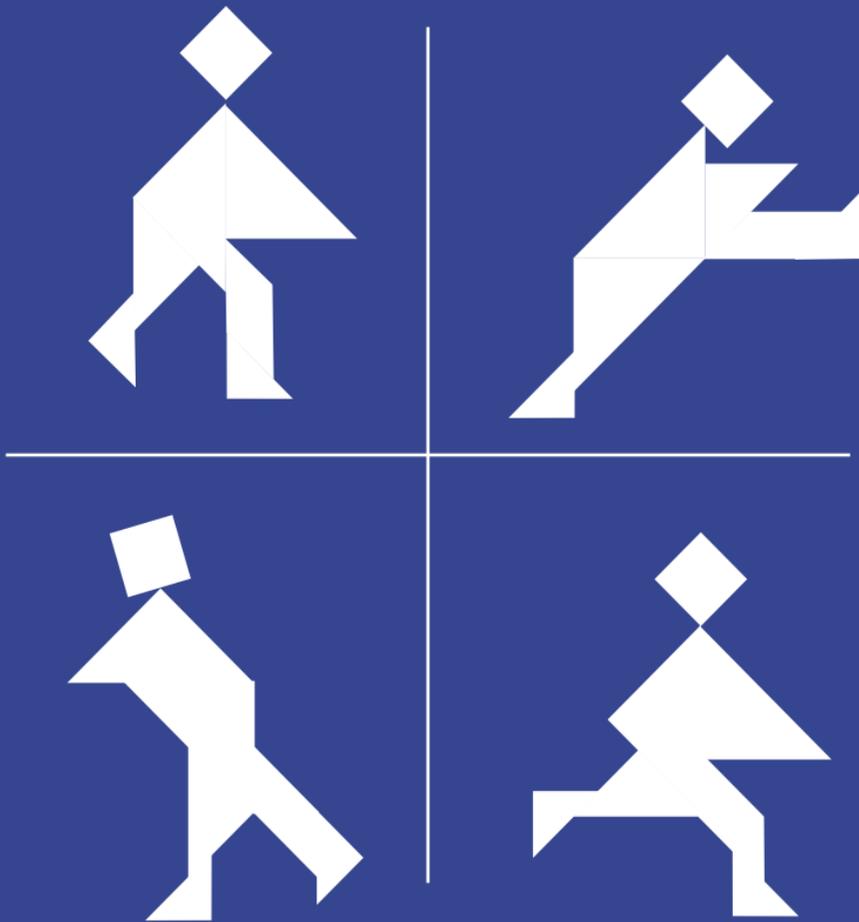


5. Protecting children calls for a strategic approach

The complexity and importance of the issues at stake and the number of actors involved call for a strategic approach. Countries must identify short-term and long-term objectives, review their legislative and institutional frameworks and launch participatory processes likely to involve all stakeholders and mobilise all resources available.

- ▲ *"Building a Europe for and with children" intends to help states consolidate or develop national strategies for the protection of children's rights. The programme also helps states design comprehensive, coherent and accessible legal frameworks. It proposes models for effective institutional frameworks and promotes the launching of participatory processes for the design and implementation of national policies.*





6. Children's rights concern us all

Children's rights should inform decisions by all authorities and institutions. All professionals, in particular those in daily contact with children (including health and social workers, teachers, lawyers, judges, journalists, the police), individuals (notably parents) and the business sector share responsibility for children's welfare. The role played by independent institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should be fully recognised and supported.

Children's rights concern first and foremost children themselves. But few children know what their rights even are or much less how to exercise them. Children need to have access to information about their rights and should be allowed and encouraged to participate in decision-making processes affecting their lives.

- ▣ *"Building a Europe for and with children" aims to mobilise all sectors of society, make them aware of their specific responsibilities and strengthen their capacity to prevent violence and protect children. The programme also aims to improve children's access to information and develop methods and tools to achieve meaningful children's participation at all levels: local, regional and national.*

A EUROPE FOR CHILDREN

7. Children's rights make Europe grow

Thanks to international co-operation, the situation of children has greatly improved. International co-operation is essential when it comes to resolving problems affecting many countries throughout Europe and in fighting trans-border crime and protecting its victims. Cyber-criminals and traffickers in human beings are the first to benefit from a lack of international co-operation.

