

The Role of Civil Society Organizations in Ensuring the Health Security of Children and Young People within the EU

Joint Conference of the Conference of the Minister for Civil Society and the Group of Civil Society Organizations of the European Economic and Social Committee



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Warsaw, The Chancellery of the Prime Minister, May 15th, 2025



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Prevention is Better than Cure – Fighting for a Clean Environment for and with Children

Kamila Kadzidłowska
May 15th, 2025, Warsaw

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Who are we?

- Grassroots civic movement of parents, guardians, and caregivers advocating for bold climate action to **protect children's health, safety, and future**.
- Acting locally, nationally, and internationally, **across generations and sectors**, building alliances with scientists, doctors, youth, local communities, and policymakers.
- Independent, non-partisan, and inclusive.
- Our advocacy — including in the Polish Parliament — focuses on:
 - **climate justice**
 - **children's rights** to breathe **clean air**,
 - **healthy food**,
 - **public transport**,
 - **circular economy** and **renewable energy** solutions,
 - **climate and health education**,
 - **healthy, safe, and peaceful environment**

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Parents for Climate



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Our impuls to act

The planetary crisis — driven by climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution of air, water and soil, and resource overuse — is not just an environmental issue; it is a child rights and public health emergency.

- **Our children are disproportionately affected** by heatwaves, air pollution, extreme weather, food insecurity, pandemics, conflicts, and migration
- **Environmental harm** in early years has **lifelong impacts** on health and development
- **Unsustainable economic** model focused on short-term profit for a narrow group — ignoring environmental and social costs — **deepens inequalities** and systemic harm
- Climate injustice is intergenerational — those least responsible are **paying the highest price**

“If we don't begin to act now, the price we and our children will pay may be catastrophic.” —

Carl Sagan, U.S. Congress testimony, 1985

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Planetary crisis



“You say you love your children above all else, and yet you are stealing their future in front of their very eyes.” – Greta Thunberg, COP24, Katowice, 2018

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Shifting from reacting to preventing

Investing in prevention means acting before harm is done — especially when children's lives and futures are at stake. It also means upholding core EU principles: "**Polluter pays**" and "**Do no significant harm**", with children's well-being placed at the very center.

- **Clean air** prevents not only asthma, infections, or chronic illness, neurodegenerative diseases and cancer later in life later, but also impaired prenatal development, neurodevelopmental disorders, and cognitive delays.
- **Planetary diet** not only prevents obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, certain cancers, but also supports both physical development and sustainable food systems.
- **Access to nature and safe mobility** promotes resilience, mental health, and well-being.
- **Renewable energy** lowers CO2 emissions, and limits fossil fuel dependency that feeds conflict and wars.
- **Climate education** builds critical thinking, resilience on disinformaion, empowerment, and future leadership.
- **Energy-efficient housing** helps reduce emissions and protect low-income families from energy poverty.
- **Disaster preparedness in schools** protects children from climate-related shocks.
- **Green public spaces** encourage physical activity and social inclusion.
- **Circular economy** helps cut down plastic pollution, reduce toxic exposures, and limits critical resources imports.
- **Strong regulations on Big Tech** help prevent digital addiction, and protect youth mental health.
- **Early policy action** builds social resilience, reduces long-term health costs, and environmental degradation.



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Young Voices

Young people face not only mental and physical health challenges, but also a growing sense of disillusionment and powerlessness in the face of systemic crises.

- **Lack of faith** in effectiveness of **political** responses
- Information **chaos**, climate **disinformation** and **populism**
- Growing frustration with **empty declarations** and **greenwashing**
- **Need for true inclusion**, not symbolic consultation

Despite this disillusionment, over **70% of young Poles** still declare that they feel personally responsible for the future of the planet — they are **not indifferent, just deeply disappointed** by inaction.

80%

Feel anxious about climate change and uncertainty about the future

38%

believe that individuals can still stop the climate catastrophe (the lowest)

23%

„Others are responsible for the ecological crisis, I don't intend to do anything”

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Schools of Resilience

Schools of Resilience is an example of our initiative, inspired by Nordic public policies, that offers a forward-looking model for responding to interconnected polycrises — with children and youth at its heart.

Three **core pillars**:

- **Resilient, healthy and self-sufficient school buildings** — designed for energy efficiency, climate adaptation, circularity, access to daylight, clean air, nature, and nutritious meals.
- **Supportive school environments and surroundings** — combining inclusive school culture with healthy, intergenerational, accessible infrastructure: green yards, safe mobility, public transport, space for outdoor learning and community use
- **Participation and democratic education** — learning by doing and empowering students to co-create school life and shape broader change through civic engagement and climate leadership

Schools of Resilience **aim to prepare young people** not just to adapt, but **to shape the future** — with knowledge, care, and courage.



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CONFERENCE ON SCHOOLS OF RESILIENCE - BACKGROUND



20 MAY 2025
11:00 – 16:00



ŁÓDŹ CLIMATE SUMMIT
ROOM DAMASK
Vienna House by Andel's



English/Polish
(interpretation)

A Polish-Danish conference devoted to the role of schools in building social resilience against multidimensional crises – climate, health, energy and social. The conference is organised under the honorary patronage of the Polish Presidency in the EU and on the eve of the Danish Presidency.

Honorary patronage:



Patronat polskiej prezydencji w Radzie UE
Patronage of the Polish presidency of the Council of the EU
Patronage de la présidence polonaise du Conseil de l'UE



Minister do spraw
Społeczeństwa Obywatelskiego



Ministerstwo
Klimatu i Środowiska

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