



**Building a Europe
for and with children**

**Construire une Europe
pour et avec les enfants**



**Presidency of Italy
Council of Europe
November 2021 - May 2022**

**Présidence de l'Italie
Conseil de l'Europe
Novembre 2021 - Mai 2022**

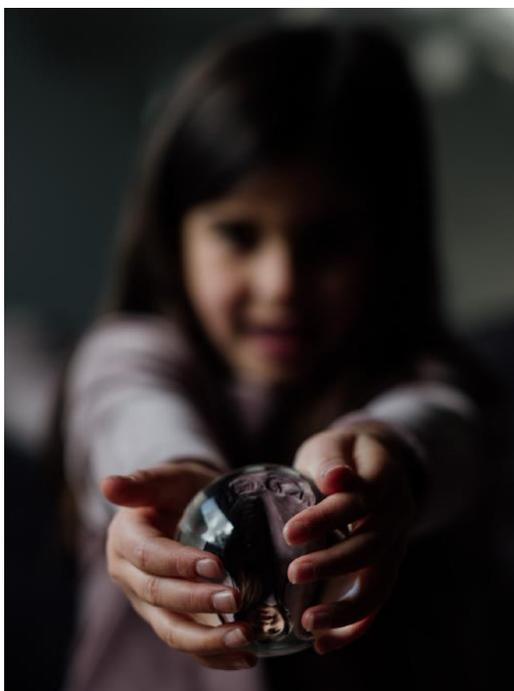


“Beyond the horizon: a new era for the rights of the child”

**High-level Launching Conference for the new Strategy
for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027)**

Draft programme

Update 11/03/22



co-organised by

*the Council of Europe and the Italian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers
at the Ergife Palace Hotel & Conference Center, Rome, 7-8 April 2022*

The Conference

It has been 16 years since the Council of Europe set up the Programme “Building a Europe for and with Children” to enhance its commitment to children and their human rights. Since 2009, this work has been guided by three consecutive Strategies for the Rights of the Child: the Stockholm Strategy (2009-2011), the Monaco Strategy (2012-2015) and the Sofia Strategy (2016-2021). The **new Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027)**, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 23 February 2022, was, for the first time, formally prepared by the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF) which will also oversee the Strategy’s implementation over the next six years.

The High-Level Conference, “**Beyond the horizon: a new era for the rights of the child**”, will launch the “Rome Strategy” (2022-2027) as a European instrument guiding the Council of Europe and its member states in delivering the following six strategic objectives for protecting and promoting the rights of the child:

1. **Freedom from violence for all children**
2. **Equal opportunities and social inclusion for all children**
3. **Access to and safe use of technologies for all children**
4. **Child-friendly justice for all children**
5. **Giving a voice to every child**
6. **Children’s rights in crisis and emergency situations**

The Conference is organised in the framework of and hosted by the Italian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, represented by the Department for Family Policies of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. The Conference will provide an opportunity for high-level representatives of member states and other international organisations to express their commitment to the Strategy and present their visions for the implementation of the rights of the child over the next years and exchange with outstanding international experts in this field, as well as a number of young delegates from different Council of Europe member states.

The Conference will propose a number of thematic sessions where participants can “dive into” some of the recent developments and significant challenges impacting the rights of the child and jointly elaborate guidance for governmental and intergovernmental action to be taken over the next years; participants will also find opportunities for networking and more personal exchanges at side events and on the margins of the Conference.

