What can we learn from families in Europe?

Declaration of the Civil Society on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the International Year of the Family

Ignacio Socías · Warsaw, April 2013
Twentieth Anniversary of IYF 2014

The twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF) offers an opportunity to refocus on the role of families in development; take stock of recent trends in family policy development; share good practices in family policy making; review challenges faced by families worldwide and recommend solutions.

Owing to rapid socio-economic and demographic transformations, families find it more and more difficult to fulfill their numerous responsibilities. Many struggle to overcome poverty and adequately provide for the younger and older family members. It is also more and more difficult for them to reconcile work and family responsibilities and maintain the intergenerational bonds that sustained them in the past.

In response to these trends, the preparations for the twentieth anniversary of the IYF will focus on exploring family-oriented policies and strategies aiming mainly at confronting family poverty; ensuring work-family balance and advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity. The preparatory process is to accelerate progress in family policy development; demonstrate its relevance for overall development efforts and draw attention to the role of different stakeholders in achieving these goals.

The preparations for the twentieth anniversary will include:

1. The International Year of the Family
2. Regional Meetings
3. Background Papers
4. Resources
The Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development (DIIFSD),
The International Federation for Family Development (IFFD)
and The Committee of the Regions of the European Union
in cooperation with the
Focal Point on the Family, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
are pleased to invite you to the
Raise Awareness Meeting

Poverty, work-family balance and intergenerational solidarity
convened as part of preparations for the Twentieth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, 2014
2012 - TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FAMILY

The Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development (DIIFSD),
The International Federation for Family Development (IFFD)
and the Committee of the Regions of the European Union
in cooperation with the
Focal Point on the Family (UNDESA)

European Expert Group Meeting
"Confronting family poverty and social exclusion;
ensuring work-family balance;
advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity
in Europe"

Convened as part of preparations for the
Twentieth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, 2014
(Cfr. Report of the Secretary-General,
Preparations for and observance of the twentieth anniversary of the
International Year of the Family in 2014,
A/67/61-E/2012/3)
Actual and ultimately intended number of children of women age 25-39, 2006

SOURCE: DOING BETTER FOR FAMILIES - © OECD 2011
Age structure of the national and foreign population, EU-27, 1 January 2012 (%)

Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr_pop2ctz)
When couples part: Understanding the consequences for adults and children
Lester Coleman and Fiona Glenn
One Plus One

State of the art report
“The Effects of Marital Instability on Children’s Well-being and Intergenerational Relations”

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Confronting family poverty and social exclusion
Ensuring work-family balance
Advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity
In Europe

European Expert Group Meeting
Convened as part of preparations for the
Twentieth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (2014)
In cooperation with the Focal Point on the Family (United Nations DESA)

Brussels
6-8 June 2012
European Union
European Platform for Investing in Children

In the spotlight

The Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union (COFACE) 2014 Campaign: European Year for Reconciling Work and Family Life

COFACE not only studies how families live and the challenges they face, but also aims to address how policy might be shaped to try and make the lives of men, women and children happier, and the decisions they make easier. In 2010 COFACE initially proposed that 2014 should be a year to focus on family well-being. Having advocated strongly since this initial proposal, COFACE and its members have now received positive reactions from the European Parliament and the European Commission to 2014 European Year for Reconciling Work and Family Life. Whilst one focus of the year aims to match people's skills to jobs, it also aims to improve the well-being and lives of European citizens. COFACE hopes that 2014 will mark a year of positive change for families in Europe.

See all events

Contact us

Irish Presidency of the Council of the EU

COPACE
Confederation of family

Events
- 24/04/2013
Round table debates on Grandparents as carers - Trends and support services in Europe
- 06-07/05/2013
The 4th European Demography Forum will take place in Brussels on 6-7 May

See all events
Commission for Social Development
Fifty-first session
6-15 February 2013
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the
twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority
theme: promoting empowerment of people in achieving poverty
eradication, social integration and full employment and decent
work for all

Statement submitted by International Federation for Family
Development, a non-governmental organization in consultative
status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being
circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council
resolution 1996/31.
Preparations for and observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2014

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in response to General Assembly resolution 66/126 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2012/10. It focuses on good practices in family policymaking in the areas of confronting family poverty and social exclusion, ensuring work-family balance and advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity. It reviews the state of preparations for the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2014 at all levels.
An initiative of
International Federation for Family Development
co-sponsored by
Make Mothers Matter International
World Family Organization
Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development
World Youth Alliance
House Renaissance Foundation
World Union of Catholic Women’s Organizations
Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe
European Federation of Parents and Carers at Home
European Large Families Confederation
European Christian Political Foundation
New Women for Europe
Forum Européen des Femmes
European local inclusion and social action network (ELISAN)
CARE for Europe
Veneto Region

The following national organizations have also joined the above Declaration (as of 1st March 2023):

Asociación Familias Formando Familias (Argentina)
Asociación Mundial para la Familia y la Educación (Uruguay)
Aspof - Asociación para la orientación familiar (Costa Rica)
ASPOF (Costa Rica)
Association Camerounaise pour le Développement de la Famille (Cameroon)
Association pour la Famille (Congo)
BeFamily (Portugal)
Caribbean Institute for Family Development (Trinidad Tobago)
ConoEx - Centro de Orientación Familiar (Portugal)
Corporación de Desarrollo Educativo y Familiar (Puerto Rico)
Culádsépô Fórum Egyésület (Hungary)
Edukild (Philippines)
Famílias Formando Familias (Argentina)
Familia & Education Suisse Romande (Switzerland)
Famille et Education (Ivory Coast)
Family Development Foundation (United Kingdom)
Family Enrichment Canada
Family Enrichment Uganda (Uganda)
Family Enrichment USA (United States)
Family First Foundation (China - Hong Kong)
Famílias - Famílias que ayudan a otras Familias (Colombia)
Famílias - Instituto de Ciencias del Matrimonio (Peru)
FPA - Family Education Australia (Australia)
FEN - Family Enrichment Netherlands (Netherlands)
FEFCT (Spain)
Family Enrichment Society (Singapore)
Parlament de la Família (Spain)
Slovenský Spolku (Slovakia)
Slovenjski Spolku (Slovenia)
Svensk Mammastad (Sweden)
Sudanese Mothers Matter
Swedish Mothers Matter
Turkish Mothers Matter
Universitas Indonesia
Venezuela Mothers Matter
Women’s Board (Nigeria)

