

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF CHILDHOOD IN EUROPE

draft
INVITATION

Working Group on the Quality of Childhood at the European Parliament (QoC)

MEP Anna Hedh
MEP Kostas Chrysogonos
MEP Deirdre Clune
MEP Arne Gericke
MEP Nathalie Griesbeck
MEP Karin Kadenbach
MEP József Nagy
MEP Evelyn Regner
MEP Julie Ward

This QoC Talk will be hosted by:

MEP István Ujhelyi
(Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament, Hungary)

61st QoC Talk:

How to empower parents for a better Quality of Childhood?

Lessons from the EU Research Project INCLUD-ED¹

The presentation will be given by **Professor Ramón Flecha** (CREA, Community of Research on Excellence for All), University of Barcelona, Spain.

This QoC Talk is organised in cooperation with the **European Parents' Organisation (EPA)**.

Time: Tuesday 8 November 2016 from 14 until 16 hours.

Location: European Parliament, Rue Wiertz 60, Brussels, Altiero Spinelli, Room number A5 G315.

¹ This project was financed by the European Commission. INCLUD-ED is the abbreviation of Strategies for Inclusion and Social Cohesion in Europe from Education. It ran from 2006 to 2011.

Entrance: We will gather at the Entrance at Place Luxembourg at 13.30 hours. Please be in time. It is obligatory to take your passport and/or ID Card with you.

All responsible parents want their children to have the best possible childhood and the best preparation for their adult life. A good quality childhood means safety, health, play, learning and the feeling of belonging. This is only possible in a social context that embraces diversity and ready to use it as a leverage to provide for a quality childhood. The people primarily responsible for this are the parents themselves, but there is a huge need to support and empower them, to help them in this enormous job.

It has been Ramón Flecha's life ambition to work a.o. on the topic of empowering parents and in this context he has been researching how governmental and nongovernmental services and practices in this area promote developments in the right direction (i.e. more empowerment, more inclusion, more equity, better school results for all, less early school leaving, less youth unemployment, better quality of childhood etc) and in which ways they lead to a worsening of the situation.

Many children in Europe are suffering from school failure and early school leaving. These children are at risk of subsequently being excluded from areas such as employment, health, housing, and political participation. European society needs all of these children and youths, their participation and contributions to society throughout their lives. However, to make this possible, we require immediate solutions. This is the reason why INCLUD-ED was designed, and why children and youths in the most need have been the inspiration for the work conducted by the consortium throughout the project.

In the contemporary knowledge society, education can serve as a powerful resource for achieving the European goal of social cohesion. However, at present, most school systems are failing. Many Europeans citizens and their communities are being excluded, both educationally and socially, from the benefits that should be available to all. This situation can be reversed, and recent studies are providing key elements for schools to inform this process.

In the past, educational and social policies have tended to be based on assumptions instead of scientific evidence, leading to the perpetuation of inequalities. Ramón Flecha and his colleagues have set themselves the goal to collect evidence of success and to make it available to policy-makers and society as a whole to inform effective measures and policies that truly address social exclusion. The model that was leading for the INCLUD-ED project is shown below.