Programme Overview

Wednesday 6 April			
<i>During the day</i>	<i>Arrival of participants in Rome</i>		
<i>As of 14:00</i>	<i>Early registration for the conference (upon participants' arrival at the hotel)</i>		
<i>As of 19:00</i>	<i>Welcome reception at the hotel</i>		
Thursday 7 April			
<i>8:00</i>	<i>Registration</i>		
9:15-9:45	Opening Ceremony		
<i>9:45-9:50</i>	<i>Moment of transition</i>		
9:50-10:45	High-level plenary session I – High-level dialogue		
<i>10:45-11:30</i>	<i>Coffee break, family photo and press point</i>		
11:30-13:00	High-level plenary session II - Member states and international organisations / INGOs		
<i>13:00-14:30</i>	<i>Lunch break</i>		
14:30-15:30	Plenary session and dialogue – “A Strategy fit for a new reality: the responses to the new horizon of children in crisis situations and emergencies”		
<i>15:30-16:00</i>	<i>Coffee break</i>		
16:00-17:30	Theme I: Strengthening child protection systems in the face of crisis situations		
	“Deep dive conversations”:		
16:00-17:30	A: Ensuring children’s access to quality mental health services	B: Recognising and enforcing children’s environmental rights	Open session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Side event organised by European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) for the launch of the revised Handbook on European law relating to the rights of the child - Dialogue between high-level representatives and young delegates (tbc)
17:30-18:15	Plenary session – Reporting back from day 1		
<i>18:15</i>	<i>End of first conference day</i>		
<i>19:30</i>	<i>Concert directly followed by the official dinner</i>		
Friday 8 April			
9:00-10:30	Theme II: Empowering children and overcoming obstacles to their right to participate		
	“Deep dive conversations”:		
	A: Promoting legal clinics as a means of strengthening children’s access to justice	B: Understanding the challenges faced by children as defenders of human rights	Open session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Children of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe - Work session by young delegates
<i>10:30-11:00</i>	<i>Coffee break</i>		
11:00-12:30	Theme III: Upholding the rights of the child in a fast-evolving technological world		
	“Deep dive conversations”:		
	A. Protecting children from online sexual exploitation and sexual abuse	B: Artificial intelligence: maximising opportunities while minimising risks	Open session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Children of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe - Work session by young delegates
<i>12:30-14:00</i>	<i>Lunch break</i>		
14:00-15:30	Theme IV: National strategies for the prevention of violence against children		
	“Deep dive conversations”:		
	A: Strengthening inter-agency collaboration	B: Comprehensive and age-appropriate sexuality education for preventing violence	Open session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work session by young delegates
<i>15:30-16:00</i>	<i>Coffee break</i>		
16:00-17:30	Plenary session – Reporting back from day 2		
17:30-18:00	Closing session – “What do we take along on our journey towards a new era for the rights of the child?”		
<i>18:00</i>	<i>End of the conference</i>		
<i>Late evening and next day</i>	<i>Departure of participants</i>		

Programme

Wednesday 6 April	
<i>During the day</i>	<i>Arrival of participants in Rome</i>
<i>As of 14:00</i>	<i>Early registration for the conference (upon participants' arrival at the hotel)</i>
<i>As of 19:00</i>	<i>Welcome reception at the hotel</i>
Thursday 7 April	
8:00	<i>Registration</i>
9:15-9:45	<p>Opening Ceremony</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Mr Mario Draghi, President of the Council of Ministers of the Italian Republic (tbc)</i> - <i>Mr Luigi Di Maio, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Italy (tbc)</i> - Mr Benedetto Della Vedova, Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Italy - Ms Elena Bonetti, Minister for Equal Opportunities and Family - Ms Marija Pejčinović Burić, Secretary General of the Council of Europe
9:45-9:50	<i>Moment of transition</i>
9:50-10:45	<p>High-level plenary session I – High-level dialogue</p> <p><i>Moderator: NN</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr Tiny Kox, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe <i>(tbc)</i> - Mr Leendert Verbeek, President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe <i>(tbc)</i> - Mr Robert Spano, President of the European Court of Human Rights - Ms Dunja Mijatović, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe - Ms Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou, Chairperson of the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF) - Young delegates
10:45-11:30	<i>Coffee break, family photo and press point</i>

Thursday 7 April (continued...)

11:30-13:00	<p>High-level plenary session II - Member states and international organisations / INGOs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High-level representatives of member states .../... - High-level representatives of international organisations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms Dubravka Šuica, Vice-President for Democracy and Demography, European Commission (tbc) - Ms Najat Maalla M'jid, UN Special Representative on Violence against Children (UN SRSG VAC) - Ms Afshan Khan, Director, Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, UNICEF - Mr Benoît van Keirsbilck, Member of the United Nations Committee for the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) - Mr Michael O'Flaherty, Director of the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) - Ms Theoni Koufonikolakou, Chairperson of the European Network of Ombudspersons (ENOC) - Ms Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Eurochild - Ms Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, former UN special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children, President of ECPAT International - Young delegates
13:00-14:30	<i>Lunch break</i>
14:30-15:30	<p>Plenary session and dialogue – “A Strategy fit for a new reality: the responses to the new horizon of children in crisis situations and emergencies”</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p><i>Responding to current challenges under the new Strategy:</i> Mr Jeroen Schokkenbroek, Director of Anti-discrimination, DGII, Council of Europe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Child protection in armed conflicts</i> - <i>Crisis and emergency situations as perceived by civil society organisations</i> - <i>Cybercrime in a crisis context</i>
15:30-16:00	<i>Coffee break</i>

Thursday 7 April (continued...)

