

PRESS RELEASE:

UNICEF welcomes creation of EU Group of Friends of Children

New grouping will provide forum for 28 EU member states to discuss children's issues

Brussels, 29th May 2017 – UNICEF has welcomed the creation of the EU Group of Friends of Children, a new informal grouping launched today by the 28 EU Member States with the goal of promoting children's rights and well-being across Europe.

The inaugural meeting of the EU Group of Friends of Children took place in Brussels, with discussion focused on the risks facing millions of refugee and migrant children uprooted by conflict, poverty and other issues.

"It is an honour for UNICEF to join hands with EU Member States in tackling some of the most pressing issues confronting children," said Ted Chaiban, UNICEF Director of Programmes, addressing senior diplomats and officials from all participating countries who attended the meeting.

"The promotion and protection of the rights of the child is a clear commitment shared by all EU Member States as signatories of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child," Mr Chaiban added.

"This shared commitment comes with an important responsibility, in our respective capacities and roles, to ensure that policies with an impact on children are designed, implemented and monitored in line with their best interests," said Ambassador Marlene Bonnici, Permanent Representative of Malta – the current holder of the EU presidency -- to the European Union.

The EU Group of Friends of Children will be a key tool for informed decision-making on issues such as migration, child protection and education. It is intended as an informal platform to facilitate discussion and share information among member states, and to inform decision-making on issues which impact on children's rights and well-being.

A further aim is to facilitate implementation of the Agenda 2030 for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

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