



Confederation of
family organisations
in the
European Union
- COFACE

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Editorial

Has it ever struck you how April is often a month of changes? This year has been no different.

Spring has well and truly “sprung” at last!

Easter at last spelled the end to a long, hard winter.

As I write these lines, the sun is blazing gloriously away in a clear blue sky and the thermometer is touching 25! And this is Belgium...

It makes you feel alive again.

And there are changes at COFACE, too.

Our policy officer **Céline Simonin** - whom many of you know and value – leaves us at the end of April. She is heading south – but not too far from Brussels! She is off to Paris to give her all - as she did to COFACE – to our French member organisation: Unapei. (at least she’s staying “in the family” so to speak!). We shall certainly miss her for everything she has brought to COFACE’s work these past two years. Good luck, Céline ... and I’m sure we’ll meet again soon!

But the team will not be short-handed for long.

Starting on 5 May, our new policy officer, **Michela Costa**, will take over Céline’s topics, namely, family and social policy, and inclusive policies for disabled and other dependent persons and their families.

These are big issues with many ramifications involving a wide range of contacts and working relations with EU institutions and other European NGOs, especially members of the Social Platform.

We have every faith that Michela, who has a master's degree in international relations and human rights, and is specialised in EU affairs, will take over the tiller with flair and skill. She is well-versed in the ins and outs of the EU, has a sound grasp of social affairs and is very alive to family issues. She will quickly settle into the Secretariat team.

Welcome aboard, Michela!

William Lay
Director

Members' activities: Seminar "First of all they are children" – organised by Salud y Familia (ES)



The Seminar "Ante todo son niñas y niños" (First of all they are children- Basic needs for foreign minors in Europe) was organised by COFACE member Salud y Familia in the framework of the International Year against poverty and social exclusion on 27 April 2010.

There is widespread agreement in Europe that recognises the specific and qualitatively significant contribution of Spanish education and health care laws and policies aimed at the immigrant population. Specifically, there is acceptance of the value of difference and the commitment to the future represented by the legal provision in Spain (Organic Law 4/2000 of 11 January on the rights and freedoms of foreign nationals in Spain and their social integration and Law on Asylum and subsidiary protection 12/2009 of 30 October) for the unrestricted right of minors to public health care and to free basic compulsory education irrespective of their origin and residency status.

It is recognised that, on a general level, this challenge has still to be met by many members of the European Union and that, consequently, a move is needed to adapt and modify laws concerning foreign nationals in order to guarantee public and compulsory coverage of the aforementioned basic needs amongst foreign minors. This is a matter of general public interest associated with meeting human rights obligations (the International Convention on the Rights of the Child) and the fight against child poverty and the transmission of intergenerational poverty.

The 2010 International Year against poverty and social exclusion puts the Spanish and European public institutions and social action and human rights NGOs in a position of extraordinary responsibility and political opportunity to enforce across Europe the needs to ensure the effective rights of access to health care and education of foreign minors regardless of their origin and administrative status. Because first of all they are children.

- • • [Programme of the seminar](#)

Members' activities: Study on poverty and family policy – Gezinsbond (BE)

As part of European Year 2010, Gezinsbond has published a study on poverty, family policy and support for it, ranging across aspects that include health, housing, education, and more.

2010
European Year
for Combating
Poverty and
Social Exclusion

2010: the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion is for the Gezinsbond an occasion to specifically focus its work on families with children who are threatened with poverty. The figures for children living in poverty are quite simply alarming. The quality of life of children who grow up in these families must improve. Consequently, the Gezinsbond is focusing on a strategy with concrete proposals that can improve the living conditions of families with children. In this, we are targeting actions that increase the spending power of families with children and at the same time fulfil 3 fundamental conditions for a dignified life for all children: **the right**

to good housing, education and healthcare. These may be obvious, but in the daily lives of many children, the cost of housing, school or a visit to the doctor is still a stumbling block.

To improve the material living conditions and support equal opportunities for children living in poverty, the Gezinsbond is making 3 priority proposals: **free basic health care** for children under 18, with general application of the direct settlement system, **free secondary education**, at least for all required educational materials such as textbooks and **guidance of families** with children in the case of evictions after payment problems.

- • • Study: [The Gezinsbond and the fight against child poverty](#)

Forthcoming “Focus Weeks”



Throughout this year, each EU country will have a week when the spotlight will be put on it. COFACE urges all its members to get actively involved in this major European Year. [This page](#) has a list of activities that might inspire you ... Upcoming dates:



3-9 May: [Iceland](#)



17-23 May: [Poland](#)



24-30 May: [European Focus week](#)

- • • For more on the activities organised by COFACE for EY2010 go to: <http://coface-eu.org/en/European-Year-2010/2010/>

EU news

29 April 2010: Second European Day on Solidarity Between Generations

COFACE is part of an alliance of European NGOs (initiated by [AGE – the European Older People’s Platform](#)) campaigning for solidarity between generations.



On the second European Day on Solidarity Between Generations celebrated on 29 April 2010, we put out a widely circulated [joint press release](#) with the alliance of European NGOs and the new **common brochure** ([English/French/Spanish](#)) on the need for greater intergenerational solidarity, offering examples of what can be done in employment, housing, pensions, welfare, health, the environment, combating poverty and social exclusion, transport, family policy, citizens' initiatives, immigration, and gender equality.

The brochure was unveiled at a conference on active aging and solidarity between generations organised by the Spanish Presidency on 29-30 April 2010 in Logroño, Spain, to mark the European Day on Solidarity Between Generations. COFACE was represented at the conference by its Vice-President, M. Delgado, and by J. M. Rodrigo of the member organisation [CEAFA](#) (*a more detailed report on the meeting will be given in the next newsletter*).

The alliance also sent a joint letter to the new Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, László Andor, asking him to propose making 2012 the European Year of Active Aging and Intergenerational Solidarity.

• • • More: <http://coface-eu.org/en/Campaigns/Solidarity-between-generations/>

The Stockholm Programme

On 20 April 2010, the European Commission published its Action Plan Implementing the Stockholm Programme, “Delivering an area of freedom, security and justice for Europe’s citizens”. The Stockholm programme adopted by the European Council in December 2009 sets the priorities for developing the European area of freedom, security and justice in the period 2010-2014. The aim of the European Commission action plan is to deliver those priorities through a vast range of initiatives.

The **first priority** is to ensure the protection of fundamental rights. The Commission has already adopted in 2010 a recommendation to authorise negotiation of EU accession to the European Convention on Human Rights. The Commission also plans a Communication on the Fundamental Rights policy, and annual reporting on the EU’s Charter of Fundamental Rights. It will apply a “Zero Tolerance Policy” as regards violation of the Charter, which should become the compass for all EU law and policies.

Many other initiatives are planned in the field of fundamental rights, including: a new comprehensive legal framework on data protection, a Communication on the fight against racism, and xenophobia; a Communication on the strategy on the rights of the child (2010-2014); initiatives on the possibilities to use family mediation at international level; a Communication on the Social and Economic Integration of the Roma in Europe; and a

Communication on a strategy to combat violence against women, domestic violence and female genital mutilation, to be followed by an EU action plan.

Under the **second priority**, empowering European citizens, the European Commission will, among other initiatives, issue a Citizenship Report including analysis and remedies for obstacles to free movement.

The **third priority** is to strengthen confidence in the European judicial area. This encompassed a recently published legislative proposal for a Council Decision on the enhanced cooperation as regards applicable law on divorce (Rome III). There will also be a compendium of existing Union legislation on consumer law, and a legislative proposal on mutual recognition of the effect of certain civil status documents.

Under the **fourth priority**, ensuring the security of Europe, the European Commission will, among other initiatives, take serious action for combating sexual exploitation of children and child pornography. The European Commission has just adopted a directive proposal in this field. It will also promote relevant measures under the Safer Internet Programme.