16:00-17:30

Theme I: Strengthening child protection systems in the face of crisis situations

The rights of the child are at greater risk during crisis and emergency situations. The impact on children of the Covid-19 pandemic, the climate change emergency and the migration crisis illustrate well the need to reinforce prevention, protection and response systems. This session will look at measures taken by States to address some of the specific challenges emerging from current crisis situations and will identify key steps needed to strengthen child protection systems and reduce children's vulnerability in crisis or emergency situations. It will also address the recognition and protection of children's right to a healthy environment.

"Deep dive conversations" (2 parallel sessions):

A: Ensuring children's access to quality mental health services

Focus

Between 2020 and 2022, public health measures to contain Covid 19 have turned children's lives upside down. Lockdowns, isolation, loss of lives and the need to accept uncertainty have impacted children's wellbeing and mental health. Further reflection on how to promote children's well-being and mental health, including in crisis situations, has become critical. What can we learn from the recent pandemic in terms of children's mental health needs? Which measures have proven effective in promoting children's well-being during crisis situations? How can we ensure that children's voices are duly taken into account in mental health responses?

Objectives

Starting from the lessons learnt, this "dive in" session aims to identify national good practices in ensuring accessibility, continuity and quality mental health services for children and to explore the intersectoral approach to mental health prevention and promotion.

Moderator: Ms Theoni Koufonikolakou, Chairperson of the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC)

Speakers:

- **Mr David Anthony**, Chief of Strategic Planning, Convening and Emerging Issues for the UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti
- **Ms Axelle Davezac**, Directrice Générale de la Fondation de France on the « *Etude Solitudes 2021* » (tbc)
- **NN.**, representative of the Council of Europe Steering Committee for Human Rights in the fields of Biomedicine and Health (CDBIO) (tbc)

B: Recognising and enforcing children’s environmental rights

Focus

No group is more vulnerable to environmental harm than children. Air pollution, water pollution and exposure to toxic substances, together with other types of environmental harm, every year, cause 1.5 million children’s deaths under the age of 5 and contribute to disease, disability and early mortality. Nearly one billion children world-wide live in areas exposed to high risk of impact from climate change, which could kill many of them or force them to leave their homes (UNICEF). A lack of effective action to tackle climate change therefore constitutes a violation of children’s rights. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and other UN and European treaties contain provisions that apply to this context. While further work is developed at international level in this field, it is critical to involve and empower children so that they can be part of the solution and make States accountable.

Objectives

This “deep dive conversation” will explore existing standards and some of the cases related to children rights and the right to a safe environment brought before international bodies. It will also discuss work conducted at international level toward the recognition and effective protection of the human right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, particularly for children.

Moderator: Ms Krista Oinonen, Vice-Chair of the Steering Committee on Human Rights (CDDH), Agent of the Government of Finland before the European Court of Human Rights

Speakers:

- **Mr Philip Jaffé**, Member of the UN Committee for the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and coordinator of the UNCRC General Comment on children rights and climate change
- **Ms Jennifer De Temmerman**, Chairperson of the PACE Sub-Committee on Public Health and Sustainable Development and Rapporteur on “Inaction on climate change – a violation of children’s rights”
- **Mr Carles López**, President, Plataforma de Infancia (Spain)

Open session:

- Side event organised by **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)** to launch the revised Handbook on European law relating to the rights of the child
- Dialogue between high-level representatives and young delegates (tbc)

Thursday 7 April (continued...)	
17:30-18:15	<p>Plenary session – Reporting back from day 1</p> <p><i>Moderator: NN</i></p> <p>Reports by adult rapporteurs and young delegates</p>
18:15	<i>End of first conference day</i>
19:30	<i>Concert directly followed by the official dinner</i>

Friday 8 April	
9:00-10:30	<p>Theme II: Empowering children and overcoming obstacles to their right to participate</p> <p>The participation of children in decision-making as a standard practice is already reflected in the commitments of many European leaders, international and European organisations, national authorities, experts, and professionals who have witnessed the substantial benefits of listening and acting upon children’s opinions, expertise and views. However, longstanding practices, social attitudes and political and economic barriers still prevent children from expressing their views in matters that affect them. What is needed to create a more favourable context and provide more opportunities for children to participate? How can we support their activism? What are the particular challenges and risks faced by children involved in activism and standing up for human rights?</p>
	<i>“Deep dive conversations” (2 parallel sessions):</i>
	<p><u>A: Promoting legal clinics as a means of strengthening children’s access to justice</u></p> <p>Focus Legal clinics come in many forms. Although it is not easy to define the concept in a comprehensive way, this session will focus on a better approach to what they are and how they contribute to building child-friendly justice systems. Legal clinics are offered by different organisations, namely universities which aim to organise such clinics so that law students, supervised by law professors or practicing lawyers, can further their training, by providing legal services to justice seekers, and NGO’s that set up such clinics in order to offer justice seekers direct access to justice and corresponding quality social-legal support.</p> <p>Objectives The "dive in session" aims to present examples of legal clinics in different forms. The focus will be on national inspiring practices that contribute to improving access to legal aid and representation of children in justice systems. It will also examine how this model can be promoted more widely across Europe. A deeper understanding will be sought on how these clinics can serve child-friendly justice and engage children in a sustainable way.</p>

Friday 8 April (continued...)