The Council of Europe was founded in 1949 to build Europe upon three main pillars: human rights, democracy and the rule of law. This mandate implies that all Council of Europe member states (today 47) should co-operate and commit themselves to building a space where children feel safe, happy and at home.

 *"Building a Europe for and with children" is making the most out of international co-operation. It combines important tools such as standard setting, monitoring, policy development, technical assistance and awareness-raising, putting them to the service of children's rights. The Council of Europe works in partnership with other important players in Europe, such as the European Union and Unicef, and contributes to ensuring appropriate follow-up to the recommendations of the United Nations Study on Violence against Children.*



"Building a Europe for and with children": work in progress

Of all intergovernmental organisations in Europe, the Council of Europe is in the best position to address effectively the issue of children's rights. It can:

1. combine highly effective tools: standard setting; monitoring; policy development; co-operation and assistance programmes and outreach (education, training and communication);
2. easily mobilise four main actors (the four pillars): governments, parliamentarians, local authorities and NGOs.

All Council of Europe bodies, institutions and major administrative entities share the programme's vision and contribute to meeting its objectives. This "team work" at the Organisation level is inspired by an inter-secretariat Task Force (where all relevant Council of Europe secretariats are represented), a programme co-ordination unit (attached to the secretariat of the Directorate General of Social Cohesion) and a Thematic Co-ordinator at the Committee of Ministers level. The Council of Europe also created a platform on children's rights, which gathers a network of focal

points in governments and representatives of civil society, ombudspersons, international organisations and experts, and research institutions.

The programme adopted a strategy for the years 2009-2011, built around five objectives:

1. *mainstreaming and co-ordination*: the programme continues to mainstream children's rights in all Council of Europe policy areas (democracy, justice, education, media, health, family policies, etc.) and to co-ordinate all its activities;
2. *promotion of children's access to justice*: the Council of Europe is drafting European guidelines on child-friendly justice which, building on existing standards, aim to ensure effective access to justice for children at national level. It also seeks to improve access to international justice;
3. *eradication of all forms of violence against children*: the Council of Europe has adopted European policy guidelines for national integrated strategies on violence against children, which promote the development and implementation of a holistic national framework for safeguarding the rights of the child and protecting children from all forms of violence. The programme follows up on the recommendations contained in the United Nations *Study on Violence against Children* and also invests in the fight against specific forms of violence, such as corporal punishment, sexual violence and violence at school;

4. *participation of children and their influence in society*: the Council of Europe is investing in the development of concrete tools to promote implementation of the right of the child to be heard and involved in decision making, whether at home, in everyday life of the community, at school, or in individual legal and administrative matters that concern them;

5. *particularly vulnerable children*: major efforts are put into implementing and developing activities targeting and involving particularly vulnerable children, especially children without parental care, children with disabilities, and children in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

The following are examples of ongoing activities at the Council of Europe.

1. Standard setting

The Council of Europe's most important asset is probably its capacity to set standards. This is thanks to the particularly dynamic participation of its bodies and institutions in this work. Among the various legal texts under preparation which concern children are:

- a Council of Europe charter on citizenship and human rights education;
- European guidelines on child-friendly justice;
- a recommendation on the participation of young people from minorities.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe also adopts recommendations, resolutions and opinions concerning children's rights. The following reports are under preparation in its committees and may lead to the adoption of important texts:

- expansion of democracy by lowering the voting age to 16;
- for a Europe-wide sex offenders register;
- guaranteeing a right to schooling for children with illness or disabilities;
- unaccompanied minors in Europe: issues of arrival, stay and return;
- prohibiting the marketing and the use of the "mosquito" youth-dispersal device;
- education against violence at school;
- convention on youth rights;
- children without parental care: urgent need for action;
- children as witness of domestic violence;
- social measures, education and rehabilitation of young offenders.