Putting solidarity and responsibility at the heart of EU's response is the **fifth priority** of the Stockholm programme and action plan. This will encompass proactive policies for migrants and their rights, including a proposal for a modification of Directive 2003/86/EC on the right to family reunification, an Immigration code (consolidation of legislation in the area of legal immigration), the launch of the third edition of the Commission "Handbook on Integration for policy-makers and practitioners", and a Communication on an EU agenda for integration of migrants, including the development of a coordination mechanism.

• • • More: http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/news/intro/doc/com_2010_171_en.pdf

Future EU Strategy for Gender Equality

A COFACE delegation had a meeting with Daniela Bankier, Head of the European Commission's Unit Equality between Women and Men, on 16 April in Brussels. The discussions focused on the future EU Strategy for Gender Equality 2010-2015 due to be adopted by the Commission in early September 2010.

The **5 key principles** of the future Strategy for Gender Equality are laid down in the Women's Charter published by the European Commission to mark International Women's Day 2010: equal economic independence, equal pay for equal work and work of equal value, equality in decision-making, dignity, integrity and an end to gender-based violence, and gender equality beyond the Union.

Reconciling family and working life remains a priority for, and a key means of, achieving equal economic independence. One big thing will be work/life balance for people with non-child dependents. This was identified as a focal point for the future at a recent Spanish EU Presidency conference on gender equality. It brings in issues of enabling women to keep

working, gender stereotypes and the framework for supporting people with care needs (hospitals must not shift responsibility onto families).

Consideration of a possible future paternity leave directive is also in the European Commission's 2010 work programme.

The responses to the European Commission's autumn 2009 consultation showed the need to **focus more on the role of men** (responses from Member States in particular - the Netherlands, Scandinavian countries - and NGOs). The role of men will therefore be a big cross-cutting priority for the new strategy, and there are plans for a large-scale study to be done on it.

Another big issue is **the gender pay gap**. Legislative initiatives are being considered on this with the social partners. Outside the sphere of legislation, the European Commission plans to work with business to develop good practices, and encourage them to do more, e.g., through gender equality labels (a European label may be created, and a study on existing initiatives finalised). The gender pay gap will be a priority for the Belgian Presidency.

The quality of jobs held by women, identified as a key issue in COFACE's response to the consultation on the future strategy, is also a concern for the Equality between Women and Men Unit.

Seminar on the Consumer Rights Directive

COFACE gave evidence on the Consumer Rights Directive to the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats group in the European Parliament on 14 April. The comments presented to the last COFACE Administrative Council were submitted to the hearing by Nicolas Revenu, Chair of COFACE's Working Group on [Consumer protection, Services and Public Health Services policies](#).



The point of the directive, presented by former Consumer Protection Commissioner Ms Kuneva, is to enable the development of trade within the EU while ensuring a high degree of consumer protection. Now that the text has reached the parliamentary vote stage, MEPs are consulting stakeholders to ensure that it reflects economic and social realities. The hearing came at the issue in terms of the following questions: Will it enhance or weaken the rights of consumers in the EU? What sort of harmonisation would best suit each chapter in the proposal?

COFACE reasserted its support for EU-wide harmonisation to bring more clarity to the right and give access to European citizenship, but stressed the serious practical difficulties posed by full harmonisation in this case.

COFACE's position is that there should be maximum harmonisation of chapters 1 (definitions) and 3 (distance and online contracts) but with a non-regression clause that preserves the rights of consumers in a different Member State for a significant period if they enjoy better protection, plus a targeted maximum harmonisation (limited to a few measures) for the other chapters (on the law of the sale) after an impact assessment study on the non-reduction of rights for consumers in all Member States.

COFACE's proposal is to improve consumer confidence by giving them information from trusted third parties (e.g., consumer organisations, but also certification) and making it easier to compare all features of concern to them (not just those chosen by professionals). For Internet sales: websites should be easier to navigate around and secure comparison sites promoted.

The presentations made by other participants argued that maximum harmonisation was not a realistic option. They sparked a debate chaired by Ms Evelyne Gebhardt MEP. BEUC alluded to Commissioner Viviane Reding's recent statements that she was considering a mixed harmonisation approach.

