

# Estonian Union for Child Welfare

2006

## 1 The Foundation of the National Section

The Estonian Union for Child Welfare (EUCW) was re-established on the 2nd of October 1988 in Viljandi, Estonia. The Union followed the principles of the Estonian Association for Child Welfare operating in Estonia in 1918–1940 and set its main objectives as follows:

- To introduce the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and to make the information available to the wider public
- To develop theoretical and practical approaches to the social assistance of a child
- To collect and disseminate appropriate information to the public about child and family related issues and problems
- To provide assistance to each child in need
- Children's health protection

The main landmarks describing the development and activities of EUCW since its re-establishment are:

1989	Food and material aid to families and children Beginning of the international co-operation (International Forum for Child Welfare; Christian Children's Fund)
1991	The Republic of Estonia acceded to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
1992	Child abuse prevention: the Republic of Estonia Child Welfare Act was adopted
1993	Work with families in crisis
1994	Development of the movement of foster and adoptive families

- 1995 Organizing children's summer camps and activities for children during summer holidays  
 Informing children and their parents about the principles of the Convention  
 Developing child welfare co-operation network
- 1996 Child and youth counselling network  
 Work with juvenile offenders
- 1997 Work with street children  
 Publishing of a children's periodical
- 1998 Drug prevention in schools  
 Training of teachers on child welfare issues  
 TV programme for teenagers  
 Children's day centres
- 1999 Training of volunteers  
 The subject of child's rights was integrated in the national curriculum of pre-school education  
 Children's work and leisure camps
- 2000 Development of a concept for work with families  
 Integration into the European child welfare network
- 2001 Study into school bullying  
 Developing family services
- 2002 Additional report on the implementation of the Convention to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child  
 Preparing the national strategy and concept for ensuring the rights of the child  
 Establishment of the EUCW Special Foundation
- 2003 Child's Rights Information Centre  
 Community work
- 2004 EUCW became a member of EuroChild  
 Started to provide courses for members on organisational matters
- 2005 EUCW's regional centres were created  
 Cooperation in promoting children's rights in the Baltic States was started  
 EUCW's concept of children's inclusion and participation.  
 EUCW took part in arranging IFCW's yearly conference on Children in Poverty

## 2 Organisation and finance

The Estonian Union for Child Welfare is a non-governmental umbrella organization of legal entities concerned with the advocacy of children's rights, interests and welfare in Estonia. It has six regional centres created in 2005 which coordinate information provision to local communities.

The EUCW is a politically, ideologically and religiously independent democratic voluntary organization fulfilling its objectives through members and with the support of donors and foundations at national as well as international level.

The mission of the organisation is to contribute to ensuring children's rights and shaping a child-friendly society.

## 3 Membership

EUCW members are organisations as well as individuals; there are 33 local societies for child welfare from all over Estonia involving approximately 650 members; of course, not all of them are active.

## 4 Activities

### 4.1 As a National Section

The EUCW is an organization with a long-term tradition and experience in work to create a safe environment and opportunities for the full development of children with the participation and assistance of all members of society. For better fulfilment of its objectives the EUCW undertakes activities in cooperation with public sector institutions, other NGOs and other interested bodies. The activities of the EUCW can be generally divided into five programmes:

1. Children's Rights
2. Children and School
3. Child Abuse
4. Children's Spare Time
5. Children in the Family

EUCW also has an Information Centre (daily activities) which:

- provides information on children's rights and child related issues
- advises parents on certain problems or issues
- sells EUCW's publications
- operates the virtual forum on children's rights
- sells handicrafts made by children

## 4.2 With other National Sections

1. Project *Together we are stronger* — cooperation in promoting children's rights in the Baltic States.

The overall objective was to strengthen civil society in order to decrease violations of children's rights in the Baltic States.

Specific objectives:

- to establish an effectively functioning network of NGOs concerned with the advocacy of children's rights in the Baltic States.
- to involve children and young people in the activities of partner organizations in order to ensure that the opinions of children and young people are heard and taken into account
- to increase the competencies and cooperation skills of the personnel and members of all partner organisations
- to create the prerequisites for the planning and implementation of thematic cross-border projects in the Baltic States

The project lasted eight months, from February to October 2005

2. Project *School Peace* (connected with the EU programme Daphne) — the goal of the programme was to create friendly school environments in association with students and teachers, young people and grown ups.
3. The aim of School Peace programme is to develop an atmosphere in school:
  - where students get to know fellow pupils at school, as well as themselves
  - where, in a friendly and tolerant atmosphere, students can express their own feelings and thoughts
  - where there is cohesion and no-one is excluded
  - where troubles and misunderstandings are solved peacefully

In 2006, a new application was made by MML, EUCW's partner, to extend national co-operation with the EU Daphne programme.

## 5 Future

### 5.1 Priorities until year 2010

Originating from EUCW's statutory goal, mission and vision, the priorities for the next few years are to:

I

1. improve the children's rights situation in Estonia
2. inform the public about the content of children's rights and the importance of respecting them.
3. encourage children's participation

## **II**

1. present, spread and carry out the principles of a family-centered approach

## **III**

1. promote unity and the cultural values of the organisation
2. develop cooperation within society to make it more child-friendly

## **6 Special Features**

EUCW also has a special foundation for outstanding students. The special foundation of the Estonian Union for Child Welfare was established in association with the Estonian National Culture Foundation in 2002 in order to support talented students acquiring basic or secondary education.

The idea of the foundation was initiated by the Bridge Builder prize awarded to the EUCW by the Union of Estonian Associations and the Finnish-Estonian Chamber of Commerce in 2001. As the prize was accompanied by a monetary award, it was decided to use it as the initial capital of the foundation.

Eligible applicants for the EUCW Foundation scholarship have outstanding achievements in a school subject and/or hobby activities, contests, sports competitions etc. The main aim of the scholarship is to support children and facilitate the further development of their talent.