

CHILD LABOUR IN EUROPE

WHAT IS CHILD LABOUR?

- Child labour: all forms of work performed by children under the age laid down in ILO standards for that kind of work.
- Worst forms of child labour: slavery, debt bondage, prostitution, pornography, forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict, use of children in drug trafficking and other illicit activities, and all other work likely to be harmful or hazardous to the health, safety or morals of girls and boys under 18 years of age.

WHAT IS THE SITUATION OF CHILD LABOURERS?

- The ILO has recently estimated that some 246 million children aged 5-17 years are engaged in child labour around the world. Of these, some 179 million are caught in the worst forms of child labour.
- Roughly 2.5 million children are economically active in the developed economies, 2.4 million in the transition countries, 127.3 million in Asia and the Pacific, 17.4 million in Latin America and the Caribbean, 48 million in Sub-Saharan Africa and 13.4 million in the Middle East and North Africa.
- Workers under 18 face particular hazards. For example, in the US, the rate of injury per hour worked appears to be nearly twice as high for children and adolescents as adults. Similarly, a survey of 13 to 17 year olds in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden in 1998-98 revealed injury rates ranging from 3 to 19% of children working before or after school. In the developing countries, an ILO study found average rates of injury and illness per 100 children ranging from a low of 12% in agriculture (for boys) to a high of 35% (for girls) in the construction sector.
- The Government of the Russian Federation has estimated that up to 1 million children may be working that country. Of these, the ILO has estimated that some 16,000 are working in St. Petersburg and 50,000 in Moscow.
- The ILO has estimated that some 350,000 children are working in the Ukraine.
- In Turkey, 1.4 million children - or 87% of all rural children - were unpaid family workers in 1994. This number had fallen to 0.9 million - or 84% of rural children - in 1999.

ILO ACTION - EXAMPLES

The ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) is the world's largest technical cooperation programme on child labour. Since its inception in 1992, IPEC programmes in more than 75 countries have had considerable impact in both removing hundreds of thousands of children from the workplace, raising general awareness of this problem and building the capacity of

institutions with responsibility for child labour. Some examples of recent IPEC projects in Europe and the Middle East include:

RUSSIA - Street Children: A three-year IPEC Action Programme in St Petersburg, Russia, launched in 1999, is providing direct support to working street children, often victims of the worst forms of child labour, with emphasis on removing them from the street and providing them and their families with alternatives.

ROMANIA - Rural Child Labour: Launched in 2001, this one-year long programme seeks to prevent and eliminate rural child labour by enhancing the capacity of the Ministry of Education and Research to increase the attendance, retention and performance rates of (ex) working children.

ILO CONVENTIONS

The ILO's Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) has been ratified by 116 countries. Its aim is the effective abolition of child labour in those children under the age of completion of compulsory schooling or, in any case, under the age of 15 years.

The ILO's Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), ratified by 117 countries, focuses on the abolition of the worst forms of child labour for children under 18 years of age.

OTHER RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

Other relevant international standards include: The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), outlining the economic, civil, cultural and social rights of children. Ratified by all UN member States except two, the CRC is monitored by the Committee on the Rights of the Child; and, the Optional Protocols to the CRC (2000) extending CRC obligations relating to the sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography and to the involvement of children in armed conflict.

Sources: ILO. Global Report: A Future Without Child Labour, Report I(B) International Labour Conference, 90th Session, 2002, ILO/Turkish State Institute of Statistics (1999). "Child Labour in Turkey", IPEC Programme for the Withdrawal of Street Children from Work at the Level of Local Communities, UNICEF (2001). "Profiting from abuse: An investigation into the sexual exploitation of children", and IPEC fact sheets.