The big question is whether different legal rules should apply to online sales and face-to-face sales for consumers. Online sales are still very often between parties (sellers and buyers) in the same country. So, does it make sense to create a special difficulty by distinguishing between types of sale? Should harmonisation be confined to cross-border transactions only? But, then, how can you be sure that the two parties are in different countries?

The representative of small and medium-sized businesses disputed that sellers could use only a single contract and did not need harmonisation. He said that the costs of presentation and translation for each target country were very high (at which point it was pointed out to him that the Directive did not deal with these matters).

Ms Gebhardt said that the non-regression clause option had been looked at but that Parliament would only go for it as a very last resort if no other solution could be found.

- • • [COFACE comments on the Consumer Rights Directive](#)

New European Disability Strategy

COFACE had a meeting with Johan Ten Geuzendam, Head of the Integration of People with Disabilities Unit in the European Commission buildings on 9 April. COFACE first gave a short presentation of its position on the new European Disability Strategy, then emphasised the need to mainstream the family dimension of disability across the different relevant European policies as an essential part of implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

COFACE argued that the new strategy should focus on inclusion for people experiencing severe disability and/or with complex care needs, who were among the most excluded groups of citizens in the EU. The Commission might consider making this the subject of mutual learning between Member States, e.g., by organising a meeting to assess good practice in the matter.

Other priorities for COFACE were discussed: inclusive education, access to quality services from early childhood (early intervention) to the end of life (services that meet the needs of disabled elderly people), and measures to support family carers in connection with care in the community policies.

COFACE of course is a member of the expert group on the transition from institutional to community-based care and its report is available on our website: <http://coface-eu.org/en/Disability-Dependence/Deinstitutionalisation/Ad-hoc-Expert-Group/>

Wrapping-up the meeting, the Commission said that the EU's initial aim for the strategy is to ensure that Member States have the wherewithal to implement the UN Convention. This phase is likely to last for a few years. Thereafter, Member States will have to work together towards common goals.

The European Commission is expected to adopt the strategy in October.

European Commission's Work Programme for the years to come

On 31 March, the European Commission has published its Work Programme 2010 "Time to act". This document provides an indicative list of important initiatives for the years 2010-2014. This encompasses strategic initiatives foreseen for adoption in 2010, aiming notably at putting the Europe 2020 Strategy into practice. **Many of these initiatives will have an impact on the daily live of families across Europe.**

Noteworthy strategic initiatives are:

- a Communication on a European Digital Agenda (2nd quarter)
- a Communication on the "Youth on the Move" initiative (3rd quarter)
- a Communication on Youth Employment (4th quarter)
- a Communication on the platform against poverty (4th quarter)
- Relaunch of the Single Market (2nd quarter)
- Action Plan Implementing the Stockholm Programme for freedom, security and justice (published on 20 April) (**see our article in page 6**)
- Revision of the Working Time Directive (proposal due for 4th quarter)
- Citizenship Report including analysis and remedies for obstacles to free movement (4th quarter)
- New comprehensive legal framework for data protection (proposal due for 4th quarter)
- Green Paper on Pensions (2nd quarter)
- Budget Review (3rd quarter)
- Fifth report on economic, social and territorial cohesion (4th quarter)

The Communication on the Platform against poverty will put forward proposals for this Platform and announce changes to the Open Method of Coordination on Social Protection and Social Inclusion. It will look at progress in the social domain and push forward an agenda to generate greater political commitment and visibility, and a stronger positive interaction with other policies. Particular focus will be on active inclusion and child poverty.