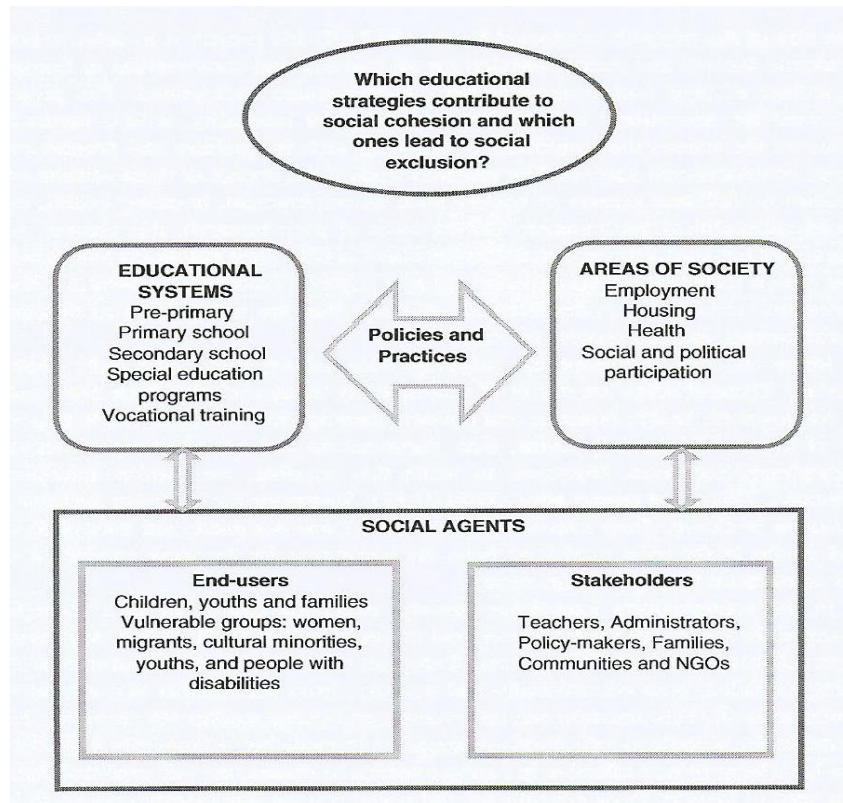


Figure 1 Objectives of the INCLUD-ED project and dimensions of study.

The INCLUD-ED project had as specific objectives:

- To analyze the characteristics of the school system and educational reforms generating low rates of educational and social exclusion and the characteristics of those generating high rates.
- To analyze the components of educational practices that are decreasing the rates of school failure and the components of the practices that are increasing such rates.
- To study how educational exclusion affects diverse aspects of society (i.e. employment, housing, health, and political participation) and what types of educational provisions contribute to overcoming it.
- To investigate how educational exclusion affects diverse sectors of society, particularly the most vulnerable groups and what types of educational provisions contribute to overcoming the discrimination they face.
- To analyze the interventions that combine educational policy with other areas of social policies and identify which of them are contributing to overcoming social exclusion and developing social cohesion in Europe.
- To study communities involved in learning projects that have developed integrated social and educational interventions that contribute to reducing inequality and marginalization and foster social inclusion and empowerment.

The INCLUD-ED project focused on three clusters:

- educational practices and systems
- the connections between education and other areas of social policy
- the relationship between schools and the communities of which they are part.

The main outcome of the INCLUD-ED project is:

- the methodology of the project itself, which is based on the premise that knowledge is constructed through dialogues between researchers and end-users, who have not traditionally been allowed to participate in the research process.
- the sociological processes in the class room: how to handle students with different levels of ability. Are they put in different groups or kept in one group.
- the project formulated also Successful Educational Actions (SEA's). With this term Flecha refers to educational interventions that are successful in different social contexts. In this context three concrete actions were recognized: interactive groups, dialogic reading and extended learning time.
- Flecha and his team furthermore discovered certain Successful Educational Actions regarding the connection of the school with the parents. In this context they found that the following activities had a positive effect on school performance of the children and their inclusion: dialogic literacy, gatherings, family involvement in learning activities and participation of the families in school evaluation and decision-making.
- transforming the schools into learning communities, in which participate teachers, parents, pupils and community members to implement successful evident-based actions in their schools.
- INCLUD-ED also looked at the relationship between education and other areas of society such as employment, health, housing and political participation.
- finally the INCLUD-ED project gives general recommendations for educational policy development.

We have asked Professor Flecha to share with us the main findings of his research so that we can get a better grasp of how to implement these new insights in other settings in Europe.

The above text is based on Ramón Flecha (Ed) and the INCLUD-ED Consortium (2015) and contributions from Ramón Flecha, Michiel Matthes and Eszter Salamon.

