



***FRENCH PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
EUROPEAN UNION***

Meeting of EU Ministers for Family Affairs

Paris, 18 September 2008
Institut du Monde arabe – Paris

Press Kit

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Program day

Rogue's gallery

“Guard of children, for a better conciliation life professional family-life”,
1^{era} round table. Document of discussion of the Presidency

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Meeting of Ministers for Family Affairs

Programme

Thursday 18 September 2008

[Access journalists](#)

9.00 am Reception of the delegations

High Council room of the AWI - 1, rue des Fossés Saint-Bernard Paris, France

9.15 am Opening by Xavier Bertrand, Minister of Labour, Social Affairs, Family and Solidarity

9.30 am Meeting on “Childcare, how to better reconcile family life and working life”

Opening by **Nadine Morano**, State Secretary for Family Affairs

Speech by **Göran Hägglund**, Swedish Minister for Social Affairs

Speech by a representative of the European Commission

Favour families’ freedom to choose, support during the arrival of a child and help parents pursue their careers without neglecting their children
Diversification of childcare methods: should the public-private partnership be increased?

[Access journalists](#)

11.30 am Group Photo

AWI terrace

12.00 pm Lunch of the Ministers for Family extended to key political and institutional figures

AWI restaurant

[Turn of images at the beginning of meeting](#)

1.45 pm Meeting on “Child protection on the Internet”

Opening by **Nadine Morano**, State Secretary for Family Affairs

Speech by a representative of the European Commission

What method and which tools are necessary to surround a technological convergence respectful of children and adolescents?

Parental control: resources to support parents in their parental responsibility

The fight against child pornography in Europe: how are objectives divided up? What methods of cooperation exist?

3.45 pm Closing by Nadine Morano, State Secretary for Family Affairs

[Access journalists](#)

4.30 pm Presidency press conference

Smoking section of the High Council Room

TROMBINOSCOPE



ALLEMAGNE

Mette RISTAU-WINKLER
Directeur général
Ministre fédéral de la famille,
des personnes âgées, de la
femme et de la jeunesse



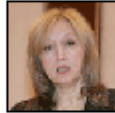
AUTRICHE

Andreas KODOLSKY
Ministre fédéral de la santé,
de la famille et de la
jeunesse



BELGIQUE

Melchior WHATELET
Secrétaire d'Etat au budget
et à la politique des familles



BULGARIE

Ivanka CHRISTOVA
Conseiller du Ministre
Ministre du travail et des
affaires sociales



CHYPRE

M. George PAPAIOORGIOU
Secrétaire permanent
Ministère du travail et des
assurances sociales

DANEMARK

M. Anders Iyng Madsen
Secrétaire permanent adjoint
Ministère de la protection
sociale



ESTONIE

M. Riho RAHUOJA
Secrétaire général adjoint
Ministère des affaires sociales



FINLANDE

Lisa HYSÄLÄ
Ministre des affaires sociales
et de la santé
En charge de la politique de
la famille



ROYAUME-UNI ET IRLANDE DU NORD

Mme. Nicola DISSEM
Directrice adjoint
Ministère des entreprises et
de la réforme de la
réglementation



HONGRIE

Mme. Erzsébet KOVARIK DR
Secrétaire d'Etat
Ministère des affaires sociales
et du travail



IRLANDE

Mme Mary HANAFIN
Ministre des affaires sociales et
familiales



LETTONIE

M. Ainara BASTIKS
Ministre de l'enfance et de
la famille



LUXEMBOURG

M. ME MAJERUS
Premier Conseiller de
gouvernement
Ministère de la famille et de
l'intégration



MALTE

John DALLI
Ministre des affaires sociales

NORVEGE

Mme Annelien HUITFELDT
Ministre de l'enfance, de la
famille et de l'égalité



PAYS-BAS

M. Peter LEVENKAMP
Directeur
Ministère de la justice



POLOGNE

Agnieszka CHLON DOMINCZAK
Secrétaire d'Etat
Ministère du travail et des affaires
sociales



PORTUGAL

M. José VIEIRA DA SILVA
Ministre du travail et de la
solidarité sociale



ROUMANIE

Mme Théodora BERTZI
Secrétaire d'Etat
Ministère du travail, de la famille et
de l'égalité



SLOVAQUIE

M. Miroslav HETTES
Directeur général
Ministère du travail, des
affaires sociales et de la famille



SLOVENIE

Mme Romana TOMC
Secrétaire d'Etat
Ministère du travail, de la
famille et des affaires sociales



