



# **“Challenges to children’s rights today”: What do children think?**

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Desktop Study completed in cooperation with  
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# Aim of the Study

- Article 12 UNCRC: The Right of Children to be heard – Basis for Study
- Explore research on children's views on which rights issues are most important to them
- A broad geographical spectrum in Europe
- The perspective of most disadvantaged groups of children

Resulting in  A snapshot of children's views

# Methodology

- Data gathering – over 130 publications
- Hidden themes and geography
- Size of Study and Frequency of Theme
- UNCRC General Principles
- Mapping available research and identifying themes
- Data analysis

**Challenges:**

- Children are a heterogeneous group
- Lack of available research
- Lack in clarity in conclusions in research

# Emerging Themes from Children's Views

- **Violence**
- **Child-Friendly Justice**
- **Children's Participation**
- **Children in Care**
- **Discrimination**
- **Education**
- **Child Poverty and Austerity**

# Violence

Threat of Violence is a priority rights issue for children in number of studies:

- ❖ Violence in the Home
- ❖ Violence in Custodial Settings
- ❖ Sexual Violence and Exploitation, including Sexual Violence and the Internet



# Child-Friendly Justice

- ❖ Participation in Justice Systems – Information and child-friendly proceedings; Mistrust of Authority ; Right to be heard and presence at proceedings
- ❖ Children in Conflict with the Law: detention for children only as a last resort
- ❖ Children of Prisoners: more visiting times; bullying of these children at schools



# Children's Participation

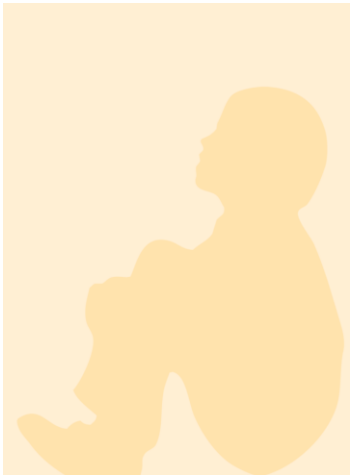
- Children strongly believe that they should have a say in key decisions that affect their lives
- Children face obstacles that prevent their participation
- Participation in Families in general positive, but varied experiences on minor and major issues
- Awareness-raising among children and adults needed
- Mechanisms needed to allow children to participate
- Professionals working with children to be trained
- Children should be informed about decision-making processes



# Children in Care

Being heard for children in care is of huge importance – but many do not feel listened to.

- Better support and interventions necessary to avoid being placed in care: say children, they prefer foster care and adoption instead of institutional care
- Importance attached to maintain family links where possible
- Children require adequate support when in care or when leaving care
- Child abuse is a major concern for children in care: urgent need for adequate child protection systems and children's rights education for children and carers





# Discrimination

- A large group of children in Europe feel discriminated and identify this as a key right to be dealt with (Art. 2 UNCRC)
- Age discrimination is a particular concern
- Double discrimination of ethnic groups, racial minorities
- Greater efforts needed to facilitate participation of disabled children in decision-making and society
- Children from particularly vulnerable groups wish to be better facilitated to access services



# Education

- Majority of children in Europe consider education as a primary area of concern
- School councils need to be improved; teachers require training on how to consult with children
- Children from disadvantaged groups require special measures to assist their participation – Equality!
- Bullying at schools is an issue of huge concern for children.
- Young children want more positive engagement of teachers



# Child Poverty and Austerity

- Children are concerned about current economic climate; poverty puts strain on family relationships
- Children worry to be trapped in cycle of poverty
- All children should have free access to services, such as youth and leisure centres
- Listen to children experiencing poverty: they have something to contribute to new understandings of child poverty and social exclusion
- Right to be treated equally
- Children want to be involved in decisions about government expenditure



# Corresponding themes from children's views in Council of Europe Draft Strategy for the Rights of the Child

## Desktop Study: What do children Think?

- Discrimination & Child Poverty and Austerity
- Violence, including online safety
- Child Participation: need for training and awareness raising
- Child-friendly Justice
- Children in Care
- Education
- General Conclusion: Family/parents and Friends are key to children

## Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2016-2019/21

### 1. Equal Opportunities for all children:

- Alleviating economic austerity
- Supporting Parents
- Countering Discrimination, including children in alternative care.

### 2. Participation of all Children:

- Empowering children in the digital world
- Strengthening participation in schools
- Reaching out to vulnerable children

### 3. A life free of Violence for all Children:

- Combating Sexual violence
- Protect children from corporal punishment, violence at schools, domestic violence, trafficking.

### 4. Access to Justice for all children:

- Promoting child-friendly justice
- Protecting children in detention
- Safe Legal Framework for Families