



CHILD RIGHTS TOOLKIT

Integrating Child Rights in Development Cooperation

Introduction





CHILD RIGHTS TOOLKIT

EU-UNICEF
Child Rights Toolkit:
Integrating Child Rights in
Development Cooperation



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Programme Division, 2014

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CONTENTS

Foreword from EU Commissioner for Development Andris Piebalgs xi

Foreword from UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake xiii

Introduction

Purpose and scope	1
Target audience	2
How to use this toolkit	2
Toolkit contents	3
Endnotes	5

Module 1: Overview of Child Rights in Development Cooperation

Acronyms and abbreviations	2
1. Introduction	3
1.1 Purpose and objectives	5
2. Key concepts and considerations	5
2.1 Childhood – a protected space	5
2.2 Vulnerability and types of discrimination	7
2.3 Key approaches to programming for children	8
2.4 Applying a human rights-based approach	9
2.5 Overview of key stakeholders	11
3. International legal framework	12
3.1 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	12
3.2 Other relevant treaties and standards	18
3.3 EU commitments to child rights	18
4. Child rights country context analysis	21
4.1 Purpose and objectives of the analysis	23
4.2 Step 1: Review critical resources	24
4.3 Step 2: Analyse patterns of social exclusion and identify underlying factors	26

TOOLS 31

Tool 1.1 Child rights country context analysis	31
Tool 1.2 Global child-focused indicators	36
Tool 1.3 Additional sources of data and child-focused databases	37

Annexes 39

Annex 1.1 The nature of childhood	39
Annex 1.2 Other relevant human rights treaties and standards	41
Annex 1.3 CRC negotiation and related controversies	42

CHILD RIGHTS TOOLKIT

Annex 1.4 Concluding observations	44
Annex 1.5 UN Common Learning Package on HRBA Programming	46
Annex 1.6 References/resources	47
Endnotes	50

Module 2: Child Rights in Programming and Sector Policies

Acronyms and abbreviations	2
1. Introduction	3
1.1 Purpose and objectives	5
2. Key considerations	5
2.1 Aid effectiveness agenda and EU development policy: A child rights perspective	5
2.2 Policy dialogue: Realizing child rights commitments through programme and project cycle management (PPCM)	6
2.3 Challenges of putting in place a child rights focus	7
3. Mainstreaming child rights in programming	9
3.1 Assessment of the country and sector contexts	9
3.2 Identification of strategic responses	13
4. Mainstreaming child rights in the cycle of operations	17
4.1 Integration in the identification stage	17
4.2 Integration in the formulation stage	18
4.3 Integration in the implementation and monitoring stages	19
4.4 Integration in the evaluation stage	20
5. Child rights in sector programmes	24

TOOLS 29

Tool 2.1 Child rights screening checklist	29
Tool 2.2 ToRs for addressing child rights issues in feasibility studies to be conducted at the formulation stage	30
Tool 2.3 Sector checklists: Education, Vocational Training and Culture	31
Tool 2.4 Sector checklists: WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene)	37
Tool 2.5 Sector checklists: Social Protection	41
Tool 2.6 Sector checklists: Rural Development	46
Tool 2.7 Sector checklists: Urban Development	50
Tool 2.8 Sector checklists: Transportation (Infrastructure and Services)	54
Tool 2.9 Sector checklists: Energy	58
Tool 2.10 Sector checklists: Finance	61
Tool 2.11 Sector checklists: Criminal Justice	65
Tool 2.12 Sector checklists: Nutrition	70

Annexes	72
Annex 2.1 References/resources	72
Endnotes	74

Module 3: Child Participation

Acronyms and abbreviations	2
1. Introduction	3
1.1 Purpose and objectives	3
2. Key issues and considerations	5
2.1 Participation as a right	5
2.2 Participation as a path to other rights	5
2.3 Participation as a contributor to child-development, programmatic and societal outcomes	6
2.4 EU's commitment to child participation	7
2.5 Challenges to realizing participation rights	7
3. Mainstreaming child participation within country programming	8
3.1 Participation rights context analysis	9
3.2 Child participation in programme implementation	11
3.3 Evaluation of child participation	11
4. Recommended interventions to realize participation rights	13
4.1 Awareness-raising to change attitudes	13
4.2 Building capacities, skills and behaviours for meaningful participation	14
4.3 Establishing standards for child participation	15
4.4 Ensuring mandated and allocated resources: time, money and people	15
4.5 Establishing structures, procedures and mechanisms for consultation	17
4.6 Mobilizing children and young people to participate	17
4.7 Integrating child participation in settings frequented by children	19