Other important initiatives in the pipeline are:

- proposal for a new Multiannual Financial Framework, setting out the budgetary priorities beyond 2013
- Communication on Mainstreaming climate adaptation and mitigation in EU policies and climate proofing of financial instruments
- Communication on the Broadband Strategy
- eHealth Action Plan
- Communication on the Future of universal service and users' rights in the field of telecommunication
- Proposal of the Commission for a Council Recommendation on Early School Leaving
- Communication on Early Childhood Education
- Proposal for a Council Recommendation on informal and non-formal learning
- Initiative on pensions (based on the outcome of the 2010 Green Paper)
- Legislative Proposal on the European Social Fund
- Communication on an EU disability strategy 2010-2020 (*see our article in page 9*)
- Communication on a Gender Equality Strategy (2010-2015) (*see our article in page 7*)
- Communication on the Social and Economic Integration of the Roma in Europe
- Proposals for a Decision on the Progress Programme 2013-2020
- Proposals on reconciliation between work life and family life, based on the outcome of a cost-benefit study carried out in 2010 on paternity leave
- Green Paper on the right to family reunification, and, based on its outcome, proposal for modification of Directive 2003/86/EC on the right to family reunification
- Proposal for a regulation on the conflicts of laws in matters concerning matrimonial property rights, including the question of jurisdiction and mutual recognition, and for Regulation on the property consequences of the separation of couples from other types of unions
- White Paper on the Relaunch of the Single Market
- Communication on an EU agenda for integration of migrants, including the development of a coordination mechanism
- Communication on the Fundamental Rights policy (implementation of the Charter)
- Communication on the strategy on the rights of the child (2010-2014), based on the outcome of a consultation
- Communication on the fight against racism, and xenophobia
- Communication on strategy for data protection
- Communication and Report on the results of the implementation of the Services Directive and its mutual evaluation process
- Communication on a quality framework for services of general interest
- Evaluation report and revision of 2005 Services of General Interest Package, based on the outcome of a consultation

- • • The programme: http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/docs/cwp2010_en.pdf

Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee

OPINION of the European Economic and Social Committee on the "[Roadmap for equality between women and men \(2006-2010\) and follow-up strategy](#)"

- The EESC stresses that reconciling family life and work is crucial to achieving equality and improving jobs for women: high-quality public social services and improvements to existing maternity, paternity and parental leave are essential to that. Progress needs to be made on all social stakeholders accepting responsibility for ensuring that household and caring tasks are fairly divided. The EESC also argues that women are especially vulnerable to social exclusion and poverty. Equal conditions of access to social protection, a guaranteed minimum income, and recognising time spent working shorter hours and stopping work for family reasons as fully paid up tax periods are measures that will improve social protection and reduce the risk of poverty.

OPINION of the European Economic and Social Committee on "[People with disabilities: employment and accessibility](#)"

- The EESC calls for criteria to strengthen disability policies to be included in the future EU 2020 strategy, and for a European Disability Pact to be adopted that will lay the foundations for a new European policy on disability. The European Disability Pact is a proposal made by the European Disability Forum, backed by COFACE.

COFACE news

COFACE's Study Day on "Families and new technologies"

On 6 May, COFACE, in cooperation with the European Economic and Social Committee, is organising a Study Day on Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Three main topics central to families' concerns will be discussed: social networking, video games and mobile technologies.



Parents have many questions about ICT today, and it is essential for us to help them find answers. **Social networking** raises issues about privacy, and especially the role of parents, and how far parental education and control can go. How can parents be certain that children will act responsibly online if they are given the means to do so (e.g., by allowing them to self-moderate content)? Parents also need to be assured that social networking providers are doing their best to protect their users, and so want to know what is being done about policing the Internet generally.

Where **video games** and **mobile technologies** are concerned, we have to realise that these will and already are increasingly incorporating social networking and web 2.0 technologies. SAGEM has now started producing a SIM card which can directly connect to Wi-Fi networks, enabling any mobile phone to connect to an open Wi-Fi network and surf online.

Most children nowadays have mobile phones, and as technology progresses, these come with new features like still and video cameras, and open platforms for applications like Facebook. Parents will soon see their children surfing the web and chatting on social networks from their personal mobile devices instead of at home on the "family" computer.