Fundación Masfamilia (Spain)
Fundación para la Familia (Honduras)
Gesellschaft Für Familienorientierung (Austria)
Haro (Sweden)
Harte Oor (South Africa)
IDF - Institut Van De Familie / Institut de la Famille Asbl (Belgium)
IIB - Institut Für Eheberaterung (Germany)
Instituto Brasileiro da Família (Brazil)
Instituto de Matrimonio y Familia (Ecuador)
Instituto de Política Familiar (Spain)
Institut Edukacije I Rodinnosti (Poland)
IPED - Institut pour l’éducation dans la famille (France)
Jafür - Japan Family Development Association (Japan)
Klub manželských rodin (Slovakia)
LAR (Mexico)
Louder 100 (Poland)
Nigerian Association for Family Development
Obiteljko Obžagovljene (Croatia)
Observezores Ciudadanos de la Familia A.C. (Mexico)
Pan-Hellenic Union of Association Families with 2C (Greece)
Profamilia (Czech Republic)
Profesionales por la ética (Spain)
Program for Family Development (Kenya)
Raíces - Centro de Orientación Familiar (Peru)
Rural Reconstruction Foundation (Bangladesh)
Safi (South Africa)
Siajma Universitetas (Lithuania)
Service and Research Institute on Family and Children (India)
Sistema Famigla: C. P. del Centri di Orientamento Familiare (Italy)
Voice of the Family in Africa (South Africa)
Women’s Board (Nigeria)
DECLARATION OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY ON THE OCCASION OF THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FAMILY

The representatives of the civil society organizations, academics and policy makers named below,

Acknowledging the right to found a family, as described by the art. 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Recognizing that, as basic and essential building blocks of societies, families have a crucial role in social development, bear the primary responsibility for the nurturing, protection, education and socialization of children, as well as instilling values of citizenship and belonging in the society, and provide material and non-material care and support to its members, from children to older persons or those suffering from illness, sheltering them from hardship to the maximum possible extent, [1]

Recalling that this social protection function performed by families is especially important in times of increased uncertainty and vulnerability, when families find it more and more difficult to fulfil these multiple roles and tackle all responsibilities entrusted to them, [2]

Emphasizing that family-focused policies have proven both valuable and efficient in many areas of social development, and that the very achievement of Millennium Development Goals depends on how well families are empowered to contribute to it, [3]

Expressing the will to work closely with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs in a coordinated manner on family-related issues, including the preparations for the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family. [4]

1. Welcome the call made by United Nations to celebrate the forthcoming twentieth anniversary, in 2014, of the International Year of the Family, noting the opportunity it provides to revisit family-oriented public policies and family-related efforts. [5] support the efforts to aim at a world where families are valued, supported and promoted.
1. Welcome the call made by United Nations to celebrate the forthcoming twentieth anniversary, in 2014, of the International Year of the Family, noting the opportunity it provides to revisit family-oriented policies as part of overall development efforts. [5] supporting its objective to aim at responding to challenges faced by families and continuing to guide national efforts that benefit families worldwide [6] and to integrate a family perspective [7] by introducing a family impact report or assessment as a standing and compulsory part of policymaking;

2. Urge Member States to enhance and strengthen family mainstreaming in policy making at all levels, considering the impacts of socio-economic policies on families; to develop, promote and implement family-friendly policies aimed at providing sustainable, affordable and quality living conditions for families; and to empower families and recognize their role in social cohesion and economic development; [8]

3. Invite Member States to recognize the right of families to sufficient resources and social assistance and the right to live in a manner compatible with human dignity, recalling that this is a common vital issue for single-parent, large and immigrant families; to develop, promote and implement policies aimed at ending child poverty through the eradication of family poverty, and encourage social, economic and educational policies to prevent intergenerational transmission of poverty; and to promote the provision of integrated services for families and family-friendly taxation policies and practices, including reduced taxes on goods and services for early childhood products and services; [9]

4. Request Member States to recognize and communicate the value of balancing family and work in the economy and in society; to develop, provide and communicate comprehensive well-resourced and flexible parental leave entitlements, to promote skill development and learning systems throughout the life course of the family and in periods of transition, to facilitate parents’ re-entering the labor market, and to enhance dialogue and partnerships between social policy makers and relevant stakeholders, including families, family associations, business sector, trade unions and employers to develop and improve family-friendly policies and practices in the workplace; [10]

5. Encourage Member States to facilitate intergenerational solidarity, quality couple and family relationships, parenting programmes; high-quality childcare and other ancillary services which support families; promote and develop active measures to support the psychological well-being of children and youth with sensitivity to family situations; prevent violence, addictions and juvenile delinquency; and promote school to work transitions and young adults’ economic security to facilitate family formation and stability, particularly among those with insecure socio-economic resources; as well as to promote and develop public policies concerning the support to the elder members of the family, especially in situations of particular need such as cases of Alzheimer or similar diseases. [11]

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