Overall objectives of the QoC Talks:

- To gain a better understanding of the Quality of Childhood in the EU Member States. This time we will focus on 'How to empower parents for a better Quality of Childhood?'
- To reflect on the role that the European institutions can play to improve the situation.
- To get to grips with the values, principles and approaches that could lead to improvements for children both in Europe and around the world.
- To form an effective working group and to get a sense of how to move on.

We take pleasure in inviting you for the 61st session on 8 November 2016.

With best regards,

Michiel Matthes
Chairman

Alliance for Childhood European Network Group

Eszter Salamon
President

European Parents' Association

References by Professor Ramón Flecha / further reading:

R. Flecha (Ed.), INCLUD-ED Consortium, Successful Educational Actions for Inclusion and Social Cohesion in Europe, SpringerBriefs in Education, 2015.

Programme Outline for Tuesday 8 November 2016

Time	Subject	Speaker / facilitator
14.00	Opening	MEP István Ujhelyi
14.05	A reflection about the theme from the point of view of the Alliance for Childhood	Christopher Clouder, one of the founders of the Alliance for Childhood
14.13	How to empower parents for a better Quality of Childhood?	Professor Ramón Flecha (CREA, Community of Research on Excellence for All), University of Barcelona
15.00	A reflection about Professor Flecha's presentation from the point of view of the EPA and the Learning for Well-being Community	Eszter Salamon, President of the EPA and member of the Learning for Well-being Community.
15.10	Discussion	Michiel Matthes, Chairman of the Alliance for Childhood European Network Group
15.50-16.00	Closing remarks	MEP István Ujhelyi

Disclaimer:

The organisers organise this session on a best effort basis. However changes in parts of the programme or in the entire programme may occur due to unforeseen circumstances and the organisers cannot be held liable for that.

Secretariat for this session:

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With the support of the following organisations:



For background information please visit our respective websites:

www.allianceforchildhood.eu

www.learningforwellbeing.org

www.euparents.eu

This programme was developed in cooperation with the **Alliance for Childhood European Network Group**, whose members are:

Alliance ELIANT, Brussels	representative to be assigned
ARGE-Erziehungsberatung, Austria	Dr. Martina Leibovici
Beweeg.nl	Elise Sijthoff
Centre for Relational Competence, Denmark	Claes Solborg Pedersen
Christopher Clouder, UK	Founding Member of the Alliance for Childhood
Paulina Dabrowska, Luxembourg	
Dr. René Diekstra, The Netherlands	
European Council for Steiner	
Waldorf Education	Dr. Richard Landl and Georg Jürgens
European Foundation for the Care of Newborn Infants (EFCNI)	Silke Mader
EPA (European Parents Association)	Eszter Salamon
Experiential Education Project, Belgium	Professor Dr. Ferre Laevers
Familylab International, Switzerland	Jesper Juul
Familienforum Havelhöhe GmbH und Emmi-Pikler-Haus e.V., Germany	Dr. med. Christoph K. Meinecke
FEMI, The Netherlands	Ruud Bakhuizen
Haukkala Foundation, Finland	Professor Dr. Lea Pulkkinen
Higher Institute for Family Sciences, Belgium	Dr. Hans van Crombrugge
International Association for Steiner / Waldorf Early Childhood Education (Sweden)	Clara Aerts
Idee Kids vzw, Belgium	Björn Accoe
Kompan A/S	Jeanette Fich Jespersen
Legambiente, Italy	Vanessa Pallucchi
Janusz Korczak International Society	Theo Cappon and Helma Brouwers
Le Furet, France	Marie-Nicole Rubio
Movium and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Alnarp	Petter Åkerblom and Maria Nordström
NIVOZ (The Netherlands)	Professor Dr. Luc Stevens / Nickel van der Vorm
Saharan & North African Toy and Play Cultures, Belgium	Dr. Jean-Pierre Rossie
Professor Dr. Anthony Staines, Ireland	
Stichting Universele Ontwikkeling (NL)	Marijke Sluijter
Universal Education Foundation, Brussels	Daniel Kropf
Briony Vanden Bussche, Belgium	
Dr. Jan van Gils, Belgium	
Verein mit Kindern Wachsen, Germany	Lienhard Valentin/Sabine Heggemann

QoC Talks held / to be held in the period 2006-2016:

QoC Talk in 2006	
5 December 2006	1. 'The Toxic Childhood Syndrome and the Quality of Childhood' with Christopher Clouder (UK) and Professor Hans van Crombrugge (Belgium). Host: MEP Karin Resetarits.
QoC Talks in 2007	
9 January 2007	2. 'Really Improving the Education in the European Union requires Systemic Changes' with professor Luc Stevens (Netherlands) and Professor Ferre Laevers (Belgium). Host: MEP Karin Resetarits.
6 March 2007	3. 'The Quality of Child-Adult Relationships in Families and School' with Jesper Juul (Denmark). Host: MEP Karin Resetarits.
15 May 2007	4. 'The Child: his/her Networks and Neighbourhood' with René Diekstra. Host: MEP Karin Resetarits.
September 20 2007	5. 'How can we improve in the European Union the Early Childhood Educational Systems' with John Bennett, the author of the OECD Study Starting Strong. Host: MEP Karin Resetarits.
November 6 2007	6. 'How to let children and adolescents acquire key competences for the world of the 21st century?' with Dr. Martina Leibovici-Mühlberger from Austria and Geseke Lundgren from Sweden. Host: MEP Karin Resetarits
QoC Talks in 2008	
January 8, 2008	7. 'Attachment, what it is, why it is important and what we can do about it to help young children acquire a secure attachment?' with Sir Richard Bowlby. Host: MEP Karin Resetarits.
March 4, 2008	8. 'A vision on children and childhood in the European Union' by Michiel Matthes. Host: MEP Karin Resetarits.
May 14, 2008	9. Professor René Diekstra about 'The Changing Face of Adolescence. Accounting for changes in adolescent development and their effects on education and social policies'. Host: MEP Karin Resetarits.
July 1, 2008	10. Professor Steen Hildebrandt (University of Aarhus, Denmark) about the 'Multiple intelligences in the knowledge-based society'. Host: MEP Rovana Plumb.
September 16, 2008	11. Presentation of the report of the Fundación Marcelino Botín entitled 'Social and Emotional Education, An International Analysis' by Christopher Clouder and Fátima Sánchez Santiago. Host: MEP Karin Resetarits.
November 12, 2008	12. Professor Boris Cyrulnik from France: 'What measures can we take to improve the quality of childhood in the European Union?' Host: MEP Rovana Plumb.
November 17, 2008	13. Organisation of a Symposium in Bucharest, Romania at the request of MEP Mrs Rovana Plumb: 'A European Policy Agenda for the Quality of Childhood with special emphasis on the case of the children of Romanian migrant workers'.
QoC Talks in 2009	
January 27, 2009	14. Dr. Michel Vandenbroeck (University of Ghent, Belgium) about 'Diversity and Equity in Early Childhood Services'. Host: MEP Karin Resetarits.
March 3, 2009	15. 'Taking stock of what has been achieved with the Working Group since December 2006 and looking forward' with Michiel Matthes, Secretary-General of the Alliance for Childhood European Network. Host: MEP Karin