And finally, video games are becoming increasingly interactive with online gaming features. Also, social networks have developed thousands of "game apps" that children can play. Mobile phones like the iPhone have free downloadable games available from the Appstore. Gaming is becoming increasingly integrated with web 2.0 and mobile technologies.

Mindful of all this, COFACE wants this seminar to be an opportunity for family organisation representatives to learn more about these things by looking not only at current but also future developments, and to come away with the knowledge they need to help families in their home country deal with the challenges and opportunities that ICTs offer.

- • • More: <http://coface-eu.org/en/Education-ICT/ICT/Study-Day/>

COFACE's Memorandum for the renewed European Commission

Although aware that family policy remains a Member State responsibility, COFACE believes that the EU has a real influence on Europeans' family lives, and that the European Institutions must therefore give proper weight to the family dimension of EU policies and initiatives through a positive application of the subsidiarity principle. It also stresses that the content of any family policy at any level must be primarily directed towards addressing families' essential needs in terms of resources, services and time.

Whatever type of family they come from, most Europeans have been, are or will be part of "a family", and opinion polls show that the family still comes at the top of the list of values. Also, the family is now more key than ever in shaping the identity and education of individuals, but also in forging attachment to society.

It therefore calls on the Commission to see that the family life of people living in the Union is taken into account in European decision-making so that all families can see themselves reflected in the shaping of Europe, and take an active part in it. That is a fundamental task of the European Union.

- • • COFACE's Memorandum for the renewed European Commission (April 2010)

New COFACE position on early school-leavers and the role of parents

Following the European Council of 25 and 26 March, the Heads of State and Government of the 27 EU Member States set five priorities to the actions of Member States and the EU in the new EU strategy for employment and growth. One of these five priorities for the next decade is reducing the school dropout rate.

Many studies have been done on the role parents play in their children's academic success. COFACE has just published a new policy position on parents and early school-leaving, making a series of recommendations on the role of parents, including:

- promoting sound parental behaviour and a healthy family life for a positive experience of parenthood.
- promoting welfare services, lifelong learning opportunities and reintegration into the labour market for vulnerable, poorly-educated and/or unemployed parents.
- reconciling the working and private lives of employed parents.
- improved dialogue between parents, schools and other services (social services, etc.).
- a special focus on more vulnerable families like migrant families and those with a disabled parent or child.
- active support of family organisations and their policies to prevent school failure.
- EU policy aspects.

- • • [Read the position](#)
-

New COFACE position on parenting and children at risk

Children are the future of European societies. Their healthy physical, mental and emotional development is something that demands COFACE's undivided attention. The number of children at risk is rising, which is particularly disturbing. The family aspect is crucial to prevention and early involvement. Policy makers should pay more attention to parenting and families' living conditions. Children need positive parenting in order to fit into, take part in and contribute to society – this is a matter of the common good. For that, parents must be supported in their responsibilities for the education and self-actualisation of their children. Investing in parenthood is always a paying proposition, because effective parenting will be handed on from generation to generation.

COFACE has just published a policy position on parenting and children at risk, setting out some basic principles of prevention and early detection. COFACE's recommendations for improving parenting and strengthening family cohesion and well-being are:

- Include “parenting” in policy-making procedures.
- Promote socio-economic measures and policies.
- Work/life balance (for parents).
- Guarantee that parents and families/children at risk will have quality, accessible and affordable support services.
- Co-operation between the state, local services, NGOs and other organisations/associations.
- EU and national government support for social economy initiatives and informal solidarity between families.
- A special focus on more vulnerable families like migrant families and those with a disabled parent or child.
- Engage actively with family organisations in policies to improve parental education.
- Promote equal and complementary parenting by men and women.

• • • • • [Read the position](#)

FamilyPlatform project - Update



FamilyPlatform has now completed its first stage: charting the contemporary field of family research in the EU, assessing existing research, and reviewing current knowledge about the family. Following ongoing work at more than nine research centres across the EU, nine reports have been produced (both in summary and in full) on the following 8 ‘existential fields of the family’; these reports will be of interest to family organisations across the EU:

- 1) Family Structures & Family Forms,
- 2) Family Developmental Processes,
- 3) Major Trends of State Family Policies in Europe,
- 4a) Family and Living Environment,
- 4b) Local Politics – Programmes and Best Practice Models,
- 5) Patterns and Trends of Family Management in the European Union,
- 6) Social Care and Social Services,
- 7) Social Inequality and Diversity of Families,
- 8) Media, Communication and Information Technologies in the European Family.