TOOLS	25
Tool 3.1 Matrices for assessing the environment for child participation	25
Tool 3.2 Matrix for assessing the scope of child participation	32
Tool 3.3 Matrix for assessing the quality of child participation	34
Tool 3.4 List of outcome indicators	40

Annexes	43
Annex 3.1 Opportunities for child participation at local and national levels	43
Annex 3.2 Approaches to integrating child participation in programming	47
Annex 3.3 References/resources	50
Endnotes	53

Module 4: Child Rights in Governance

Acronyms and abbreviations	2
1. Introduction	3
1.1 Purpose and objectives	5
2. Key considerations	5
2.1 Definition and key principles	5
2.2 EU commitments to governance and child rights	7
3. Mainstreaming children in governance reforms programming	8
3.1 Child rights-sensitive governance assessment	9
3.2 Stakeholders in child-friendly governance	12
4. From analysis to action: Suggested entry points	13
4.1 Establishing structures and institutions that give priority to children’s perspectives	13
4.2 Strengthening capacities of government structures and institutions	15
4.3 Institutionalizing accountability mechanisms	17
4.4 Supporting legislative reforms	18
4.5 Support to parliaments	18
4.6 Ensuring child-friendly services	19
4.7 Anti-corruption efforts	20
5. Case studies	21
5.1 Justice for children	21
5.2 Supporting systems for birth registration	27
TOOLS	31
Tool 4.1 Child-sensitive governance assessment tool	31
Tool 4.2 Checklist of considerations for model legislation content	38
Tool 4.3 Questions for parliament	40



Annexes

Annex 4.1 Recommendations on how to support legislative reforms	42
Annex 4.2 Examples of specialized trainings	45
Annex 4.3 UNICEF innovation: ‘Rapid SMS’	46
Annex 4.4 Justice for children approaches	48
Annex 4.5 References/resources	50

Endnotes	52
-----------------	-----------

Module 5: Child Impact Assessment

Acronyms and abbreviations	2
1. Introduction	3

1.1 Working for the child's best interest	3
1.2 Purpose and objectives	3
2. Key issues and considerations	5
2.1 What is an <i>ex ante</i> child impact assessment?	5
2.2 Purpose and added value	5
2.3 Challenges	6
3. Making child IAs part of programme and project cycle management	7
3.1 Child IA context analysis	7
3.2 Programming and implementation	9
3.3 Integration in evaluation	9
4. Implementing a child IA: Step-by-step guidance	9
Step 1: Defining the problem and objectives	11
Step 2: Ensuring stakeholder and child participation	13
Step 3: Outlining alternative policy options	16
Step 4: Assessing the impact of the identified policy options	17
Step 5: Comparing options and proposing scenarios	21
Step 6: Communicating findings and recommendations	23
Step 7: Ensuring follow up and linking with monitoring and evaluation	23

TOOLS	27
Tool 5.1 Areas of policy reform and their potential impacts on children	27
Tool 5.2 Draft terms of reference for a child IA expert or team	29
Tool 5.3 Working out when consultation with children is needed in a child IA	31
Tool 5.4 Options assessment: Identifying which children's rights might be affected	32
Tool 5.5 Options assessment: Identifying age-related vulnerabilities	34
Tool 5.6 Options assessment: Identifying gender and other social determinants of vulnerability	36
Tool 5.7 Useful examples of practices in ex-ante assessments	37
Tool 5.8 Distinguishing short-, medium- and longer-term effects on children of declining household incomes	42
Tool 5.9 Impact matrix	44