	<p>Moderator: Mr Seamus S. Carroll, Chair of the Council of Europe Committee of Experts on the Rights and the Best Interests of the Child in Parental Separation and in Care Proceedings (CJ/ENF-ISE)</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr Ursula Kilkelly, Professor, University College Cork (Ireland) - Dr Antonios St. Stylianou, Director of the University of Nicosia Law Clinic (Cyprus) - Ms Maartje Berger, Legal Advisor Children’s Rights and Child Protection at Defence for Children (the Netherlands)
	<p><u>B: Understanding the challenges faced by children as defenders of human rights</u></p> <p>Focus Over recent years, children have been speaking up for human rights, have created powerful movements which have triggered significant change. This activism has sometimes come at a high price, with children being victims of physical attacks, harassment, hate speech and social exclusion. What are the risks and obstacles faced by child human rights defenders including in the design of policies that affect them? What measures have proven effective in ensuring that these children stay protected from harm when they express themselves?</p> <p>Objectives Building upon the experience of child activists and defenders of human rights, this “dive-in session” will explore the main challenges children have had to face when defending human rights, the risks they have been exposed to and the measures that must be taken to ensure their right to express themselves, build resilience, prevent and respond to harm.</p> <p>Moderator: Ms Jana Hainsworth, Secretary General of Eurochild</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr Michel Forst, Former UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders - Mr Alex Conte, Executive Director, Child Rights Connect (tbc) - A child rights activist (via Terre des Hommes) (tbc)
	<p><u>Open session:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Children of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe - Work session by young delegates
<p>10:30-11:00</p>	<p><i>Coffee break</i></p>

Friday 8 April (continued...)

11:00-12:30	Theme III: Upholding the rights of the child in a fast-evolving technological world
	<p>Digital technologies offer unprecedented opportunities for children’s well-being and development, enhancing their enjoyment of human rights. However, the complex and constantly evolving nature of the digital environment also presents many risks to children’s safety and creates new challenges for the protection of children’s right to privacy, freedom from violence and exploitation, among others. How can policies and laws effectively protect children in their use of digital technologies, for example against online sexual exploitation and sexual abuse? Which opportunities are offered by artificial intelligence for the prevention, investigation and prosecution of online child sexual abuse and exploitation?</p>
	<p><i>“Deep dive conversations” (2 parallel sessions):</i></p>
	<p><u>A. Protecting children from online sexual exploitation and sexual abuse</u></p> <p>Focus Online child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse continues to increase, with an estimated nearly 22 million reports in 2020, leaving almost as many crimes unpunished and their victims without the needed support. These new and rapidly emerging trends and challenges related to the increased use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) must be addressed in the framework of international human rights, including comprehensive legal frameworks, education, international cooperation and victim support. The Committee of the Parties to the Council of Europe Convention on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (Lanzarote Committee) has examined and addressed specific challenges related to ICTs and the protection of children against some of the worse forms of violence.</p> <p>Objectives This “deep-dive conversation” will first focus on an overview of the increase in online child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse and then on the results of the 2nd thematic monitoring round of the Lanzarote Committee on the “Protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse which are facilitated by information and communication technologies (ICTs)”, in particular on how to “Address the challenges raised by child self-generated sexual images and/or videos”.</p> <p>Moderator: Mr Philip Jaffé, Member of the UN Committee for the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms Susie Hargreaves, CEO, Internet Watch Foundation (UK) - Ms Maria José Castello Branco, Vice-Chairperson of the Lanzarote Committee - Mr Ernesto Caffo, President of SOS Telefono Azzurro Onlus (Italy)