	Resetarits.
April 28, 2009	16. Professor Peter Moss (University of London) about young children and their services: developing a European approach. Host: MEP Rovana Plumb.
September 8, 2009	17. 'Continuing to work on improving the Quality of Childhood in the European Union during the present economic downturn' with Professor Emeritus Richard Wilkinson, co-author of the book 'The Spirit Level, Why More Equal Societies Almost Always do Better'. Host: MEP Rovana Plumb.
November 17, 2009	18. The Technical University of Dortmund won the tender issued by the European Commission to execute a Research Project to identify the key research questions regarding families and family policies. The leader of this project, Professor Dr. Uwe Uhlenborff gave a briefing on this Project and spoke about 'Developing a European Research Agenda for Families and Family Policies'. Host: MEP Livia Járóka.
December 8, 2009	19. Why Love Matters: How Affection Shapes a Baby's Brain, and the policy requirements in this respect with Sue Gerhardt, author of the book with the similar title. Host: MEP Evelyn Regner.
QoC Talks in 2010	
January 12, 2010	20. The PISA Study and lessons learned regarding the Quality of Childhood with Andreas Schleicher, Head of the Indicators and Analysis Division of the OECD Directorate for Education. Host: MEP Evelyn Regner.
March 2, 2010	21. 'Improving the Quality of Childhood in the European Union: the Case of Roma Children' with Ivan Ivanov, Executive Director of the European Roma Information Office (ERIO) and Bernard Rorke, Director of the Roma Initiative Programs of the Open Society Institute (OSI). Host: MEP Gerald Häfner.
April 13, 2010	22. Improving the Quality of Childhood in the European Union: the Aspect of Parental Leave Policies by Professor Peter Moss of the Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London. Host: MEP Gerald Häfner.
June 8, 2010	23. 'The City for the Children'. Key-note speaker: Vanessa Pallucchi, Director for Education of Legambiente, Rome, Italy. Host: MEP Vittorio Prodi and MEP Karin Kadenbach.
August 31, 2010	24. 'The impact of television and screen media on the Quality of Childhood and what are good policies in this respect on the level of the family, on the level of the country and on the EU level?' with Dr. Aric Sigman, author of the book 'Remotely controlled, how television is damaging our lives'. Host: MEP Karin Kadenbach.
November 17, 2010	25. 'The proposed research agenda for the European Commission re families and family policies' with Professor Dr. Uwe Uhlenborff of the Technical University Dortmund, Germany. Host: MEP Mr Gerald Häfner
QoC Talks in 2011	
January 11, 2011	26. 'The Quality of the Physical Environment of the Child, the Current Problems in this area, and what needs to be done?' together with the Health and Environment Alliance and the INCHEs Network. Host: MEP Gerald Häfner.
March 1, 2011	27. 'Educating the Art of Life: Resilience and Creativity in Contemporary Education' with David Brierley, Associate Professor at the Rudolf Steiner University College, Oslo Norway. Host: MEP Evelyn Regner.
March 29,	28. 'A reflection on the European Commission's High Level Group on