SUEDE

M. Göran HAGGLUND
Ministre de la santé et des
affaires sociales



REPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE

M. Michal SEDLAČEK
Secrétaire d'Etat
Ministère du travail et des
affaires sociales

Commission Européenne

Mme Kristin SCHREIBER
Directrice du cabinet du
Commissaire V. ŠPIDLA



Commission Européenne

M. Richard SVETENHAM
Chef d'unité DG Société de
l'information et média



Secrétariat général du Conseil

M. Philippe LANDON
Administrateur

FRANCE

Xavier BERTRAND
Ministre du Travail, des Relations
Sociales, de la Famille et de la
Solidarité



FRANCE

Nadine MORANO
Secrétaire d'Etat chargée
famille, auprès du ministre
Des Relations sociales, de
et de la Solidarité



**Meeting of EU Ministers for Family Affairs
Paris, 18 September 2008**

Childcare, how to better reconcile family life and working life

1st Roundtable

PRESIDENCY DISCUSSION PAPER

Europe faced with new demographic challenges

The European Union is facing major demographic changes which call for the renewal of the solidarity between generations pact.

The proportion of senior citizens will rapidly increase under the double effect of low fertility rates and continually increasing life expectancy.

This aging population is a challenge for all EU social policies that must confront the situation while maintaining the financial balance of the social protection systems.

To meet this challenge, one of the key elements is family policy, mainly the development of childcare services and improved reconciliation of family life and working life.

These efforts must focus on two main lines:

1. **Favouring the family's freedom to choose:** the choice to work or to stop or to reduce their career to take care of their children, to choose one form of childcare as opposed to another.
2. **Diversifying childcare methods,** and ensuring, beyond the public authorities' current efforts, that companies play their role in achieving this objective.

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1. Favouring the family's freedom to choose, providing support during the arrival of a child and helping parents pursue their careers while providing childcare:

The arrival of a child into a household, especially for very young couples, working couples and single parents, is often a source of organisational problems in daily life, both professionally and privately speaking.

One of the main difficulties is access to childcare. The European Council of Barcelona in 2002 set itself ambitious targets by deciding that, by 2010, Member States must have structures to provide childcare for 90% of children between the age of three and the mandatory school age and for 33% of all children under the age of three.

Today the situations within the Member States are very different.

Nevertheless, the need for childcare remains significant in the majority of the Member States of the European Union.

Access to childcare is an important factor when deciding whether to have a child. A Eurobarometer survey carried out in 2006 (*Eurobarometer 2006, Childbearing preferences and family issues in Europe*) shows, at the EU25 level, that 29% of men and 39% of women ages 15 to 39 consider that access to childcare is one of the "very important" factors influencing the decision to have a child.

The employment rate of women (58.3% of women ages 15 to 64 in 2007 in EU27) and the fertility rate (1.5 children per woman in 2004 in EU27) fully justify a strong effort from the public authorities, by encouraging greater involvement from companies to facilitate formalities for the families and provide them with a range of solutions.

Supporting childcare is a productive investment for the community. While it contributes to fighting a declining population, it also favours generation replacement and the workforce availability that the Union needs and will continue to need. This investment is a necessary requirement to achieve the Lisbon objectives

The early childhood policy should promote the freedom to choose and, therefore allow, those who wish to take a parental leave to reconcile caring for their children, particularly infants, and working. It must, however, take into consideration the risks related to a prolonged absence from the labour market, especially for women with few qualifications. The negotiations being carried out by social partners at the European level will help to make progress on these issues.

As regards the childcare policy, the challenge is to provide families with opportunities of access both financially, and in terms of working hours and availability throughout the country, while ensuring the quality of information (information and formality assistance services: a single contact person, for example) and services.

Childcare is indeed a determining factor in fighting the social exclusion and poverty of families: it helps young single mothers with no work experience to quickly find the road to independence and, more generally, it helps low-income parents to remove one of the major obstacles to their job search or their return to the labour market.

2. Diversifying childcare methods: should the public-private partnership be increased?

Tendency:

In the majority of the Member States, there has been an increase in the demand for childcare services over the last several years. These new needs are mainly the result of the strategic objectives of gender equality (Lisbon), labour market flexibility and the changes in family structure. The attention given to childcare services is quite naturally a concern for the large majority of Member States given their effect on the well-being of the children, society and the economy.

Challenges:

In general, the regions and municipalities are responsible for financing these services and receive subsidies from the central government. Childcare services are to a great extent controlled by the central government despite the decentralisation and/or devolution of responsibilities over the last several years. To encourage the creation and diversification of childcare services and to try to limit public spending, a tendency is emerging in the Member States. Market and competition logic are being introduced into a sector of activity from which they were excluded until now and which remains largely dominated by public regulation.

For companies, it is a matter of boosting their involvement in promoting the reconciliation between the private and professional life of their employees, with specific attention for small and medium-sized companies and very small companies. This depends on tax and financial incentives, but could also be achieved through commitments from the companies themselves as is the case with the "Charter on parenthood in the company" signed by about thirty major groups in France.