Annexes	45
Annex 5.1 References/resources	45
Annex 5.2 Regional child observatories as sources of data	46
Endnotes	47

Module 6: Child-Responsive Budgeting

Acronyms and abbreviations	2
1. Introduction	3

CHILD RIGHTS TOOLKIT

1.1 Purpose and objectives	4
2. Key considerations for child-responsive budgeting	4
2.1 Why invest in children?	4
2.2 Defining child-responsive budgeting	6
2.3 Overview of the budgeting process	7
2.4 Challenges related to child-responsive budgeting	8
2.5 EU commitments and global standards related to child-responsive budgeting	9
3. Mainstreaming child-responsive budgeting considerations in programming	10
3.1 Child-responsive budgeting considerations in country context analysis	10
3.2 Identifying key stakeholders	11
3.3 Integrating child-responsive budgeting concerns in policy and budget dialogue	13
4. Recommended interventions in support of child-responsive budgeting	15
4.1 Analyse the budget to ensure children, women and poor families are not marginalized in public sector allocations	15
4.2 Capacity-building and broad-based decision-making processes to influence public sector allocations	17
4.3 Improve efficiency by helping to achieve the best possible results for children for the amount of resources committed	21
4.4 Ensure sustainability by helping to secure adequate resources to sustain child-responsive policies	21
4.5 Create accountability on child rights commitments through evaluations	23

TOOLS **29**

Tool 6.1 Key areas to test the level of inclusion of children's concerns in budgets	29
Tool 6.2 Using existing budget analysis tools	30
Tool 6.3 Conducting a stakeholder and institutional analysis: sample questions	38
Tool 6.4 Identifying key stakeholders	39
Tool 6.5 Identifying opportunities to work with stakeholders at each stage of the cycle of operations	40
Tool 6.6 List of key areas and questions to assess the quality and credibility of policies and their transmission through the budget	42

Annexes **48**

Annex 6.1 Understanding public finance management assessment	48
Annex 6.2 References/resources	50

Endnotes **51**

Module 7: Child Rights in Crisis and Risk-prone Situations

Acronyms and abbreviations **2**

1. Introduction **3**

1.1 Purpose and objectives	4
2. Key considerations	4
2.1 What is resilience?	4
2.2 Integrating resilience in different contexts	7
2.3 Coordination of efforts to promote resilience	7
2.4 International legal framework and core principles of humanitarian action	9
2.5 EU commitments to children in crises and risk-prone situations	9
2.6 Challenges	11
3. Mainstreaming resilience in country programming	12
3.1 Prevention and preparedness planning	12
4. Entry points for engagement: prioritizing children within resilience-building efforts	17
4.1 Support national capacities for disaster risk reduction (DRR)	17
4.2 Support participation of children in local planning, risk assessments and monitoring	19
4.3 Ensure integrated programme approaches and strategies	22
4.4 Engage in joint needs assessments	23

TOOLS **27**

Tool 7.1 Identifying capacity assets and needs for crisis response	27
Tool 7.2 Operational guidance: Integration of child rights concerns into DRR programming	29
Tool 7.3 Checklist for assessing the integration of resilience and child rights concerns in funding proposals	30
Tool 7.4 Operation guidance: Factors to consider for contextual analysis	32
Tool 7.5 Key interagency assessment tools and frameworks	34

Annexes **36**

Annex 7.1 Key international instruments to protect child rights in emergency settings	36
Annex 7.2 Humanitarian principles	40
Annex 7.3 References/resources	42

Endnotes **44**

Module 8: Working with Civil Society on Child Rights

Acronyms and abbreviations	2
1. Introduction	3
1.1 Purpose and objectives	5
2. Key concepts and considerations	5
2.1 What is civil society?	5
2.2 Why work with civil society to advance child rights?	7