II. Monitoring

Monitoring the compliance of member states with human rights standards is of the highest importance. The Council of Europe's statutory bodies (the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers) have established various monitoring systems (country-based, thematic or treaty-based). The case law of the European Court of Human Rights and the decisions and conclusions adopted by the European Committee of Social Rights are outstanding examples in this field.

The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, an independent institution, greatly contributes to assessing the situation through individual country visits. The Commissioner's reports and activities have increasingly highlighted children's rights issues.

Monitoring bodies are encouraged to pay particular attention to violence against children. The programme "Building a Europe for and with children" provides for the systematic review of decisions, reports and recommendations concerning children's rights.

III. Policy development

The Council of Europe has cumulated impressive expertise in the field of policy development. Steering committees composed of government representatives and of observers from NGOs (the Organisation's "fourth pillar") and other intergovernmental organisations undertake the bulk of this work. They are the architects of the Council of Europe's sectoral policies. Steering committees in the fields of legal co-operation, human rights, social cohesion, culture, education and youth have all placed children's rights issues on their agendas, including:

- access to education for Roma children;
- integration of migrants' children;
- education for democratic citizenship and human rights education: designing a set of tools for decision makers on citizenship and human rights education;
- empowering children and youth in the information society;
- children's rights and social services;
- the rights of children with disabilities;

- the rights of children in institutions;
- children's participation: developing methods, networks and tools, paying particular attention to child victims of exclusion (migrant children, street children, children in institutions, children with disabilities, etc.);
- reviewing national youth policies, in connection with child policies;
- analysing legal and institutional frameworks at national and local levels, identifying best practices and drawing up models for national strategies to protect children's rights and the prevention of violence;
- developing family policies in the best interests of children and promoting positive parenting.

IV. Co-operation and assistance

Upon request, the Council of Europe will co-operate with countries on an individual basis, assisting them with legal reform, policy and institutional framework design, and training for professionals.

V. Outreach – Communication, education and training

Standards and policies need to be accompanied by communication, education and training strategies. Current activities include:

- a children's rights' website (www.coe.int/children);
- child-friendly communication (web and printed material);
- *Through the Wild Web Woods*: an online game on Internet safety and children's rights available in 16 languages including a teacher's guide;
- the campaign "Raise your hand against smacking" and its communication kit, as well as other awareness initiatives on specific issues, sexual violence, Internet safety or violence in schools;
- *Compasito* (a manual for human rights education for children);
- a training pack on democratic governance at school;
- Theseus, the online database on case law of the European Court of Human Rights relevant to children;
- various publications on children's human rights for lawyers and on Council of Europe action to end violence against children;
- training courses on human rights;
- a wide range of initiatives and events at national and international level.



The Council of Europe and children's rights

MAIN LEGAL TEXTS¹

I. Conventions

Core conventions

- Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950)
- European Social Charter (1961)
- Revised European Social Charter (1996)
- Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter Providing for a System of Collective Complaints (1995)
- European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1987)

Other conventions

- European Convention on the Adoption of Children (revised) (2008)
- Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (2007)

- Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (2005)
- Convention on Contact concerning Children (2003)
- Convention on Cybercrime (2001)
- European Convention on Nationality (1997)
- European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights (1996)
- European Convention on Recognition and Enforcement of Decisions concerning Custody of Children and on the Restoration of Custody of Children (1980)
- European Convention on the Legal Status of Children born out of Wedlock (1975)
- European Convention on the Adoption of Children (1967)

II. Recommendations, resolutions and declarations from the Committee of Ministers (1990-2009)

- Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)10 on integrated national strategies for the protection of children from violence
- Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)9 on the education and social inclusion of children and young people with autism spectrum disorders
- Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)5 on measures to protect children against harmful content and behaviour and to promote their active participation in the new information and communications environment

- Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)11 on the European Rules for juvenile offenders subject to sanctions or measures
- Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)6 on measures to promote the respect for freedom of expression and information with regard to Internet filters
- Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)4 on strengthening the integration of children of migrants and of immigrant background
- Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)13 on gender mainstreaming in education
- Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)9 on life projects for unaccompanied migrant minors
- Recommendation Rec(2006)19 on policy to support positive parenting
- Recommendation Rec(2006)12 on empowering children in the new information and communications environment
- Recommendation Rec(2006)5 on the Council of Europe Action Plan to promote the rights and full participation of people with disabilities in society: improving the quality of life of people with disabilities in Europe 2006-2015
- Recommendation Rec(2006)1 on the role of national youth councils in youth policy development
- Recommendation Rec(2005)5 on the rights of children living in residential institutions
- Recommendation Rec(2004)13 on the participation of young people in local and regional life

- Recommendation Rec(2003)20 concerning new ways of dealing with juvenile delinquency and the role of juvenile justice
- Recommendation Rec(2002)8 on child day-care
- Recommendation Rec(2002)5 on the protection of women against violence
- Recommendation Rec(2001)16 on the protection of children against sexual exploitation
- Recommendation Rec(2001)10 on the European Code of Police Ethics
- Recommendation No. R (2000) 11 on action against trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation
- Recommendation No. R (98) 8 on children's participation in family and social life
- Recommendation No. R (97) 19 on the portrayal of violence in the electronic media
- Recommendation No. R (97) 13 concerning intimidation of witnesses and the rights of the defence
- Recommendation No. R (94) 14 on coherent and integrated family policies
- Recommendation No. R (93) 2 on the medico-social aspects of child abuse
- Recommendation No. R (91) 11 on sexual exploitation, pornography and prostitution of, and trafficking in, children and young adults
- Recommendation No. R (91) 9 on emergency measures in family matters

- Recommendation No. R (90) 2 on social measures concerning violence within the family
- Resolution ResAP (2005) 1 on safeguarding adults and children with disabilities against abuse



- Declaration on protecting the dignity, security and privacy of children on the Internet (2008)

III. Recommendations and resolutions from the Parliamentary Assembly (1990-2009)

- Recommendation 1882 (2009) on the promotion of Internet and online media services appropriate for minors
- Recommendation 1872 (2009) on the rights of today's girls: the rights of tomorrow's women
- Recommendation 1868 (2009) on action to combat gender-based human rights violations, including abduction of women and girls
- Recommendation 1864 (2009) on promoting the participation by children in decisions affecting them
- Recommendation 1861 (2009) on feminicides
- Recommendation 1849 (2008) for the promotion of a culture of democracy and human rights through teacher education

- Recommendation 1844 (2008) on refreshing the youth agenda of the Council of Europe
- Recommendation 1828 (2008) on the disappearance of newborn babies for illegal adoption in Europe
- Recommendation 1815 (2007) on prostitution – Which stance to take?
- Recommendation 1778 (2007) on child victims: stamping out all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse
- Recommendation 1703 (2005) on protection and assistance for separated children seeking asylum
- Recommendation 1698 (2005) on the rights of children in institutions: follow up to Recommendation 1601 (2003) of the Parliamentary Assembly
- Recommendation 1666 (2004) on a Europe-wide ban on corporal punishment of children
- Recommendation 1632 (2003) on teenagers in distress: a social and health-based approach to youth malaise
- Recommendation 1601 (2003) on improving the lot of abandoned children in institutions
- Recommendation 1596 (2003) on the situation of young migrants in Europe
- Recommendation 1561 (2002) on social measures for children of war in South-Eastern Europe

- Recommendation 1555 (2002) on the image of women in the media
- Recommendation 1551 (2002) on building a 21st-century society with and for children: follow-up to the European strategy for children (Recommendation 1286 (1996))
- Recommendation 1545 (2002) on a campaign against trafficking in women
- Recommendation 1532 (2001) on a dynamic social policy for children and adolescents in towns and cities
- Recommendation 1526 (2001) on a campaign against trafficking in minors to put a stop to the east European route: the example of Moldova
- Recommendation 1523 (2001) on domestic slavery
- Recommendation 1501 (2001) on parents and teachers' responsibilities in children's education
- Recommendation 1460 (2000) on setting up a European ombudsman for children
- Recommendation 1459 (2000) on an action plan for the children of Kosovo
- Recommendation 1449 (2000) on clandestine migration from the south of the Mediterranean into Europe
- Recommendation 1443 (2000) on international adoption: respecting children's rights
- Recommendation 1398 (1999) on the situation of children in Albania