The next stage of the project is to critically review these reports. In order to achieve this, FamilyPlatform calls for stakeholders to critically review the reports and submit comments via the interactive website. This ensures that as wide a range of perspectives as possible is involved in the review of these papers. To download the reports, and to get involved, visit the website and register as a user at www.familyplatform.eu.

Conference “Housing - fit for life?”



A conference on housing and changing life paths was organised on 23 April by the Ligue des familles in Namur, Belgium. It also ties into **the European Day on Solidarity between Generations on 29 April** with inter-generational aspects very much to the fore.

Getting somewhere decent to live at a reasonable price has now become an increasingly difficult challenge for many ordinary folk. Coupled to this housing crisis are the different life paths that families take, uniting, dividing and blending. Not to mention elderly people who are still active, growing less independent, or in care homes. Access to reasonably-priced quality housing needs to square with the demands of increasingly changing families. The Ligue des familles wants that done through public policies to improve the supply of housing that is appropriate to the wide variety of parents' life paths and the needs of all life stages, and that promotes solidarity within society and between generations.

- • • [Conference programme](#) (in French)

Sustainable development week in France

* Do you know about dual-flush toilets? Do you think to put a lid on the saucepan to boil water? Have you stuck a “no free papers” sticker on your letter box? Do you automatically let fresh air into the house for 10 minutes or so every day? If you see a plastic bag lying in the street, do you pick it up? Do you wait for leftovers to cool down before putting them in the fridge? Do you know about alum stone?

National sustainable development week ran from 1-7 April in France. Some COFACE organisations including Familles Rurales and UNAF were actively involved in it.

Familles Rurales has put a list of questions* (see above) [on its website](#) designed to make people more aware of what sustainable development is all about and encourage more responsible behaviour.

UNAF used the opportunity to publicise the wide-ranging discussion it was having and set about developing an action plan with UDAF and URAF on the theme “No sustainability without families” which will be the keynote theme of its activity and policy report 2010-2012 to be submitted to its forthcoming General Assembly on 19-20 June.

COFACE itself is currently finalising a draft position on “Sustainable development and families” for validation by its Administrative Council on 31 May.

Stats of the month

Eurobarometer special survey on EU citizens' attitudes towards alcohol.

- Excessive drinking (five or more glasses in a single session) crosses all ages, but young people aged 15-24 years are most likely to binge drink every week. However, *people aged 55 and over are much more likely to drink every day than young people. That could lead to an increased risk of chronic illnesses in an ageing population.* Most Europeans see drink driving as risk behaviour, but 14% drive after drinking more than two glasses in two hours which would put their blood alcohol level over the legal limit in most EU countries...

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_331_en.pdf

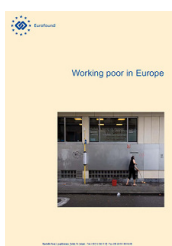
Eurobarometer special survey on patient safety and quality of health care.

- Nearly 50% of the respondents to this survey feel they could be harmed by health care. Over 25% people claimed that they or a member of their family had experienced an adverse event with health care. Many of these events go unreported and a third of respondents did not know which body was responsible for patient safety in their country...

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_327_en.pdf

Publications

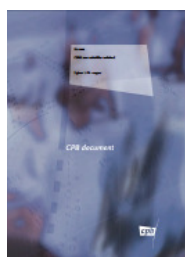
Working Poor in Europe. Eurofound.



