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27 June 2006

To promote the involvement of children in decisions concerning them

Motion for a recommendation
presented by Mrs Cliveti and Mrs Bargholtz and others

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only the members who have signed it

1. Human beings become citizens as soon as they are born. From birth, they enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms, as set out in the European Convention. They may exercise most of these rights (with the exception of electoral rights) from the first second of their lives.
2. That is the theory. In practice, things are very different, for human beings between the ages of one day and 18 years exercise their rights through someone else, an adult who protects and represents them.
3. Children's rights are recognized in virtually all member states: there are specific laws on children's rights. We take an interest in our children, seeing them, and rightly so, as the future of humanity.
4. But we forget that children are part and parcel of humanity as it exists at present, and that the population under the age of 18 accounts for 15% of the population as a whole. Within this category, there are very different groups: tiny children, children whose capacity for discernment is not recognised, older children who may be arrested or given a criminal sentence, those who can marry, those who have children, those who are entitled to use their financial assets, and so on. In other words, "minors" have responsibilities, just like adults.
5. Yet, most of the time, children do not have direct access to the decision-making processes that affect their lives. Childhood is not a transition to life, but a key stage of life that lasts 18 years, during which the human personality is formed and consolidated.
6. It is for this reason that the signatories below propose that the Assembly analyse the way in which children are involved or otherwise in decision-making in the various member states and consider measures to be recommended to ensure their genuine, effective participation.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed ¹:

CLIVETI, Minodora, Romania, SOC BARGHOLTZ, Helena, Sweden, ALDE
ASPHJELL, Jorodd, Norway, SOC
DUPRAZ, John, Switzerland, ALDE
FAUTRIER, Catherine, Monaco, EPP/CD
FLYNN, Paul, United Kingdom, SOC
HANCOCK, Michael, United Kingdom, ALDE
HURSKAINEN, Sinikka, Finland, SOC
HUSS, Jean, Luxembourg, SOC
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McCAFFERTY, Chris, United Kingdom, SOC
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¹ SOC: Socialist Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democratic Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: not registered in a group