CHILD RIGHTS TOOLKIT

2.3 Challenges of engaging with CSOs on child rights	11
3. Mainstreaming work with CSOs into country programming	12
3.1 Context analysis for working with CSOs	12
3.2 Identifying potential partnerships	13
4. Recommended interventions: Structured process for engaging with CSOs	16
4.1 Creating an enabling environment for governments and donors to cooperate with CSOs	16
4.2 Promoting meaningful and structured participation of CSOs to achieve child rights objectives	17
4.3 Building capacity and addressing CSO capacity constraints	19
4.4 Assessing the quality of collaboration with CSOs	19
4.5 Examples of different types of operational engagements with CSOs on child rights	21
TOOLS	25
Tool 8.1 Quick assessment of the enabling environment as it relates to the promotion and protection of child rights	25
Tool 8.2 Mapping of child rights-focused CSOs	29
Tool 8.3 Assessing the capacity of CSOs in child rights promotion	32
Tool 8.4 Assessing a CSO's integrity and core values from a child rights perspective	35
Annexes	37
Annex 8.1 Main CSO networks on child rights	37
Annex 8.2 Examples of child rights monitoring databases held by CSOs	39
Annex 8.3 References/resources	41
Endnotes	42

Foreword from EU Commissioner for Development **Andris Piebalgs**



During my visits to countries around the world as part of my role as EU Development Commissioner, one of the things which I have constantly found the most disturbing is when I see children in distress. It is a sad fact that those who are the most affected by poverty and its knock on effects are those who are the least able to cope with it. In a crisis, it is almost always children who suffer the most.

Across the world, thousands of children are denied the rights which here in the EU we often take for granted. Many are still unable to go to school. They are recruited into armed forces. They are forced into marriage at an early age. They have to work to provide for their family. In short, they are denied the basic human rights and the opportunity to meet their full potential as they grow up.

And take the area of hunger and malnutrition, for example, where children suffer disproportionately. I have just come back from Guatemala, where half of all children are malnourished. I find it incomprehensible that in today's era of technology and advancement, some 3 million children still die every year from under-nutrition. That's why I recently pledged to reduce stunting (when children don't have enough food to enable them to grow properly) in children under five by 7 million by 2025. And there are countless other ways in which children lose out because of poverty – lack of education, poor access to healthcare, inadequate water or sanitation facilities, to name just a few.

But there are other areas, apart from those which are obviously focused on children, and which you may not expect, in which children's rights are compromised. That's why the new Child Rights Toolkit is so important. It looks beyond traditional child-focused sectors and programmes (such as education) to demonstrate how EU development cooperation can effectively contribute to the fulfillment of children's rights in every area of its work. For example, it looks at how we can help protect child rights in areas such as infrastructure, governance or budget support.

By providing practical guidance on how we can focus on children in all of the work we do, this new toolkit aims to ensure that children's rights and initiatives to promote the well-being of all children are effectively integrated and applied across all of our EU development programming. Children's rights have always had a special place in EU external policy and the EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child aims to reinforce commitments of the EU to promote, protect and fulfill the rights of the child in all relevant EU policies and actions.

Together with our partners like UNICEF, we're already doing a lot to improve children's lives. Yet, I'm convinced that more can still be done to make sure that children's rights are at the heart of everything we do. I hope that this toolkit will become an important resource for colleagues in EU headquarters and delegations and across the international cooperation field in ensuring that they take children's rights into account in all areas of their work, so that we continue to ensure our work helps those who need it most.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andris Piebalgs'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Andris Piebalgs
Commissioner for Development, EU



Foreword from UNICEF Executive Director **Anthony Lake**



Children must be at the heart of human development: they should be our highest priority, the first call on our resources. The investment case for

education and healthcare services for children is solidly established. Investing in the health, education and protection of a society's most disadvantaged and excluded children and families gives all children the opportunity to fulfil their potential, and thus leads to sustained growth and stability of countries. But this is not enough.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) reminds us of the fundamental importance of children's rights. All children must have an equal opportunity to survive, develop and reach their full potential without discrimination or exclusion. To the degree that any child has an unequal chance in life, her or his rights are violated.