2011	Literacy' with emeritus Professor Margaret Clark from the UK. Host: MEP Lambert van Nistelrooij.
May 31, 2011	29. 'Learning to move and moving to learn. Why physical development in the early years supports later learning, behaviour and achievement' with Sally Goddard Blythe, Director of The Institute for Neuro-Physiological Psychology in the UK. Hosted by MEP Edward McMillan-Scott.
September 6, 2011	30. Presentation of the report 'Learning for Well-being: a Policy Priority for Children and Youth in Europe, A Movement for Change' by Professor Ilona Kickbusch, Director of the Global Health Programme at the Graduate Institute of International Development Studies in Geneva. Host: MEP Karin Kadenbach.
November 8, 2011	31. Alcohol Nation, How to protect our children from today's drinking culture' with Dr. Aric Sigman. Host: MEP Gerald Häfner.
QoC Talks in 2012	
January 10, 2012	32. Presentation of a Proposal to set up a European Academy for Complementary Pedagogy by Jesper Juul. Host: MEP Judith Merkies.
March 6, 2012	33. 'What Contribution can the Digital Environment make to the Improvement of the Quality of Childhood?' with Professor Martine Delfos from the Netherlands and Thibaut Kleiner of the Cabinet of Euro-commissioner Neelie Kroes. Host: MEP Evelyn Regner.
April 11, 2012	34. 'Improving the Quality of Childhood as a challenge to European institutions: Reflections from the Ombudsmen for Children' with Maria Kaisa Aula, the Finnish Ombudsman for Children. Host: MEP Liisa Jaakonsaari.
5 June 2012	35. The State of Affairs of the Child in the City, and What Needs To Be Done? with Dr. Jan van Gils, President and founder of the European Network of Child Friendly Cities and President of the International Council for Children's Play. Host: MEP Karin Kadenbach
4 September 2012	36. '500,000 Preterm Births in Europe Each Year. What are the Dangers, and What are the Main Components of a Successful Strategy to Address this Challenge?' with Professor Luc Zimmermann (Belgium / Netherlands), Professor Dominique Haumont (Belgium) and Silke Mader (Germany), all working with the European Foundation for the Care of Newborn Infants (EFCNI). Host: MEP Peter Liese.
13 November 2012	37. 'How can we help children to reach their unique potential and how can we support the parents, caregivers and teachers in their role vis-à-vis children' with Dr. Gordon Neufeld from Vancouver, Canada. Host: MEP Gerald Häfner.
QoC Talks in 2013	
9 January 2013	38. 'Children and their connection with nature: why it is important and how can it be stimulated?' with Tim Gill from the UK. Host: MEP Judith Merkies and MEP Gerald Häfner.
5 March 2013	39. 'IFFD's Family Enrichment Courses: the Case Study Method applied to Family Settings. What it is and how to provide it to more families?' with Marina Robben, President of the International Federation For Family Development (IFFD). Host: MEP Anneli Jäätteenmäki and MEP Anna Záborská.
9 April 2013	40. Finland has the best literacy score in the European Union. What are the main elements of its strategy and to what extent can it be copied by other countries? with Professor Heikki Lyytinen. Host: MEP Liisa Jaakonsaari.

4 June 2013	41. 'The commercialisation of childhood in the USA: what is the current situation, to what extent is it harmful for children, what needs to be done and what are the lessons for the European Union?' with Susan Linn, Founder and Director of the 'Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood'. Host: MEP Anna Záborská.
3 September 2013	42. 'The Human Biotechnology Revolution is opening the door to the creation of genetically modified 'designer babies': what is the current situation?, what is at stake at the moment?, what needs to be done?, and what role could the European Union play in this respect?' with Enola Aird, Founder and Director of 'Mothers for a Human Future'. Host: MEP Anna Záborská.
12 November 2013	43. 'Positive human development: a spontaneous or guided process?' 45 years of experience with longitudinal research and the policy lessons that can be drawn from it' with Professor Lea Pulkkinen. Host: MEP Anneli Jäätteenmäki.
QoC Talks in 2014	
7 January 2014	44. 'Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Systems in Europe: what are the current trends and what needs to be done?' with Professor Dr. Mathias Urban, Professor of Early Childhood and Director of the Early Childhood Research Centre, University of Roehampton, London, Great Britain. Host: MEP Gerald Häfner.
4 March 2014	45. Parents' partnership stability and quality as a context for child development. What are the challenges, and what policies and programmes are in place? Some insights from Germany' with Professor Dr. Sabine Walper, Research Director of the German Youth Institute in Munich, Germany. Host: MEP Jürgen Klute.
18 June 2014	46. 'Make the European Parliament a global Child Rights Champion'. The presentations will be given by members of the Child Rights Action Group (CRAG) a.o. Jana Hainsworth of Eurochild, Deirdre de Burca of World Vision and Lilana Keith of PICUM. Host: MEP Gerald Häfner.
8 July 2014	47. 'Youth employment in the EU member states: what is the current situation?, and what is the role of the European Commission in the domain of the Youth Initiative and the Youth Guarantee? Discussion of the Commission's Country Specific Recommendations' with Jeroen Jutte of the European Commission, Head of Unit, DG EMPL, Unit C1 European Employment Strategy and Governance. Host: MEP Julie Ward.
9 September 2014	48. 'Developing inclusive systems across Education, Health and Social sectors for early school leaving prevention' with Dr. Paul Downes of Saint Patrick's College, Dublin City University. Host: MEP Julie Ward.
18 November 2014	49. 'The Mental Health Situation of Children and Young People in the European Union: What is the Current Situation and What could be done?' with Professor Ulrike Ravens-Sieberer and Dr. Veronika Ottova-Jordan. Host: MEP Anna Hedh.
QoC Talks in 2015	
6 January 2015	50. 'The effect of the Great Recession on Southern European Children's and Adolescents' Adaptation and Wellbeing: Risks and Resilience Processes. What is necessary at this moment?' with Professor Frosso Motti-Stefanidi, PhD. Host: MEP Kostas Chrysogonos.
3 March 2015	51. '4000 City Councils for Children in France: how do they operate and what makes them successful?' with Jonathan Lévy. Host: MEP