Encouraging companies to enter into the family sphere is the answer to several concerns:

- Increasing the available quantity of childcare services
- Reinforcing the appeal of territories in addition to public interventions
- Meeting needs as closely as possible to employee expectations to facilitate the reconciliation between working and family life.
- Deal with the changing labour market given the increasing importance of flexibility.
- Making companies aware of their responsibilities as regards the working hour constraints of their employees (atypical working hours, night shifts, etc.)

At the European level the social partners (BusinessEurope/UEAPME, CEEP and CES) have already taken over the issue by writing a joint letter on childcare sent on 7 July to Commissioner Spidla. This joint project, which falls under their "framework for action on equality between men

and women” and its “reconciliation of family and working life” chapter, particularly demonstrates their commitment to these issues.

Prospects:

In this context and considering these challenges, introducing market mechanisms must continue and be reinforced. It is however difficult to conceive that these mechanisms can develop without the strong support of the public authorities in favour of increasing the disposable income of families. Due to the issues of unequal access within countries, it is also difficult to imagine the public authorities abandoning all regulatory policies.

New strategies which take into account the new interactions among the different levels of the public authorities, the profit-making sector, non-profit-making sector and civil-society organisations, must be encouraged in the Member States.

In France, different companies are grouped together in industrial parks encouraging the implementation of a shared childcare service. Some employers are introducing a specific economic model on how these childcare services function in order to facilitate access for all companies and to meet their expectations of involvement on this particularly important social issue.

Questions:

- ▶ How can Member States reinforce their resources to achieve the objectives set in 2002 in Barcelona? How can we set up accessible, quality services to cover the needs of working parents? How can we encourage the diversification of childcare methods in the interest of the families and the children?
- ▶ How do the Member States encourage greater involvement from companies and social partners to improve reconciliation between family and working life for employees especially through the availability of childcare services? Have there been any conclusive experiments in the Member States?



**Meeting of EU Ministers for Family Affairs
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Child protection on the internet

2nd Roundtable

PRESIDENCY DISCUSSION PAPER

Protecting children in a Europe of information and communication technologies.

Communication networks are powerful levers that simplify our everyday lives. They are an opportunity for wealth and development for people and countries. Nearly 1.2 billion people are connected to the Web. One fifth of the world's population uses an Internet service at least once a month.

Over 42% of European households have a high-speed Internet connection¹. One in ten Europeans has already created their own Web page. Undeniably, the efforts made in terms of infrastructures and equipment by the States and citizens place Internet at the top of the list of media with the greatest potential for development.

The current convergence of audiovisual and telephone technologies supports that potential. Observers point out that the turnover resulting from e-commerce will have increased from 40 thousand million euros in 2004 to 167 billion euros in 2009².

In such a socially and economically key context, what importance is given to protecting children from these technologies? A recent European study³ shows that children and adolescents of the Member States⁴ use the Internet in a "remarkably" similar way. The two activities most frequently mentioned by the young people polled are online games and information research. Furthermore, the combination of the cross-border and instantaneous nature of the Internet exposes young Europeans to the same risks regardless of their nationality or place of residence.

Thus, if the Internet provides economic and cultural wealth for the States and the families, it also conceals dangers for its younger users: confrontation with traumatic content or remarks, contact with ill-intentioned adults, cyber blackmail, aggressive marketing, glorification of risky behaviour, various manipulations and disinformation, addiction, etc.

Just as in other areas of social life, child protection must move into the field of Internet and associated technologies. That involvement must focus on three main lines:

- what methods and tools should be used to support a technological convergence that is respectful of children and adolescents?
- parental control: the resources to support parents in their parental responsibility;
- the fight against child pornography: towards a preventive cooperation in Europe.

¹ Survey by the European Commission on the 27 Member States of the Union, *The Use of Internet in 2007, households and individuals*.

² Forrester Research.

³ *Safer Internet for children*, qualitative study, European Commission, Directorate General for information society and the media, May 2007.

⁴ The 27 Member States to which Iceland and Norway were added.

1.- What methods and tools should be used to support a technological convergence that is respectful of children and adolescents?

Internet connectivity is constantly improving. Now quicker and more fluid, the connection between internet users has been simplified. The equipping of hardware and places, particularly public places (train stations, schools, public parks, etc.) with WiFi networks favours nomadic access to the Internet. Already, 3rd and 4th generation mobile telephones can be used to surf the Internet. On the whole, three out of four European children aged 9-10, and nine out of ten aged 12-14 own a mobile telephone⁵. In 2013, over 125 thousand million Europeans⁶ will regularly access the Internet using their mobile telephone.

The significant progressive nature of these technologies makes the issue of children navigating alone on the network, away from the eyes of adults, like parents or any other teachers (52% of the 11-17 age group surfs the Internet in an isolated room: office, bedroom⁷) all the more meaningful.

With its Multiannual Community Programme (Safer Internet), the European Commission is already aiming to protect children when using Internet and other communication technologies. This year it is suggesting extending the programme for another 5 years.

The Safer Internet programme was established for the first time for an initial period of four years from 1999 to 2002 and although it was not specifically focused on children as it was intended for all Internet users in general, programme extensions were developed for the 2003-2004 period to include children and adolescents as they are often the first to make use of new possibilities.

The compatibility of child and adolescent protection tools with the various services that exist on the Web is a joint challenge that must be taken up by manufacturers and the public authorities. Such partnership experiences are currently under way. Most of them still require technological development efforts. Exchanging good practices and disseminating pertinent technical solutions would help to accelerate the implementation of effective responses.

2.- Parental Control: resources to support parents in their parental responsibility

Supporting parents in their parental responsibility implies greater awareness of the risks that exist on the Internet for their children and teenagers. More than one in two European parents expects awareness-raising and information initiatives regarding the risks found on the Internet from the authorities⁸.

Whether through self-regulation, co-regulation or legislative development, or even the combination of these different approaches, the Member States involved in a process to protect children from the Internet have obtained initial results, particularly in terms of information and awareness, as well as illegal content signalling services.

For parental responsibility to be as effective on the Internet as it is elsewhere, it also seems necessary to organise families' access to technical resources (signalling sites, software, databases, etc.) that will allow parents to fulfil their obligations in the best possible conditions. Among other issues are those of the effectiveness of the hot lines and help lines or the parental control programmes, their evaluation and technical upgradeability, cost for the families (free, purchase, subscription).

Furthermore, if several programmes allow the different police and justice services of the Member States to work together in the fight against offences on minors, then European cooperation that more closely involves the public players of family policies would provide a new dimension to this fight by more closely fitting into the experience and everyday life of families, on one hand, and combining the repressive and preventive factors into one action, on the other.

⁵ *Safer Internet for children*, qualitative study, European Commission, Directorate General for the Information Society and the Media, May 2007.

⁶ 38% of mobile telephone users.

⁷ Ifop/DIF poll, September 2005.

⁸ Eurobarometer poll, 2004.

3.- Fighting child pornography in Europe: how are objectives divided up? What means of cooperation exist?

Child pornography is certainly the most horrible offence committed against children on the Internet. Several million images showing minors in situations of child pornography are constantly accessible on the network. This figure continues to increase. Estimates of the number of websites supplying such content range from 100,000 to over 470,000⁹. Children are victims for two reasons: they are directly involved in scenes of aggression perpetrated by an adult; and because they are confronted with these traumatic images or texts. 36% of 11-17 year olds declare having been confronted with "violent, shocking or pornographic" images at least once¹⁰.

In a certain number of European States, access providers have accepted to filter websites with child pornography content, particularly the database of lists containing several thousand URLs and which are continuously being updated.

This type of filtering is an appropriate response to the risks of accidental exposure to child pornography sites or incited via legal sites, as well as exposure through hyperlinks or ads. It would also make it harder to voluntarily consult those same websites. Lastly, receiving a connection refusal message along with a warning on the illegal nature of the query when trying to access such websites helps raise awareness of child protection among Internet users.

Lastly, the infringement of the law and offences against human dignity, which are numerous and all too often go unpunished, might allow those responsible to believe that there is a form of inaction or disinterest on the part of the public authorities with regards to their inadmissible acts. While continuing to respect the fundamental principles of freedom of expression and respect for privacy, it is imperative to get the measure of the offences committed by cyber criminals against young people and society in general.

Prospects:

- For all of these challenges, the necessary measures must be taken with force and determination. Internet must, like any other public place, be able to be used as a place where individuals can express themselves and blossom without running the risk of being abused.
- 1.- The technological convergence in terms of information and communication will gain in including the duty to protect children and adolescents. Such consideration must come from all players in the sector. Partnership must be concluded to: move the fight against offences on minors outside the competitive realm; and allow for the necessary technical developments, define common objectives, exchange good practices. This commitment from the players will follow perennial solutions in the objectives, evaluated on their technically upgradeable performances.
- 2.- Due to the technical complexity of the Internet environment and the significant progressive nature of the sector, the resources for parents to exercise their parental responsibility must be supported by industrial players and the public authorities. Child and adolescent protection tools must be developed and made easier for families to access.
- 3.- Sites containing child pornography content are illegal. Their creators, editors, promoters and users must be prosecuted. Adult and minor internet users should be able to be protected from such sites. These objectives require European coordination on these issues.
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⁹ Respectively: Internet pornography statistic (2006) and Action Innocence Association.

¹⁰ Ifop/DIF, September 2005.