As we near the 25th Anniversary of the CRC and look forward to a post-2015 world, it is an opportune time to reflect on the successes and challenges of the Convention's implementation. One central lesson of the last twenty five years is this: no government, donor or agency can meet the multiple child rights challenges alone. While it is UNICEF's fundamental mission to promote the rights of all children, everywhere, in everything we do, it has become abundantly clear that broad partnerships are vital to the realization of children's rights, and that children can be essential partners in this process.

It is in this context of our broader strategic partnership for children that UNICEF and the EU have partnered to develop this comprehensive "Child Rights Toolkit: Integrating child rights in development cooperation".

We know that whether decisions relate to trade or taxation, diplomacy or debt, there is no such thing as a 'child-neutral' policy, law, budget, programme or plan. This is why this Toolkit looks beyond traditional child-focused sectors. It provides guidance on how children's rights can be considered in national budget decisions or when designing or evaluating sector strategies. It offers tools for different sectors – from infrastructure to transport and rural development – to consider how their assistance works for children. It also contains practical tips on how development partners and national governments can magnify the views of women and children, and reflect them in laws, practices, policies and programmes among other things.

Only as we move closer to realizing the rights of all children will countries move closer to their related goals of development, prosperity and peace. We hope that this Toolkit will be a useful resource as we work together with our partners in the EU and across the development community to realize the full promise of the CRC.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony Lake".

Anthony Lake
Executive Director, UNICEF



The Treaty on European Union, Article 3

“In its relations with the wider world, the Union shall uphold and promote its values and interests and contribute to the protection of its citizens. It shall contribute to peace, security, the sustainable development of the Earth, solidarity and mutual respect among peoples, free and fair trade, eradication of poverty and the protection of human rights, in particular the rights of the child.”

Purpose and scope

Since 2008, the European Union (EU) and its member States have been committed to applying a comprehensive and integrated human rights-based approach in all areas of EU external action, including EU development cooperation. The 2009 [Treaty on European Union \(Treaty of Lisbon\)](#) contains an explicit commitment to protect and promote the rights of the child, and in 2011 the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy announced the promotion of the rights of the child as one of the Union's three explicit foreign policy priorities.¹

These commitments are in line with the [Convention on the Rights of the Child \(CRC\)](#), which has been ratified by virtually every country in the world. They also reinforce the 15-year on-going partnership between the European Commission and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) aimed at fulfilling the rights of the most vulnerable children in fundamental areas such as nutrition, health, education and access to water and sanitation. Moreover, in December 2012, the Council of the European Union adopted a Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy for the 27 EU member States as well as European institutions that proposes several outcomes and activities that are also in synergy with the work of UNICEF in the area of gender and child protection, especially addressing child marriage, female genital mutilation/ cutting, birth registration, justice for children and children affected by armed conflict.

Children's rights form part of the human rights obligations that the EU and its member States are bound to respect under international and European treaties. While responsibility for realizing the rights contained in these treaties and instruments lies primarily with governments, donor countries can also play an important role in the effective and timely achievement of implementation of children's rights through programmes of bilateral and multilateral development assistance.

As part of their strategic collaboration, this 'Child Rights Toolkit: Integrating child rights in development cooperation' has been developed by UNICEF and the EU to strengthen the capacity of development partners, European Commission staff, bilateral donors and other development actors to integrate a child rights approach throughout development programming, budgeting, policy-making and law making. The toolkit looks beyond traditional child-focused sectors and programmes (such as education and maternal health) to demonstrate how development cooperation can effectively contribute to the fulfilment of children's rights. Sector reforms and development initiatives in areas such as infrastructure, governance or budget reform all have a strong impact on child well-being and rights. Yet, these sectors tend to consider children's rights as an afterthought at best and oftentimes not at all. Even in child-focused programmes, children's interests, perspectives, vulnerabilities, capacities and rights are frequently overlooked.

By providing practical guidance on how to take a rights-based, child-focused approach, this toolkit aims to ensure that children's rights as well as initiatives to promote the well-being of all children can be effectively integrated and applied across programmes of bilateral and multilateral development assistance.