<p>11:00-12:30</p>	<p><u>B: Artificial intelligence: maximising opportunities while minimising risks</u></p> <p>Focus Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems have radically changed children’s lives. AI technologies are embedded in toys, videogames, and adaptive learning software. Algorithms suggest which videos children should watch, which educational path they should pursue and with whom to be friends. Even when AI systems are not used directly by children, they significantly impact their lives and rights. The relation between AI and children’s rights therefore appears to be complex and multidimensional. On the one hand, how do AI systems endanger children’s rights, putting their lives at risk? And on the other, how can AI technologies foster children’s rights, enhancing their well-being?</p> <p>Objectives This “dive in session” aims to explore the potential positive and negative impact of AI systems on children’s rights in order to find solutions and maximize opportunities while minimising risks. In addition, it intends to stimulate the discussion around the provision of a child rights-based framework for AI that outlines rights and duties for relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>Moderator: Ms Vasiliki Charisi, Research Scientist, Joint Research Centre, Centre for Advanced Studies, European Commission</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms Denise Amram, Assistant professor, LIDER Lab, DIRPOLIS Institute & EMbeDS Department of Excellence, Scuola Superiore Sant’Anna (Italy) - Ms Leanda Barrington-Leach, Director of International Advocacy & Head of European Affairs, 5Rights Foundation - Ms Alisha Arora, UNICEF Youth Ambassador - Mr Alain Berthoz, Neurophysiologist, Honorary Professor, Academy of Sciences, Academy of Technologies (France)
<p>11:00-12:30</p>	<p><u>Open session:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Children of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe - Work session by young delegates
<p>12:30-14:00</p>	<p><i>Lunch break</i></p>

Friday 8 April (continued...)

14:00-15:30	Theme IV: National strategies for the prevention of violence against children
	<p>The Council of Europe Policy Guidelines on Integrated National Strategies for the Protection of Children from Violence have outlined a model approach for the adoption, implementation and monitoring of integrated national strategies for the protection of children from violence. More than 10 years later, have national strategies adopted this approach by combining awareness-raising, prevention, early detection, protection and recovery, and promoting inter-agency co-operation? Which are the key strategies and best practices envisaged in Council of Europe member states? How have national legal and policy frameworks responded to the increase of various forms of violence against children during the Covid-19 pandemic? What are the remaining blind spots to be addressed?</p>
	<p><i>“Deep dive conversations” (2 parallel sessions):</i></p>
	<p><u>A: Strengthening inter-agency collaboration</u></p> <p>Focus Specific questions to be addressed are: How can national strategies and legal frameworks coordinate an integrated approach to violence against children and more systematic collaboration between the different public authorities and agencies involved? What are the new approaches to data collection and information-sharing? Which cross-cutting approaches can be further promoted through co-operation projects?</p> <p>Objective This “dive-in session” will share best national practices regarding coordination of services, inter-agency collaboration and data collection mechanisms to handle and prevent violence against children more effectively, including in the context of reporting systems for professionals and in crisis situations such as the ongoing pandemic. It will also address some of the blind spots identified in legislation and policies, as well as barriers to overcome them.</p> <p>Moderator: Mr Alfonso Lara Montero, CEO, European Social Network (ESN) (tbc)</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms Olivia Lind Haldorsson, Senior Adviser and Head of the Children at Risk Unit, Council of Baltic Sea States Secretariat - Ms Carla Garlatti, Italian National Ombudsperson for Children and Adolescents - Mr Andrej Del Fabro, Project Manager of the Barnahus initiative in Slovenia, Ministry of Justice of Slovenia - Ms Lucía Losoviz, Director General of Children’s Rights, Spanish Ministry of Social Rights and Agenda 2030

Friday 8 April (continued...)

	<p><u>B: Comprehensive and age-appropriate sexuality education for preventing violence</u></p> <p>Focus This session will focus on education and awareness raising as a means for building a culture of respect for children’s rights and violence prevention. How can different areas of education, including age-appropriate and comprehensive sexuality education strengthen child protection and the prevention of violence against children, including sexual violence and harmful sexual behaviour by children? What tools are effective to empower and educate children about the risks met in the online environment?</p> <p>Objective This “dive-in session” will share national good practices on education and awareness raising aimed at preventing violence.</p> <p>Moderator: NN. (tbc)</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms Thordis Elva Thorvaldsdóttir, Activist and Journalist specialising in violence prevention, Iceland - Ms Joanna Herat, Senior Programme Specialist in Health Education, UNESCO
	<p><u>Open session:</u></p> <p>Work session by young delegates</p>
15:30-16:00	Coffee break
16:00-17:30	<p>Plenary session – Reporting back from day 2</p> <p><i>Moderator: NN</i></p> <p>Reports presented by adult rapporteurs and young delegates</p>
17:30-18:00	<p>Closing session – “What do we take along on our journey towards a new era for the rights of the child?”</p> <p><i>Moderator: NN</i></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou, Chairperson of the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF) - NN., Representative of the Italian government (tbc) - Ms Regína Jensdóttir, Head of the Children’s Rights Division, Council of Europe - Young delegates
Friday 8 April (continued...)	
18:00	End of the conference
Late evening and next day	Departure of participants