	József Nagy.
13 May 2015	52. 'Children's Well-Being Indicators: a Powerful Tool to Improve the Well-Being of Children. Launch of the European Report of Children's Worlds' with Professor Ferran Casas, Professor Sabine Andresen and Professor Jonathan Bradshaw. Host: MEP Nathalie Griesbeck
2 June 2015	53. 'Health Assets for Young People's Health and Well-being. A New Basis for a set of Indicators for Policy and Practice?' with Dr Antony Morgan from the Glasgow Caledonian University, London Campus, UK Host: MEP Marie Arena and MEP Jana Zitnanska
1 September 2015	54. 'Elham Palestine: a multisector national partnership towards making schools more conducive to children's well-being. What is the philosophy and approach of Elham? What positive outcomes have resulted? In which way can we apply the same approach in a European context?' with Professor Dr. Marwan Awartani. Host: Julie Ward.
17 November 2015	55. 'Prosperity without growth: a vision of a lasting prosperity for all' with Professor dr. Tim Jackson from the University of Surrey, UK. Host: MEP Molly Scott Cato.
QoC Talks in 2016	
12 January 2016	56. 'Curious Minds: The English approach to offer rich educational and cultural programmes to all children and young people' with Derri Burdon. Host: MEP Julie Ward.
1 March 2016	57. 'Refugee and immigrant children and youngsters: some reflections on the successful integration of them in the receiving societies' with Professor Frosso Motti-Stefanidi, PhD and Lilana Keith. Host: MEP Caterina Chinnici.
26 April 2016	58. 'What constitutes good education and what are the roles of measurement and evaluation in it?' with Professor Dr. Gert Biesta. Host: MEP Liisa Jaakonsaari.
14 June 2016	59. What we can do to establish a good education and which new pedagogical approach we may propose? with Martine Reicherts, Director-General for Education and Culture in the European Commission. Host: MEP Julie Ward.
6 September 2016	60. 'Toward media literacy or media addiction?', contours of good governance for healthy childhood in the digital world' with Professor Dr. Paula Bleckmann. Host: MEP Julie Ward.
8 November 2016	61. 'How to empower parents for a better Quality of Childhood?' with Professor Ramón Flecha. Host: MEP István Ujhelyi

Five yearbooks were published with the reports of these sessions:

session 1-16: Improving the Quality of Childhood in the European Union: Current Perspectives.

session 17-23: Improving the Quality of Childhood in Europe 2011, Volume 2.

session 24-30: Improving the Quality of Childhood in Europe 2012, Volume 3.

session 31-37: Improving the Quality of Childhood in Europe 2013, Volume 4.

session 38-44: Improving the Quality of Childhood in Europe 2014, Volume 5.

All books can be downloaded free of charge from: www.allianceforchildhood.eu/publications or ordered at www.amazon.co.uk.