- Recommendation 1371 (1998) on abuse and neglect of children
- Recommendation 1336 (1997) on combating child labour exploitation as a matter of priority
- Recommendation 1286 (1996) on a European strategy for children
- Recommendation 1121 (1990) on the rights of children



- Resolution 1669 (2009) on the rights of today's girls – the rights of tomorrow's women
- Resolution 1662 (2009) on action to combat gender-based human rights violations, including abduction of women and girls
- Resolution 1654 (2009) on feminicides
- Resolution 1630 (2008) on refreshing the youth agenda of the Council of Europe
- Resolution 1624 (2008) on preventing the first form of violence against children: abandonment at birth
- Resolution 1608 (2008) on child and teenage suicide in Europe: a serious public health issue
- Resolution 1587 (2007) on situations of children living in post-conflict zones in the Balkans
- Resolution 1579 (2007) on prostitution – Which stance to take?

- Resolution 1537 (2007) on a future for children infected with HIV/Aids and Aids orphans
- Resolution 1530 (2007) on child victims: stamping out all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse
- Resolution 1337 (2003) on migration connected with trafficking in women and prostitution
- Resolution 1307 (2002) on sexual exploitation of children: zero tolerance
- Resolution 1291 (2002) on international abduction of children by one of the parents
- Resolution 1247 (2001) on female genital mutilation
- Resolution 1215 (2000) on the campaign against the enlistment of child soldiers and their participation in armed conflicts
- Resolution 1212 (2000) on rape in armed conflicts
- Resolution 1099 (1996) on sexual exploitation of children

IV. Recommendations and resolutions from the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (1999-2009)

- Recommendation 272 (2009) on preventing violence against children
- Recommendation 253 (2008) on the social reintegration of children living and/or working on the streets
- Recommendation 241 (2008) on the child in the city

- Recommendation 208 (2007) on access to public spaces and amenities for people with disabilities
- Recommendation 198 (2006) on promoting an entrepreneurial spirit among young people in Europe's regions
- Recommendation 135 (2003) on local partnerships for preventing and combating violence at school
- Recommendation 128 (2003) on the Revised European Charter on the participation of young people in local and regional life
- Recommendation 59 (1999) on Europe 2000 youth participation: the role of young people as citizens
- Recommendation 53 (1999) on policies for deprived children/adolescents and families



- Resolution 289 (2009) on preventing violence against children
- Resolution 271 (2008) on the social reintegration of children living and/or working on the streets
- Resolution 259 (2008) on the integration and participation of young people at local and regional level
- Resolution 258 (2008) on the child in the city