Target audience

This toolkit has been developed primarily for *development professionals working in bilateral and multilateral donor agencies* (such as European Union delegations, UNICEF, other UN agencies, regional development banks, the World Bank, and others). It is also expected that it will be useful for government and civil society professionals in countries addressing development challenges as well as for experts engaged in providing technical assistance in the design and implementation of development programmes.

The intended audience includes policy makers and practitioners who are not child rights experts but need practical guidance on:

- How to operationalize international commitments on child rights within different phases and sectors of development cooperation programming and external action;
- How to support partner governments in implementing their commitments under international treaties and standards to protect, respect and fulfill children's rights.

How to use this toolkit

There are at least three ways that development professionals can use this toolkit:

1. To gain an overview of key concepts and principles on child rights and be aware of key sources of data and selected resources for further reading and information.
2. To gain a better understanding of the obligations of relevant actors to realize international commitments on child rights and of some specific strategies and frameworks for ensuring these are put in place through national laws, policies and budgets.
3. To use specific tools and examples as a practical step-by-step guide for implementing programme strategies that facilitate the integration of child rights concerns within different sectors and phases of development cooperation programming.

The different toolkit modules are designed to be used independently of each other. However, it is recommended that Modules 1 and 2 are reviewed first as they define key concepts and set out critical programming parameters for applying the tools and interventions in subsequent modules.

For added functionality, the toolkit includes references and direct web-based links to useful sources of information and other tools. It should be noted that guidance within the toolkit is not meant to be prescriptive or directive. Rather, identified guidance offers recommendations that can be adapted and tailored across settings, regions and priorities.

Toolkit contents

The toolkit consists of eight modules on key areas, each of which contains associated tools for application:

MODULE	KEY CONTENTS	TOOLS
Module 1: Overview of Child Rights in Development Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of key issues and international legal and political commitments on child rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child rights country context analysis Key sources of child-focused indicators and data
Module 2: Child Rights in Programming and Sector Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key entry points and considerations for the integration of child rights within different phases and sectors of development cooperation programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checklist for assessing whether a programme promotes child rights Terms of reference (ToRs) for addressing child rights issues in feasibility studies Sector checklists
Module 3: Child Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Methods for supporting national governments in putting in place child participation rights Operationalizing child participation within donor programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matrices for assessing the environment, scope and quality of child participation Matrix for monitoring the outcomes associated with children's participation
Module 4: Child Rights in Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing child-friendly governance reforms Conducting child-focused governance assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child-sensitive governance assessment Checklist of considerations for model legislation Questions for parliament
Module 5: Child Impact Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountability and capacities for carrying out an ex-ante child impact assessment (IA) Step-by-step guidance for conducting a child IA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas of policy reform and their potential impacts on children Drafting ToRs for a child IA expert/ team Consultation with children during ex-ante child IAs Options assessments for identifying affected rights, age-related vulnerabilities and gender and other social determinants of vulnerability
Module 6: Child-responsive Budgeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining child-responsive budgeting as a concept and key considerations Identifying entry points for engagement with partner governments on child-responsive budgeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Testing the level of inclusion of children's concerns in budgets Using existing budget analysis tools Identifying stakeholders and opportunities at each stage of the programming cycle

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Module 7: Child Rights in Crisis and Risk-prone Situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Obligations of government and development partners to prepare, prevent, mitigate and respond to the impact of adverse events on children▪ Specific actions to ensure preparedness, emergency response and long-term development efforts contribute to building resilience and promoting child rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Identifying capacity assets and needs for crisis response▪ Guidance on integrating child rights into disaster risk reduction (DRR) programming▪ Guidance for resilience-focused contextual analysis▪ Key interagency assessment tools and frameworks
Module 8: Working with Civil Society on Child Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Entry points and recommendations for meaningful engagement with civil society organizations (CSOs) on child rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Quick assessment of the enabling environment▪ Mapping of child rights-focused CSOs▪ Assessing the capacity of CSOs▪ Assessing the integrity and core values of CSOs

ENDNOTES

1. High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 'Human Rights and Democracy at the Heart of EU External Action: Towards a more effective approach', Joint Communication to the European Parliament and to the Council, Brussels, 12 December 2011.

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