Note on the conclusions on Child Labour

The Council of the European Union on its Conclusions on child labour, delivered on June 20, reaffirmed its strong commitment to the elimination of child labour and, in line with this, made a call to the Member States of the European Union to take renewed action, particularly concentrating efforts on vulnerable groups or children in particularly difficult situations as those who directly suffer the ravages of the humanitarian crisis currently happening. Similarly, the Council stressed the importance of undertaking actions with a rights-based approach and that are incorporated into comprehensive plans and programs of action. Also, it urged the European Commission to ensure the mainstreaming of child labour in other sectors and it stressed that social protection floors and quality education are factors that contribute to its reduction.

This entity reaffirmed its commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and encouraged the High Representative and the European Commission to explore how the EU can increase its contribution to the achievement of the 8.7 target of the SDGs. Regarding this point, the Council considers relevant to recognize that child labour and forced labour are closely linked and often are present in similar contexts and sectors. In addition, in the document, the Council stressed the role of workers’ and employers’ organizations and civil society and welcomed the new and ongoing alliances to address child labour and respect for the rights of the child in global value chains. It also highlighted the efforts of the EU in the work of Member States with the private sector, as well as the tools developed by the ILO in partnership with other international agencies seeking to highlight and address the situation of child labour in business. The Council urged the Commission as well to continue exploring ways to use the European Union trade instruments effectively to combat child labour and encouraged it to examine in detail child labour in their procurement policies and consider the usefulness of providing guidance to Member States in this analysis.

The Council invited the High Representative, the European Commission and Member States to encourage and support partner countries in the adoption and implementation of National Action Plans to tackle the multi-dimensions of child labour, and in the develop and strengthen of the collection and dissemination of more and better national statistics and information on children in employment. Also it considered necessary to support policy-oriented research to better understand which policies contribute to the reduction of child labour. The need for strong partnerships between United Nations agencies, in particular UNICEF and ILO, and regional organizations was emphasized as well. The Council welcomed the attention given by the 105th International Labour Conference to decent work in global production chains and employment and decent work for peace, security and resilience. Finally, it urged the preparation and active participation of all stakeholders to the Fourth Global Conference on Child Labour to be held in Argentina in 2017.

For more details: http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10244-2016-INIT/en/pdf