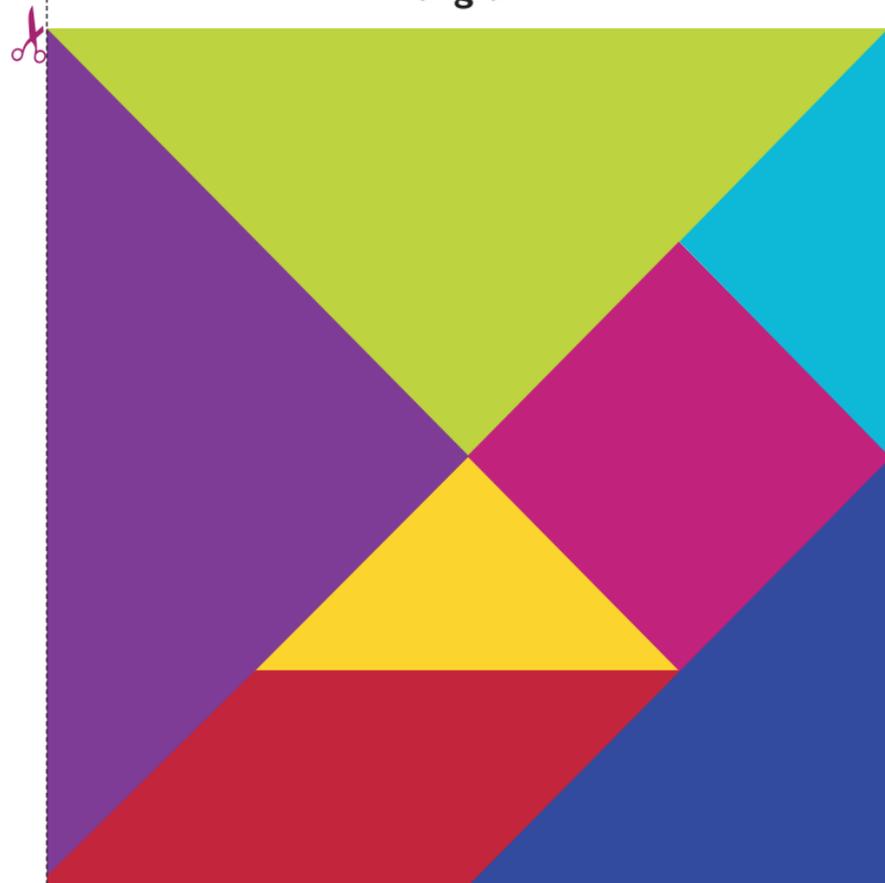
- Resolution 221 (2006) on promoting an entrepreneurial spirit among young people in Europe's regions
- Resolution 207 (2006) on young people and new information and communication technologies: a new opportunity for local democracy
- Resolution 160 (2003) on local partnership for preventing and combating violence at school
- Resolution 152 (2003) on the Revised European Charter on the participation of young people in local and regional life
- Resolution 78 (1999) on Europe 2000 youth participation: the role of young people as citizens
- Resolution 74 (1999) on policies for deprived children/adolescents and families
- Resolution 43 (1997) on opening up Europe to the young: towns and regions in action

A EUROPE
WITH
CHILDREN

Build with us!

The graphics for the programme “Building a Europe for and with children” are inspired by the tangram. The tangram is a Chinese thinking game, similar to a puzzle. The idea is to make shapes out of seven standard pieces: five triangles – two large ones, one medium sized and two smaller ones – plus a square and a parallelogram. At first glance, making shapes seems simple, but after a few tries, you might change your mind! If you have never played this game before, try reproducing the illustrations in this booklet using the cut-outs on the opposite page. If you can't do it, ask a child to help you, or look at the solutions on pages 41 and 42.

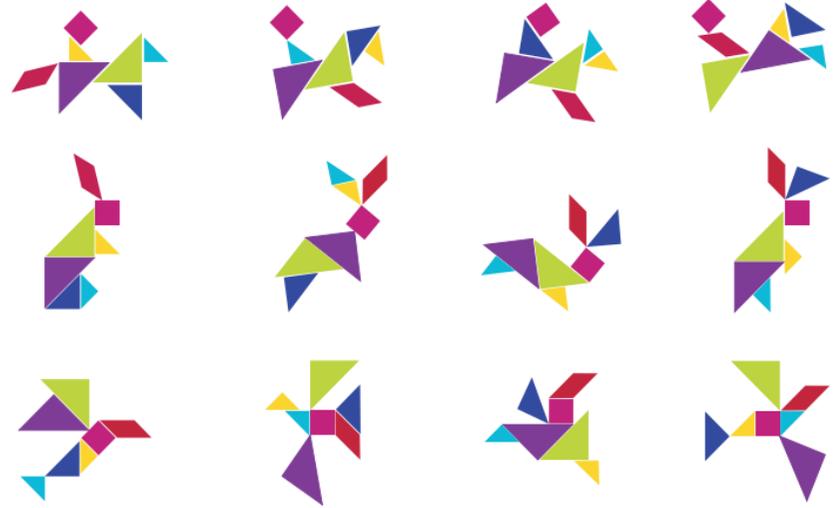
Tangram



Tangram



Game solutions



Game solutions



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