While being in employment is a key safeguard against poverty, it does not necessarily guarantee that poverty is no longer a risk. Across Europe, it is estimated that 8% of those in employment are at or below the poverty level (earning less than 60% of median income). A new report from Eurofound finds that policymakers rarely seem to tackle this complex and little-recognised phenomenon directly, dealing with it rather as part of more general anti-poverty measures. Some national governments have, however, set out to address it explicitly. In the UK, for instance, the Income Support scheme is designed to boost the incomes of low-income workers, while in Norway, tax reductions have been proposed for such workers. However, rising unemployment, wage cuts and cuts in working time in response to recession - as well as reductions in social benefits - are likely to have pushed many workers close to the brink of in-work poverty.

The Study: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/docs/ewco/tn0910026s/tn0910026s.pdf>

Child Care Subsidies Revisited. CPB Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis.



Public spending on child care has grown rapidly in the Netherlands. One of the key policy goals of child care subsidies is to stimulate labour force participation. This report studies the impact of child care subsidies on labour force participation using a general equilibrium model.

The choice between formal and informal care plays an important role in the overall impact of child care subsidies on labour participation. The model is calibrated to Dutch data. The analysis shows that existing child care subsidies have promoted labour force participation. However, at the current average subsidy rate of almost 80%, a further increase in the subsidy rate is a somewhat ineffective way of promoting formal participation, as the main effect is to substitute informal for formal care.

Read the report: <http://www.politiquessociales.net/IMG/pdf/doc200.pdf>

Exchange of **information** and experiences

COFACE members' newsletters

<http://coface-eu.org/en/Info-Communication/Members-newsletters/>

European programmes of potential interest to COFACE members

<http://coface-eu.org/en/News/EU-Programmes/>

Meetings of the month

April

- 1: Social Policy Working Group-Europe 2020. Social Platform. Brussels. C. Simonin.
- 6: Meeting with the policy staff of M. Wathelet, Belgian Secretary of State for Family Policy. H. Zeghiche.
- 8: COFACE internal audit. M. Melis (POP, CY).
- 9: Meeting with J. Ten Geuzendam, Head of Integration of People with Disabilities Unit. European Commission. C. Simonin.
- 9: Meeting with NELFA (Network of European LGBT Families Associations). Brussels. W. Lay.
- 12: Meeting with A. Drieskens, Chair of the COFACE Working Group on Social and Family Policies. Brussels. W. Lay, C. Simonin.
- 13: Meeting on reconciling family life and professional life. EPC. Brussels. C. Simonin.
- 16: Meeting with Daniela Bankier, Head of Equality between Women and Men Unit (DG EMPL). Brussels. W. Lay, C. Simonin.
- 20: Meeting of COFACE's Belgian organisations to prepare for the upcoming Belgian Presidency of the EU. Brussels. W. Lay, H. Zeghiche.

22: Social Platform General Assembly. Brussels. W. Lay.
22: Meeting with the policy staff of M. Wathelet, Belgian Secretary of State for Family Policy. H. Zeghiche.
23: Preparation day for the new COFACE strategy 2011-2013. Brussels. COFACE Secretariat.
29: Ad Hoc Expert Group on the Transition from Institutional to Community-based Care. European Commission. Brussels. C. Simonin
28-29-30: FamilyPlatform Project Steering Committee meeting. Witten (DE). L. Farrer.

Forthcoming...

6 May: COFACE study day on "Families and new technologies", European Economic and Social Committee, Brussels.
7 May: Working Group on Education and New Information Technologies Policies, European Economic and Social Committee, Brussels.
25-26-27 May: FamilyPlatform Conference. Lisbon.
31 May: COFACE Bureau and Administrative Council. Brussels.
1 June: COFACE General Assembly. Brussels.



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coface is a pluralistic organisation, at the heart of civil society, which aims at promoting family policy, solidarity between generations and the interests of children within the European Union. **coface** advocates a policy of non-discrimination and of equal opportunities between persons and between family forms, and specifically supports policies aiming at equality between women and men. **coface** links together general and single-issue national family organizations. It currently has more than 51 member organizations across 20 Member States of the European Union. As such, it gives a voice to many millions of parents and children.



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http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/progress/index_en.html