

## **MEDIA RELEASE 29/05/09**

### Call for children's rights to be top priority in Europe elections

Children in Scotland has welcomed support from the Scottish Liberal Democrats and Scottish National Party for the establishment of a European children's rights strategy in the next European Parliament, expressed in response to five key priorities set for Scottish candidates in the European elections on 4 June.

Children in Scotland drew up the list, which calls on MEPs to make children's rights a priority by:

1. Helping make the EU a leader in children's rights by 'child rights proofing' all EU policies and actions to ensure their impact on children's rights is taken into account;
2. Advocating for children's views to be sought out and listened to in EU decisions and discussions, and for children to be empowered to participate;
3. Acting for sufficient resources to be provided for children's rights in the EU budget;
4. Promoting ambitious EU action for the eradication of child poverty and social exclusion in the UK;
5. Backing EU action to protect children against violence, abuse and exploitation.

Responses from all the political parties that currently represent Scotland in Europe are in *Children in Scotland* magazine, published today.

Dr Bronwen Cohen, Chief Executive of Children in Scotland and Editor in Chief of *Children in Scotland* magazine, said:

"What happens in the European Parliament has a direct effect on Scottish policy and legislation. There is huge potential in these elections to improve the lives of Scotland's children and families. More needs to be done to ensure more equitable access to services for young children across Europe and to enable better cooperation and cross learning in addressing issues of child protection, poverty and social exclusion. The priorities we have identified are key to building a successful future for Scotland's children."

**- Ends -**

### **Notes to Editors**

1. Over 100 million children aged 0–18 live in the European Union. All EU member states have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and in 2006 reached an agreement to develop a children's rights strategy. No formal process has yet been adopted.

2. According to the latest figures from the Scottish Government 18% of Scotland's population was under 16 in 2008. In May 2009 Government figures showed one in five children in Scotland live in relative poverty.

3. Children in Scotland is directing a cross-European programme examining how improving the skills and qualifications of those working with our youngest children can help reduce poverty and improve social inclusion. *Working for inclusion: the role of the early years workforce in addressing poverty and promoting social inclusion* is taking place simultaneously in Scotland, Poland, Norway, Italy, Slovenia, France, Denmark, Portugal, Sweden and Hungary and will offer an overview of developments throughout the EU. For further information, contact Karen Mountney at [kmountney@childreninscotland.org.uk](mailto:kmountney@childreninscotland.org.uk).

4. The policy paper *Young children and their services: developing a European approach*, published by Children in Scotland for the network Children in Europe, reiterates calls for a more integrated and child-centred approach to early childhood education and care across Europe. To download a copy visit [www.childrenineurope.org](http://www.childrenineurope.org).

**Further quotes are available. Contact Tracey Francis on 0131 222 2419, or by email at [tfrancis@childreninscotland.org.uk](mailto:tfrancis@childreninscotland.org.uk).**

**Children in Scotland** is the national agency for voluntary, statutory and professional organisations and individuals working with children and their families in Scotland. It exists to identify and promote the interests of children and their families and to ensure that relevant policies, services and provision are of the best possible quality and able to meet the demands of a diverse society. For further information visit: [www.childreninscotland.org.uk](http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk)