



FAMILYPLATFORM

Civil Society Perspective:

Family Organisations at the Local, National, European and Global Level – Three Case Studies



Linden Farrer (COFACE), Lorenza Rebuzzini (FDAF), Liverani Aurora (FDAF),
Anne-Claire de Liedekerke (MMM), Jill Donnelly (MMM), Marie-Liesse Mandula (MMM)



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
European Research Area



Funded under Socio-economic Sciences & Humanities

FAMILYPLATFORM (SSH-2009-3.2.2 Social platform on research for families and family policies): funded by the European Union's 7th Framework Programme for 18 months (October 2009 – March 2011).

This report was produced by **FAMILYPLATFORM**.

FAMILYPLATFORM (SSH-2009-3.2.2 Social platform on research for families and family policies) is funded by the the EU's 7th Framework Programme (€1,400,000) and has a duration of 18 months (October 2009 – March 2011).

The consortium consists of the following 12 organisations:

- 1) Technical University Dortmund (Coordinators)
- 2) State Institute for Family Research, University of Bamberg
- 3) Family Research Centre, University of Jyväskylä
- 4) Austrian Institute for Family Studies, University of Vienna
- 5) Demographic Research Institute, Budapest
- 6) Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon
- 7) Department of Sociology and Social research, University of Milan-Bicocca
- 8) Institute of International and Social Studies, Tallinn University
- 9) London School of Economics
- 10) Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union (COFACE), Brussels
- 11) Forum delle Associazioni Familiari, Italy
- 12) Mouvement Mondial des Mères, Brussels

Contact info@familyplatform.eu or visit <http://www.familyplatform.eu> for more information.



This document is distributed under a *Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported* licence.

This allows copying, distribution and transmission, with the condition that it is properly attributed, used for non-commercial purposes, and that no derivative works are created. The full legal code is available at:

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/legalcode>.

Contents

Contents	3
Introduction	4
Forum Delle Associazioni Familiari: A Local and National Level of Action.....	5
Introduction	5
Principles and Objectives	5
History	6
Organisation	8
The Means and Challenges of Co-operation with Public Institutions.....	10
Mainstreaming Family Policies	12
Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union: A European Union Level of Action	13
Introduction	13
Objectives	13
History	14
Organisation	15
The Family Dimension of European Policies	16
COFACE's Positions	17
Challenges	21
Mouvement Mondial des Mères: A Global Level of Action	24
Introduction	24
MMM in a Nutshell.....	25
Mission and Vision	25
History	26
Organisation	27
Activities	29
Barriers and Challenges.....	31
From the Grassroots to the Policy Level	32
Conclusion: Commonalities and Consensus Principles.....	36
Bibliography	38
Annex 1 – FDAF Member Organisations	40
Annex 2 – FDAF Conferences	43
Annex 3 – COFACE Member Organisations.....	45
Annex 4 – Recent Positions Adopted by COFACE	47
Annex 5 – Other Family Organisations Active at a European Union Level	50
Annex 6 – MMM Member Organisations.....	52

Introduction

This report has been produced for FAMILYPLATFORM¹, a 7th Framework Programme project gathering 12 organisations working together to articulate key questions about the family for the European Social Science and Humanities Research Agenda (2012-2013). The brief of this report is to profile the activities and political dimensions of family associations so that the range of stakeholder representatives can be properly considered in the work of FAMILYPLATFORM.

To that end, this report consists of three case studies of civil society organisations involved in FAMILYPLATFORM: *Forum Delle Associazioni Familiari* (based in Rome and operating at a local and national level in Italy), *Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union* (based in Brussels and operating at a European Union level), and *Mouvement Mondial des Mères* (based in Paris and operating at a global level).

The three case studies should not be considered a holistic overview or survey of the field of family or social organisations. Instead, they represent a snapshot of activity in the field of family organisations at the moment, describing how the organisations support their members, interact with and attempt to influence political institutions, negotiate the tightrope of receiving public funding while at the same time adopting (sometimes) critical positions on those same public institutions' policies, come to decisions in a democratic manner, and what some of the challenges and difficulties they face are.

Although the aim has been to present the organisations 'dispassionately', the report has been written by authors from the organisations in question; it can do no harm at all that some of the conviction and enthusiasm of these authors shines through in this finished text.

Linden Farrer
Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union

¹ See <http://www.familyplatform.eu>.

Forum Delle Associazioni Familiari: A Local and National Level of Action

Introduction

Forum Delle Associazioni Familiari (FDAF)² was born in 1993 and became a formal Pact among twenty-five Family Associations in 1995. Since then, FDAF has gained increasing relevance at social and political levels. Around fifty nationwide family associations are currently members of FDAF (Annex 1), which is also organised at a regional level, with one Regional Forum in each one of the twenty Italian Regions. An additional grassroots level is present in more than fifty small areas (districts, provinces, and cities). FDAF has therefore become one of the main political actors at the local and national level as regards family policies.

At a European level, FDAF became a member of the Federation of Catholic Family Organizations in Europe (FAFCE)³, an umbrella association of Catholic family organisations from various European Countries, in 1999. In 2006, the close nature of the relationship between FDAF and FAFCE was cemented when Giuseppe Barbaro (past Vice-President of FDAF), became the FAFCE Vice-President.

Principles and Objectives

Three principles lay the basis of the FDAF Pact:

1. families plays a significant role in society: therefore, the wellbeing of the family and family members is not socially irrelevant;
2. the social role of families is called upon to find expression in the form of political intervention: families should be the first to take steps to assure that the laws and institutions of the State not only do not offend, but in fact support and positively defend the rights and duties of the family; along these lines, families should realise their potential as “protagonists” of “family policy” and assume responsibility for transforming society;
3. the State shouldn’t perform functions that families can perform either themselves or in free associations; instead, it should positively favour and encourage - as far as possible - responsible initiatives run by families, according to the principle of subsidiarity.

FDAF was born to recognise, promote and support a specific identity of family.

² See <http://www.forumfamiglie.org/>.

³ See <http://www.fafce.org>.

This recognition and promotion is based upon consideration of the human being as a *person*, and of the family founded on the following principles:

- the family originated by a heterosexual encounter (male and female);
- the family having social and public relevance and responsibility (which calls for a public act – marriage);
- the family oriented to a generative goal (parenthood, an educational responsibility towards the new generation).

According to these principles, FDAF as a political and social player has the following aims:

- to support political decisions aimed at encouraging and sustaining family-life;
- to monitor administrative and governmental policies that can weaken or damage families and take action to highlight them;
- to encourage the creation and the development of associations among families in order to increase their wellbeing;
- to lobby for institutions to support family associations;
- to build partnerships with institutions and other social players in order to promote the family, always respecting the distinction of duties and competences of each partner;
- to promote a family-friendly society through conferences and cultural events.

Regarding its inner governance:

- FDAF is based on democratic values and rules, and favours free exchange of ideas among Member Associations: this includes respectful dialogue, shared planning, compliance to common decisions, autonomy of each association;
- FDAF adopts the principle of subsidiarity not only in political action, but also as the inner governance system; therefore, it enhances synergies and convergences among associations, in order to reinforce and support them.

History

FDAF was born in 1993, and will therefore come of age in 2011. On the 5th of November, 1993, during a public seminar in Rome, a consortium of family associations presented the *Vertenza Famiglia* (Family Instance) to the government in charge. For the first time in fifty years, the issue of family policy was highlighted and openly proposed by associations in Italy. Two years later, a book was released titled *The citizenship of the Family in Italy – Family*

Associations getting organized (Boffi (ed.), 1995), which contained theoretical founding articles and speeches presented during the seminar.

In 1995, twenty-five family associations signed a formal pact - the Associates' Pact -, where the fundamental values and objectives of FDAF were explicitly listed and formally undersigned by all Member Associations. In the same year, over a million Italian citizens signed a petition to the Italian Parliament in support of *Vertenza Famiglia*, demanding that family policy become part of the political agenda.

In 1996, FDAF was received by the Italian President in charge, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro. In the same year, FDAF opened a permanent round table on family policies with sixty Italian Deputies and Senators. Since 1998, FDAF has been a permanent advisor in the Parliamentary Commissions on Tax Reform, Childcare Services, the Education System, and Assisted Hatching (IVF).

In 2000, FDAF presented a petition to the Italian Gas and Energy Authority, requesting favourable gas and energy rates for large families. In the same year, the Prime Minister in charge, Massimo D'Alema, met FDAF representatives and stated that "On family related issues, consultation with FDAF is always necessary". Some months later, FDAF entered the Consultation Cabinet for the Finance Bill and the Commission on School Reforms and in June 1998, FDAF was received in private audience by Pope John Paul II.

In 2001 FDAF collaborated actively in the promulgation of the Italian Law on adoption⁴, one of the most advanced in Europe, because it considers family relations as a necessary and irreplaceable means to build one's own identity. The fundamental criterion guiding the FDAF lobbying action was defence of the right of each child to live in his/her family of origin. In cases where his/her family of origin cannot give material and moral assistance, the child has the right to live in a family.

In 2002, on FDAF initiative, the International Day of Families (promoted by UN in 1994) was celebrated for the first time in Italy. A conference on *The family: social subject and resource for the whole community* was organised in co-operation with Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and Lazio Region. Since then, FDAF has organised an annual conference or meeting on a specific topic regarding family policy and family life (Annex 2).

In 2006, FDAF expressed its approval for two laws voted in the Italian Parliament: the law on protecting minors against pornography on the internet, and the law on joint custody of children for divorced and separated parents⁵. In 2007 FDAF was the promoter of a huge demonstration, gathering a million people in Rome to defend and promote family rights. In 2008, FDAF presented

⁴ Law 149/2001.

⁵ Law 54/2006.

another petition, which was signed by more than a million Italian citizens, demanding taxation reforms and in particular for the introduction of the tax deductions system. In this document, starting from the acknowledgement of the marriage-based family as a social subject and engagement in defending life from conception till its natural ending, FDAF advanced two requests: reform of the taxation system, introducing a family-based taxation system, and the possibility for families to choose between public and private schooling.

Besides these lobbying actions at a national level, FDAF has organised conferences, seminars and cultural events on family-related issues.

Organisation

Legal and Financial: FDAF is an umbrella association and is defined under Italian Laws on non-profit sector⁶ as an Association for Social Promotion. In practical terms this means that FDAF is enrolled in the official Register of Associations for Social Promotion, managed by the Italian Ministry for Labour and Social Policies. In 2000, the FDAF Foundation was created in order to be the operative instrument for FDAF activities. The FDAF Foundation is enrolled in the Register of Legal Persons at the Prefect's Office of Rome.

FDAF is a self-financing association and draws its economic resources from free contributions of Member Associations, projects financed by the State or the Regions, partnership projects with local institutions, donations and other entries linked to FDAF activities.

Members: FDAF represents fifty family associations (Annex 1) present at the national level. Family associations willing to become a member of FDAF have to present a formal admission request to be examined by the Advisory Board and by the FDAF General Assembly in plenary session. New Member Associations are asked to sign the Associates' Pact and also the FDAF Statute. Association fees are required yearly to both National Associations and Regional Forums.

Regional Forums: FDAF is organised in independent and autonomous Regional Forums, which work at a local level. At present, 20 Regional Forums are active.

Regional Forums group together the representatives of Member Associations and also representatives of associations that are only active at a local level, and which therefore cannot be represented at the national level of FDAF. Regional Forums are involved in partnerships with local public institutions, to different stages in each Region, according to Regional Forum representatives' skills and capacities, and the possibilities of co-operation given by the different regional welfare systems.

⁶ Specifically L. 383/2000.

Governance: FDAF is governed and supported by a President, two Vice-Presidents, an Executive Board, and dedicated staff. The FDAF complete organisational chart includes a Scientific Committee, and the Treasurer and Audit Committee who are both in charge of financial and economic matters.

The President and the two Vice-Presidents are elected every three years by Member Associations and Regional Forums' representatives, during the General Assembly in plenary session. The President is the legal representative of FDAF. He/she presides and supports the Executive Board meetings and takes into account Executive Board decisions. The president is also the "public voice" of FDAF: he/she meets representatives of political parties and of institutions, and also journalists. The President of FDAF is in charge of intervening in family-related issues debated at national level by media or other relevant cultural institutions and decision-makers.

The Vice-Presidents are chosen to represent both the Member Associations and the Regional Forums: therefore, one Vice-President is a member of a national association, and the other is chosen among the Regional Forum representatives. Together, they work with the President to define objectives and priorities, and they are also in charge of managing relations with all the Member Associations and the Regional Forums.

The Executive Board is composed of eleven representatives of Member Associations and Regional Forums who meet once a month. Each Member of the Board holds one or more specific executive functions and the Board is in charge of the organisation of every aspect of FDAF activity, including decisions about political interventions, communications, and managing relationships with political, social and religious parties. Representatives of the Regional Forums also have the specific task of managing relations with macro-regions of the country (north, centre and south of Italy).

The Scientific Committee is formed of eleven University Professors, involved in research on family-related topics in the areas of Economics, Law, Sociology, Psychology, Philosophy, and Media. The Scientific Committee provides scientific support to FDAF initiatives and official statements.

The Treasurer, chosen from among Member Associations or Regional Forums representatives, is in charge of fund-raising and financial accountability. An Audit Committee is charged with controlling budget accuracy, according to Italian civil and societal laws, while a Warranty Committee is responsible for settling differences and disagreements among Member Associations. The FDAF staff is composed of six persons and is managed by a General Manager, who assures the continuance of FDAF action. FDAF Member Associations, Regional Forums, the President and Vice-Presidents, the Executive Board, the Treasurer and the Staff are gathered in General Assemblies, three or four times a year.

FDAF also supports and organises the work of various internal commissions, which are established in order to discuss and propose projects or bills on specific issues such as a Family Law Commission, a Media Commission, a Work-Family Balance Commission, a School and Education Commission, and so on. Commissions are composed of Member Associations and Regional Forums representatives and are organised and supported by FDAF Staff.

The Means and Challenges of Co-operation with Public Institutions

FDAF has been working with public institutions from the very beginning, and we can trace an outline of the relevance of this kind of co-operation: in short, working with public institutions is a very important asset for an umbrella association like FDAF, both from strategic and financial perspectives.

From the strategic point of view, the possibility of working in partnership with institutions is a means of helping develop and influence family policies. FDAF promotes distinction between family policies and other kind of policies, such as social policies (linked to the wellbeing of individuals), education policies (childcare services), and policies against poverty. Although all these kind of policies can help families they are targeted at individuals, while family policy deals with the relational dimension of persons linked together in a family. Moreover, family policies consider the family as a factor assuring personal wellbeing, stability and forward-looking attitudes in society.

In recent years, the Italian government has transferred competences on family policies from national to regional and municipal levels. Therefore, FDAF has been involved in promoting family policies at three different levels:

1. at national level, for concerns about national laws, taxation and other general issues;
2. at regional level, for concerns about the schooling and health systems;
3. at local level, for concerns about services that determine the wellbeing of families, such as social services, work-family balance services, mobility, housing, and public parks.

According to this objective, FDAF represents its Member Associations' views when proposing partnerships with institutions, and is also very interested in involving families at local level, so that families themselves can become real actors of the change and can exert influence on it. The partnership with the Municipality of Parma, where FDAF has been working with an explicit and specific agreement is a good model of this. This collaboration between FDAF and the Municipality of Parma is structured as follows:

- collaboration based on a Strategic Agreement, signed in 2004: even

- besides strategic and general agreements, agreements on specific issues and projects have been signed from time to time when deemed necessary.

Based on its experiences of working at these levels, and partnership with the Municipality of Parma, FDAF advocates creation of two intermediate bodies in the local administration:

1. an 'Agency for the Family', a very lean structure, operating in strong connection with Municipal Departments to develop family policies linked to the territory and the community;
2. a 'Local Board of Associations' at a local level: a consultative body in which local family associations decide and act at a micro-level while building a permanent network among the various family associations.

In co-operation with public institutions, FDAF has to meet many challenges, synthesised as follows:

- FDAF promotes the social citizenship of the family: this is the first and main challenge facing FDAF, as family is not seen by institutions as a possible social player or a stakeholder to be taken into account.
- The enhancement of the family should be considered a common goal for all of society rather than a private matter. Strengthening the family means strengthening the whole of society.
- A real change in mentality is needed: from a problem solving approach to the family driven by emergencies (the *deficit model*) to an approach that can be defined as *promotional (the empowerment model)*. With this promotional approach policy makers become able to view the inner good and the inner possibilities of solutions *inside* each problem. This can be demonstrated with an example taken from the Italian situation: the problem-solving approach deals with orphanages closing, the promotional approach deals with the creation of care homes and family-based communities. This change of approach can be applied to many family-related issues, such as media consumption, work-family balance, migration, etc.
- FDAF supports the transition from a welfare system mainly based on state control and intervention to a welfare mix based on public-private mutual exchange. In the welfare mix, family associations and the participation of families in public life - in addition to freedom of choice as citizens - is positively strengthened. Also changing the taxation systems to promote associations can be considered a good step towards a welfare mix system.
- The strengthening of local autonomies, a process which encounters many obstacles in Italy, can also be considered a chance to create more

- possibilities at local and regional level.
- For 15 years, FDAF has been active promoting campaigns to make politicians more aware about family policies and to explain to politicians and also to voters what family policy is, and the main issues of family policies: protection of family ties, education, work, taxation, welfare system, migration.
- FDAF is also promoting - in the public television service - an adequate representation of the family and is involved in protecting the rights of women and of all people under legal age.

Mainstreaming Family Policies

According to FDAF experience and its principles, family policies can be more easily mainstreamed through a set of inter-related actions, in which institutions, family associations, and economic players are all involved as main actors.

The following mainstreaming actions seem to us to be particularly urgent:

- definition of the role of the family in society and the protection of family relations: there can't be any effective family policy if the role of family in society is denied or neglected;
- the development of family associations that involve families and experiment in active citizenship;
- recognition of family associations' role in society;
- creation of administrative and consultation bodies on family policy at all levels (national, regional, local): a Ministry for the Family, Agency for the Family, Board of Associations, etc;
- the possibility of building partnerships with all the social and economic actors/stakeholders, such as economic organisations, and trade unions, to find strategic assets in work-life balance;
- awareness campaigns to promote family-friendly and family-promoting programming on Italian public television;
- the possibility of having public competitions for project-funding not only based only on single persons, but also on families;
- development of migrant integration policies based on families, with particular attention drawn to female and jobless migrants;
- a new "educational pact" between parents and teachers in schools and the promotion of the role of families in school management.

Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union: A European Union Level of Action

Introduction

The Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union (COFACE)⁷ is an international non-profit association under Belgian law that raises awareness of the family dimension of European policies, and promotes solidarity between the generations and the interests of children within the European Union (EU). It advocates policies of non-discrimination and equal opportunities between people and family forms, and supports policies that promote equality between women and men.

Objectives

COFACE's key objective is to speak up for families in the European institutions, with a view to ensuring that proper heed is paid to the family dimension of European policies. With a view to achieving this, COFACE works in three complementary directions:

- as a spokesperson for family organisations it liaises with the European authorities in all sectors relating to the rights and interests of families;
- it informs national organisations of developments in the European Union, and encourages greater awareness of the EU dimension;
- it organises exchanges of ideas and experiences as well as mutual aid between family organisations in different countries.

COFACE's involvement in the PROGRESS programme⁸ (2008-2010) and in the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion⁹ (2010) has enabled it to emphasise the role that families play in preventing social exclusion and poverty, and the ways that they are being affected by the current economic crisis in Europe. In addition to this current crisis, which is generating questions about the viability of the European social model and the economic system as a whole, other crises are just around the corner – such as sustainable development, migration, and climate change. In all of these areas, COFACE is ready to raise awareness of the implications that they have for families, and the active roles that families can play in dealing with them.

⁷ See <http://www.coface-eu.org/en/>.

⁸ See <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=327&langId=en>.

⁹ See <http://www.2010againstopoverty.eu/>.

History

COFACE is an offspring of the International Union of Family Organisations (IUFO), which was formed in 1947 at the end of an International Conference of Population and Family held in Paris. The IUFO was organised into 'regions', one of which was Europe¹⁰. When the Treaty of Rome brought the Coal and Steel Community and EURATOM together to form the European Economic Community of six-countries in 1957 - and the IUFO was itself just 11 years old - European family organisations within the IUFO lobbied to create a separate arm for action and lobbying of the new European institutions. The result of this lobbying was the European Action Committee, founded in 1958.

This Committee was based at an office in Brussels paid for and run by Belgium's family organisation Ligue des Familles Nombreuses. In 1960, this became the Family Action Committee to the European Communities (*le* COFACE), but remained an informal entity under the control of the IUFO. Tensions between the IUFO, which still had its own European regional arm, and supporters of a 'de-facto' COFACE simmered, only to be finally resolved in 1979 when COFACE became a confederation (*la* COFACE) in its own right, and a separate legal entity under Belgian law. At the time it was agreed that COFACE would be an observer member of IUFO and that both organisations would co-operate closely, though over time contacts between the IUFO and COFACE have dwindled.

Since the earliest of days, COFACE has been actively publishing documents and position papers, and building up a presence within the European institutions. A major milestone was reached with the passing of the European Parliament Resolution on European Family Policy in 1983, which was the first formal declaration of family policy in its entirety by one of the European Community's main bodies. COFACE also lobbied actively for the establishment and first meeting of the Council of Family Ministers. This first took place in 1989 and is something that the Commission publicly credited COFACE for having achieved. COFACE also established a series of European family conferences, the first of which took place in 1987 under the patronage of the King and Queen of Belgium and with the official sponsorship of the European Commission. These raised the issue of the family dimension of European policies to the highest levels; three other conferences followed in 1990 (Rome), 1993 (Brussels), and 1996 (Dublin), and will be followed later this year (2010) by a conference in Brussels¹¹.

In the wider European Civil Society Organisation (CSO) 'landscape', the founding of the Platform of European social NGOs (SocialPlatform) in 1995 was a milestone in the campaign for a social Europe. SocialPlatform now has around forty member organisations and has become a key player on the European social

¹⁰ See De Lestapis (1956) for an early account of the work of the IUFO. The IUFO is now known as the World Family Organisation; see <http://www.worldfamilyorganization.org/>.

¹¹ "Social inclusion of families and EU Policies: Where do we stand?" (14-15 October 2010); see <http://coface-eu.org/en/European-Year-2010/for-COFACE/EU-Family-Conference/>.

policy scene. COFACE was actively involved from the beginning, and sits on several of its governing bodies and working groups. The representativeness of SocialPlatform, and therefore its constituent members, means that the EU institutions consult it regularly, either by inviting delegations or organising discussion meetings with its members. In addition to COFACE, there are also a number of other organisations representing family organisations at a European level; some of these are outlined in Annex 5 for context.

Organisation

COFACE is a pluralistic organisation, with around fifty member organisations from twenty-two Member States of the European Union (Annex 3). These member organisations may be generalist national organisations (Union Nationale des Associations Familiales - France), regional organisations (Gezinsbond - Flanders, Belgium), organisations with geographical bases (Unión de Escuelas Familiares Agrarias - Spain), specialist organisations (Club of Large Families - Slovenia), and those with a more ideological focus (Centre d'Action Laïque - Belgium). COFACE unites these organisations and acts as their spokesperson in the European institutions.

All member organisations pay a subscription fee and have the right to speak at the once-yearly General Assembly, which is open to representatives of all member organisations and decides on broad lines of action. The General Assembly elects an Administrative Council, which is the most important executive structure within COFACE. It has a maximum of two effective members and two alternate members per country¹², elected for a four-year term of office. The Council meets three or four times a year and for the purposes of day-to-day administration, the Council elects a President, the three Vice-Presidents, a General Secretary and a Treasurer who constitute the Bureau; the Bureau is geographically and gender balanced. It is the Bureau's job to monitor the implementation of decisions taken by the Administrative Council.

Five working groups are open to all member organisations on key policy areas of interest:

1. Family and social policies;
2. Inclusive policies for disabled and other dependent persons and their families;
3. Consumer Protection, Services and Public Health Policies;
4. Education and information and communication technologies;
5. Exchange of information and experiences: mutual learning and capacity building.

¹² This depends on the number of members that COFACE has in each country at any one time.

Working Groups consist of fifteen or more members which meet twice a year. The Chair, who is elected by the Administrative Council, publicly represents their Working Group at internal and external events. Working Groups are responsible for drafting reports, making recommendations, and after a co-ordinated period of analysis and debate, propose COFACE position papers for submission to the Administrative Council. Once adopted, these become the official positions of COFACE, though it often takes more than one meeting of the Administrative Council before they are finally agreed upon. This democratic process makes the products usable by all members of COFACE.

The Secretariat, based in Brussels, coordinates the Working Groups, and manages regular contacts with the European institutions, in particular the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council of Ministers and the European Economic and Social Committee. It also communicates the positions and messages of COFACE internally and externally and collaborates with other important stakeholders at an EU level, such as with social partners (business and trade unions) and other European NGOs. In practical terms, this consists of daily work writing the newsletter, maintaining the website, communicating with members, publishing documents and positions, contacting the press, networking and working closely with a variety of other organisations from inside and outside the field of the family, and financial related activities. These tasks are currently carried out by seven members of staff: the Director, two Policy Officers, two Project Officers, a Communications Officer and an Assistant.

In addition to the everyday work of COFACE under the PROGRESS programme, it is currently organising a high-level conference for the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, and is involved in a number of other projects including FAMILYPLATFORM (working towards development of a research agenda on the family)¹³, DAPHNE (aiming to raise awareness about people at work who are victims of domestic violence)¹⁴ and FLABEL (conducting research on nutrition labelling so as to develop clearer, more transparent and understandable nutrition labelling)¹⁵.

The Family Dimension of European Policies

Although the word 'family' is mentioned in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the Union (2000) and the Lisbon Treaty (ratified in 2009), the European Union has no direct competence in family policy, and as a result Member States are free to manage family policy as they deem fit. COFACE has consistently argued that this approach is right and proper, and that family policy must remain the responsibility of the national, regional or local government. Indeed, promoting the

¹³ See <http://www.familyplatform.eu>.

¹⁴ See <http://coface-eu.org/en/European-Projects/Project-DAPHNE/The-Project/>.

¹⁵ See <http://www.flabel.org/en/>.

family dimension of current European competencies is not a call for greater EU-level powers: it is a call for the family dimension of *established* European competencies and policies - be they economic, social, employment, environmental or even agricultural - to be taken into proper account. COFACE has been making this case ever since 1958.

As early as 1968 the European Commission observed that “Europe is not just about industries, farmers and technocrats...It must also be for people...” (European Commission Policy Statement, 1968). It was not until 1983, however, that the European Parliament acknowledged a specific responsibility to families, when it declared that “the European Community can no longer ignore the needs of the family when formulating its policies...family policy should therefore become an integral part of all Community policies” (European Parliament Resolution on European Family Policy, 1983). And in 1994 the family dimension of the European Union’s competencies was finally recognised by the European Commission, when it accepted that “Even if not directly addressed to families, most socio-economic and development policies and programmes invariably affect families” (European Commission, 1994).

This has been COFACE’s *raison d’être* for over fifty years: raising awareness of the family dimension of European policies, reminding policy makers of their responsibilities towards European families, and promoting specific family-friendly policies at a European level. Alongside a variety of other European level CSOs and NGOs, COFACE has been actively promoting a social rather than a business orientated Europe. It is COFACE’s view that there is a constant need to keep reminding the institutions of their responsibilities and to ensure that they have the input of family organisations from across the European Union when formulating policy. This was the purpose of one of COFACE’s most recent actions - publication of the 2010 Memorandum to the new Commission (COFACE, 2010) - which listed eleven demands that reflect the outcomes of the work done by COFACE’s member family associations over the past three years.

COFACE’s Positions

COFACE has contributed to a wide range of EU-level policies, including maternity and paternity leave, support for family carers, childcare, domestic violence, education, housing, indebtedness, consumer rights, and new technologies.

The last few years have been particularly busy, with twenty positions and recommendations adopted in 2009 alone on issues ranging from critical analysis of the *Framework Agreement on Parental Leave* and the *Role of maintenance payments in combating poverty among lone-parent families*, to *Safer Internet* and *Preventing over-indebtedness, personal finance education and action against banking and financial exclusion* (Annex 4). A few of these past and current

concerns are detailed below to indicate how COFACE and its members have lobbied the European institutions on these matters:

Social Protection: Social protection covers the three elements of the 'family policy triangle': resources, services, and time (COFACE HANDICAP, 2001), and has been the subject of a number of meetings and publications (e.g. COFACE, 1998; COFACE, 2001). COFACE has consistently argued that housing benefits, unemployment benefits, and child and family benefits, are all necessary supports for families. It has argued that family benefits should be the right of the child and be universal (non-means tested), which would ensure that whatever might befall a family, the child still receives necessary resources; in addition, universality also helps build support in the wider population for the allocation of benefits. The time element of social protection, which is receiving increasing attention at the European level, includes the various kinds of leave available to families (such as parental, maternity and paternity). Finally, the services element includes childcare and specific support for families with special needs.

Although there are big differences between different welfare systems across Europe, in no country do the benefits provided by governments actually cover the real costs of having a family, and in some countries, such as Italy, one has to live on or below the poverty line in order to be eligible to receive any support. While trade unions have called for a minimum salary for workers, COFACE has joined calls with other European-level organisations for a European minimum income, arguing that this is necessary to protect those individuals who are not in work.

Disabled children: The European Commission was initially only concerned with disability in relation to employment. COFACE raised the profile of the issue by setting up a special commission on children and families with disabilities, and later on hosted two European conferences on the topic of brain injury in 1987 and 1988, which grabbed the attention of the Commission. The outcome of this flurry of work was the establishment in its own right of a European association in its own right: EBIS (the European Brain Injury Society), co-founded by COFACE. It continues to work actively with COFACE to this day.

Men and families: The role of men in families has been a high priority for COFACE for many years. The issue was actually tackled first in *Women's Rights and Family Policy* (COFACE, 1985), which called for men to take a more active role in the family to ease the burden on women. By 1994 the Commission had also taken an interest in the issue of fathers, calling it a policy issue and devoting considerable space to the phenomenon of 'new fathers' (European Commission, 1994).

The issue continued to attract European attention, and in 2006 COFACE published the results of a project titled *Men and Families*, which argued that "Examining men's role in the family effectively means having to look at the organisation of society in general, and particularly at the huge influence of

stereotypes and resistance to change... It is not just men's role that is in question, but that of women, too" (COFACE, 2006). A number of recommendations were put forward, such as training for health workers and educators, teaching gender equality as a national curriculum subject, and framework agreements for different types of parental and family leave.

Internet: The widespread adoption and use of the internet over the last twenty years has led it to becoming something of a hot topic for family organisations and policy makers.

In 2008, COFACE published its position on the e-Inclusion of families and put forward a number of recommendations on how to help bridge the digital divide. More recently, COFACE published *Safer Internet*, which argued that parents need support in their role as educators, and that education and co-regulation are fundamental in tackling issues of internet safety. As part of this area of work, several seminars have been organised by member organisations in different countries, most recently a study day took place at the European Economic and Social Committee on Families and New Technologies¹⁶.

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP): The CAP was an integrated Community policy from the outset, and it helped to shape the fate of millions of farming and consuming families. As such, it was a key issue in COFACE's earlier days. COFACE contributed policy positions, took part in the Consumers' Consultative Committee, and lobbied the Commission and Agriculture Ministers. It also released two documents – *The Common Agricultural Policy Revisited* (1981), and *The Common Agricultural Policy – Policy Positions* (1985). Both reports stressed the need to put product quality and support for profitable family farms top of the list. Despite sustained negotiations, powerful vested economic interests blocked reforms that were acknowledged as necessary.

Today, COFACE has several members specifically representing rural families - such as the Irish Countrywomen's Association (Ireland), Familles Rurales (France) and Unión de Centres De Acción Rural (Spain) - and also has other member organisations that have a more general concern for issues that affect rural areas, such as transport, education and services.

Demography: Despite all of the efforts of family organisations including COFACE in other policy areas, nothing has done more to raise the family dimension of European policy to policy makers' attention than has concern about demographic change in Europe¹⁷. This concern leads directly to the

¹⁶ See <http://coface-eu.org/en/Education-ICT/ICT/Study-Day-Families-ICT/>.

¹⁷ Fertility levels are mentioned in a number of FAMILYPLATFORM reports, including *Existential Field 1: Family structures and family forms in the European Union* (Beier *et al.*, 2010) and *Transitions into Parenthood* (Stauber, 2001), and give credence to what COFACE has been saying about gender equality: namely, that countries with the most advanced social systems as regards gender equality have the greatest levels of fertility.

FAMILYPLATFORM project, for which this report has been produced.

COFACE was active on demographic issues well before the European Commission started taking a serious interest in the issue, holding its first symposium on the subject as early as 1983. COFACE published *Families and demographic facts* in 1986, sounding a wake-up call to “give families every opportunity to have and raise children, thereby being free to make a dignified contribution to population growth”. Concentrating on policy areas that have the greatest impact on birth rates, the report gave recommendations on town planning, employment rights, and youth unemployment amongst others. COFACE has repeatedly resisted calls for demographic policies aimed solely at increasing birth rates as ‘political goals which offend the dignity of the family’ (COFACE, 1984: 8); instead, it has made clear that “Any upswing in Europe’s birth rate must be brought about by a more generous family policy which gives each couple the chance to have the family they want” (COFACE, 1985: 24).

In 1983, COFACE organised a symposium titled *Families, demography and crisis*, which attracted a fair amount of attention, and the French Government, which at the time held the Presidency of the EEC’s Council of Ministers called for a report to be drafted on the EEC’s demographic situation. This report, written in 1984, was referred to by the Queen of Holland, the French President, and the German Chancellor. The ministers responsible for family affairs came together to pool their national experiences, and in 1989 presented a report with the following recommendations:

- to pursue information actions, particularly through production and presentation of regular information on demography;
- include the family dimension in the establishment of appropriate Community policies, for example in freedom of persons and equality between men and women;
- regularly exchange of information and views at a Community level on major themes of common interest as regards family policy and demography.

The issue continued to be of concern at the European level, with the European Commission stating in 1994 that the “declining birth rate in almost all Member States of the Union, fewer marriages, more couples living together and children born out of wedlock, and a rising divorce rate” are “of considerable concern to the institutions of the European Union” (European Commission, 1994: 5). In September 2004, COFACE co-hosted a seminar on population issues with the European Observatory entitled *Social Situation, Demography and the Family*. Shortly afterwards the Commission published a Green Paper titled *Confronting demographic change: a new solidarity between the generations*¹⁸. This was

¹⁸ See http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/situation_in_europe/c10128_en.htm.

followed by a wide-ranging consultation and publication in 2006 of *The demographic future of Europe – from challenge to opportunity*¹⁹, which led to the setting up of the European Alliance for Families²⁰.

The Alliance was formally adopted by the EU's highest authority, the European Council in March 2007, to serve as a platform for the exchange of views and knowledge on family-friendly policies as well as of good practices between Member States. Practicalities establishing the Alliance included the creation of a European Observatory on family (which has yet to be set up for budgetary reasons), facilitating an exchange of views with social partners and civil society, creation of a specific website, and promoting work on the situation of families and family-friendly policies under the 7th Framework Programme – which leads directly to FAMILYPLATFORM.

Challenges

Many of the challenges faced by COFACE at an EU level are shared by other EU level CSOs:

- the need to apply strict transparency standards to ensure that organisations are fully accountable to their members, society, and to their funders;
- going beyond current membership and reaching out to new organisations, particularly in the new Member States;
- committing to promote and strengthen the geographical representation of all regions of Europe;
- working towards a better gender balance within organisations;
- working actively to involve all members within the organisation, looking at practices that work well, and building the capacity of member organisations and CSOs more widely when appropriate (SocialPlatform, 2010).

Other challenges are specific to family organisations: foremost that family policy is not a competence of the European Union. Despite constantly reminding institutions of their responsibilities towards families, the European Parliament Resolution on European Family Policy (1983), the resultant budget line on measures in favour of families and children (1984), and the first Council of Family Ministers (1989), the European Court of Justice ruled in 1998 that there was insufficient legal basis for a budget line on family policy. This ruling changed eligibility criteria for core funding grants that COFACE had enjoyed for close to 13 years and led to the family being dubbed a “negative priority” by certain

¹⁹ See http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/situation_in_europe/c10160_en.htm.

²⁰ See http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/emplweb/families/index.cfm?langId=en&id=1.

Commission officials, leading to a period of much reduced activity at COFACE. Although PROGRESS currently enables COFACE to run its five Working Groups, employ staff, and be actively involved in shaping policy debate on the family in relation to poverty and social exclusion, it is not clear what will happen when it ends in 2013.

As already mentioned, COFACE does not call for family policy to become a competence of the European Union, though it does call for its policies to take the family into account. This is made more difficult by the fact that the political forces present at a European Union level are not equally engaged on the issue of the family: while some have shied away from involvement, others have been much more involved. For COFACE, it is important that all political options engage in the debate on family policies, and it is an on-going challenge to ensure that all political options do engage with the family dimension of European policies.

The recent expansion of the EU has led to additional challenges facing organisations at the EU level. In the family field at least, the shared experiences of 'old' and 'new' Member States are understandably quite different, and different views prevail regarding a number of contentious issues, requiring a period of building-up of trust and friendship. Organisations in the 'new' Member States face the additional challenge of a relatively undeveloped civil society – meaning that CSOs in general face a more precarious situation, and are still undergoing considerable change and development. The current economic crisis, and future expansion of the EU, no doubt means that this will continue to be an issue.

COFACE tries to ensure that family organisations facing a precarious future are supported, and that the knowledge and experience of more established organisations is shared with those who have had fewer opportunities to organise themselves. As stated succinctly by SocialPlatform: “The strength of European organisations depends on the strength of their members. If these organisations are not recognized and valued at national level, it is likely that their involvement at EU level will be diminished...There is therefore a role for European networks to empower national organisations not yet equipped with the relevant policy frameworks to become efficient watchdogs at national level” (SocialPlatform, 2010: 5).

Increasingly, family issues are being approached from the perspective of equal opportunities, non-discrimination, gender equality, the role of men in families, and changes in life courses. With the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, the focus has broadened more widely to the spread of poverty, increasing inequalities, and social exclusion. EU enlargement has thrown an even harsher spotlight on these problems, and social NGOs at a European level have been working together to ensure that the new 2020 Agenda²¹ focusses at least some of its attention on the issue of disadvantage

²¹ This sets out the next ten year vision (2010-2020) of Europe's social market economy; see http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/index_en.htm.

and inequality. For organisations that have focused on these issues, the challenge is to ensure the continued focus after the end of the 2010 Year.

Finally, in the current 'age of austerity', COFACE has been arguing of that cuts to welfare budgets can easily fuel poverty. Pointing out that the social protection systems of Europe have prevented a massive increase in poverty over the last few years, it has argued that European governments must ring-fence social protection systems from cuts, and therefore find alternative sources of finances to tackle national deficits. One possible solution to this would be a tax on financial and currency speculation, which would involve a redistribution of wealth from the financial and speculative sector to individuals and families. For COFACE, the redistribution of wealth at a time of increasing inequalities across Europe is a question not only of equity, but of social justice too.

Mouvement Mondial des Mères: A Global Level of Action

“One factor remains constant: the timeless importance of mothers and their invaluable contribution to raising the next generation”

- Ban Ki Moon, UN Secretary General, 15 May 2009

Introduction

The family and - even more so - family policy, are sensitive issues at a national level where there is the simultaneous need to maintain a fragile balance between the privacy, free-choice and independence of an individual, versus the state's desire to ensure the wellbeing of its population. Organisations - whether they be grassroots, community-based, or non-governmental -, often run by committed volunteers attuned to the constraints, sensitivities and practicalities of such personal intervention, can be much more effective at raising public awareness and implementing family-friendly policies than public authorities. They can also, in good working relationships with academic institutions and governments, alert those advising and making social policy of unexpected consequences of policies on the family.

When these issues are considered at regional and global level, the situation is further complicated by transnational cultural, ethnic and religious diversity, and the desire for national sovereignty. International activities always make it necessary to put aside differences and find common ground. The highest international institution - the United Nations - does not have legislative powers, nor can it implement policies. Representatives of Member Nations in the various sessions work together on the texts of thematic documents on which all 192 member states must agree, and only then may they choose to ratify the document. Only NGOs can encourage their governments to implement what they have promised to do in a given sphere. NGOs have significant power to ensure that international directives are properly and fully implemented at the national level.

For these reasons, the importance of civil society organisations working in complementary collaboration with academic, national, regional and international institutions should not be underestimated. This is how Mouvement Mondial des Mères (MMM/World Movement of Mothers)²², sees its role at all levels: from the grassroots, to policy implementation. MMM is an example of an NGO working globally to support mothers and highlighting the importance of their social and economic role in the heart of the family and beyond the home.

²² See <http://www.mouvement-mondial-des-meres.org/>.

MMM in a Nutshell

MMM is an international NGO in General Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council and Department for Public Information, while MMM's European Delegation enables the organisation to work effectively with the European Commission and European Parliament. For 60 years MMM has federated associations from widely different backgrounds working with and for mothers to ensure at least the basics of human security and improved quality of life. The input of a mother and a father in bringing up children is - or should be - symbiotic, equal, different but complementary. However, mothers believe that they have a most profound and lasting influence from a child's earliest moments. For this reason MMM seeks to address many social issues through the natural authority of mothers.

To reinforce its open, inclusive character, MMM defines itself as an independent, apolitical and non-denominational movement. It is managed by mothers who volunteer to organise, support and represent Member Associations throughout the world: in short, MMM is run by mothers, for mothers and their children and family. The wide range of issues covered by MMM reflects not only a mother's essential multi-tasking skills, but also the diversity of its Member Associations. All of the different levels of activities - practical, and institutional and international networking - enhance each other.

Mission and Vision

The founding document of principles of MMM states: "A mother is the most powerful influence on the life of the family and, therefore, on the cultural, economic and social life of the nation. It is vital that public opinion and policymakers recognise and value the irreplaceable contribution of mothers throughout the world"²³. Therefore, MMM supports the action of mothers for peace and human security by:

- helping mothers as the first educators of their children to fulfil all their responsibilities: family, professional, social and civic;
- raising awareness and obtain recognition for a mother's mission, the social and economical value of her work with the general public and policy makers, in laws and in international conventions;
- fighting against different forms of violence, exclusion, discrimination and exploitation that affect mothers.

The specificity of MMM is that it works with issues of concern to mothers (and therefore, women), the family and children: mothers are the living link between

²³ Extract from the Mothers' Charter, available at:
<http://www.mouvement-mondial-des-meres.org/eng/identity/charter.html>.

these sometimes conflicting roles. Mothers do everything that women do, but in addition they have made a commitment to bear and raise children, which is a huge investment in - and direct influence on - the future; this is a fundamentally important dimension to add to the normal concerns and activities of women.

This is why the mother at the heart of the family and the community is an effective resource for all family-focused stakeholders and why MMM encourages the inclusion of mothers in decision-making processes at all levels, bringing to this the benefit of their specific expertise as mothers. MMM believes that policy beneficial to mothers can only be successfully developed with the direct input of mothers. Mothers can be agents of peace – a source of experience, strength, resilience, communication and mediation to help prevent, resolve and recover from family and community dysfunction and to build an integrated and inclusive society. This is what MMM seeks to encourage mothers, policy-makers, opinion formers and the general public to recognise.

To date, most communities and societies have, however, not granted mothers the corresponding public influence that their responsibilities and quiet on-going actions deserve. Ultimately, mothers' participation in public life might also give their societies a better chance of survival in the long run.

History

MMM formed as a result of the work of the Feminine Civic and Social Union (UFCS). The UFCS was active in France in the 1930s, raising awareness about the problems faced by many mothers as they became increasingly active outside the home. It demanded that mothers be given a truly free choice between going to work and staying at home, and it is thanks to these pioneers that family allowances were granted in France.

During the Second World War women met the challenge of fulfilling the responsibilities of men while they were away at war; women, particularly mothers, kept alive not only their family, but also their national economy and the very fabric of society. But these women simultaneously had no say in the decisions which had so devastated their lives. This experience led women to realise that mothers are responsible for transmitting to their children from the earliest of years the values of responsibility, respect and peace – they wished to actively contribute to a peaceful future and to the economic and social developments of the time.

In this spirit, the UFCS organised an international congress in 1947 at the new UNESCO building in Paris, where delegates from 26 nations of the world debated the theme: “Mothers Work for Human Progress”. Denouncing the horrors of war, participants asserted their determination to repair the ruins, to recreate conditions for lasting peace and to build a better world for their children.

At the close of the congress it was unanimously decided to found MMM and to adopt the text of the Mothers' Charter for its underlying principles.

In the aftermath of the war, there were still divisions between the peoples of Europe, but MMM understood from the start the importance of an inclusive approach to building a lasting peace. As MMM has developed links with many countries, its vision has been shared by associations worldwide. In 1949 MMM was granted Special Consultative Status to the Economic and Social Council at the United Nations, and in 2004 MMM was granted General Consultative Status – one of only 135 NGOs with this status out of over 3,000 non-governmental organisations active at the UN. Since 2001, MMM has been developing a working relationship with the European Union's authorities.

Organisation

All MMM members ultimately refer to the Paris office which ensures the unity of MMM in all its members' mission and activities. However, the different elements constituting the structure of MMM are all interlinked and communicate extensively to ensure shared information, vision, experience and expertise.

The head office: MMM's head office ('the hub') is based in Paris, and deals with day-to-day administration and coordinates all MMM activities. It is staffed solely by volunteers and the team based there currently consists of the Secretary General and Treasurer, aided by mothers who volunteer to take on a specific responsibility in the running of the organisation.

Internally, the hub:

- communicates through a monthly electronic newsletter to all members, through email and telephone communications, including international conference calls;
- informs, motivates and supports members;
- develops training sessions for members to improve their associative skills;
- assists in international representation of the organisation, acting as the interface between the grassroots members and the representatives to the international institutions whose decisions impact on their lives.

Externally, the hub:

- communicates through the website;
- ensures presence at international conferences, collaboration with other organisations;
- initiates research;
- oversees publications;
- organises international conferences and workshops;

- investigates applications for membership;
- raises funds for members' projects and for awareness-raising work;
- develops projects with members and other international organisations.

In addition to the hub, MMM sends representatives to the UN (New York, Geneva, Paris, Vienna, and other worldwide locations for specific sessions) and to the EU institutions.

Members: Members comprise associations adhering to the principles of MMM. These include –

- regional MMM associations, such as MMM Europe, which represents the interests of the European Member Associations and works with the European Commission and the European Parliament (see below);
- national MMM associations, such as MMM France, MMM Lebanon, MMM Mali, and MMM England (a grassroots association of local relevance, linking mothers with local and national government and organising training sessions, conferences, discussion groups, etc);
- Member Associations, which include a wide variety of grassroots organisations encompassing action in fields such as education, training, health, rural development, social legislation, strengthening the family, combating substance abuse, and supporting mothers in distress (Annex 6).

Individual mothers are also involved in MMM, working with MMM and fulfilling specific tasks for MMM.

Board of Governors: The governing body of MMM is elected from the members, both associations represented by an agreed delegate, and individuals. The composition of the board aims to reflect the geographical spread and range of different experiences of MMM's members. The Board of Governors elects the President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary General and Treasurer. The Board of Governors –

- develops MMM strategy to present to the members;
- discusses how issues raised by the members should be dealt with;
- deals with membership applications. Decisions of the Board are always ratified by the members in General or Extraordinary Assembly.

Informal panel of experts and advisors: These are international specialists - some MMM members, some not - on whom MMM can draw for specific advice on sensitive issues, such as family policy in various countries, inter-faith dialogue, law, mental health, and matters relating to security in its widest sense.

Activities

Grassroots Activities: International aspect of MMM's activities make it necessary to find common ground: that is the powerful influence of mothers in their families and in their communities as agents of peace and security. The wide range of MMM network's grassroots activities shows the involvement of mothers in multiple fields, such as education, health, social and economical development, prevention.

- Enfance sans drogue – France: Training mothers to speak effectively with their children about drug abuse and raising awareness about this issue amongst young people in schools.
- Accion Familiar – Spain: Family counselling and support, drug prevention, mother's workshops, immigrants counselling, university Chair for the family;
- ONG Repères (“Reference Points”) – Ivory Coast: Raising awareness among parents and training them about health and education issues, informing parents about their role in preparing children to live in their communities, training and information through ‘Life schools’, training seminars and workshops, youth camps, conferences, forums, dinner debates, round tables, open days, meeting places. Counselling: through support groups, creative activities groups, health groups.
- Ligue Marocaine pour la Protection de l'Enfance – Morocco: Defending the rights of the child, promoting child health and education, training and information in the field of mother and child, orphanages, facilitating adoption, crèches, schools, day care centres, health centres, literacy classes, development of a National Centre for the Mother and Child.
- The Rural Reconstruction Foundation – Bangladesh: Agricultural practices, woodland management, fish farming, rural economics, disaster management and reconstruction. Literacy classes, women's development, health and hygiene, citizenship.
- Fundalam – Argentina: maternal health, supporting young mothers and raising awareness of the importance of the mother-child bond and prevention of early pregnancies.

Interactions with the United Nations: As an NGO with General Consultative Status to the UN, MMM seeks to –

- participate in all high level meetings in New York;
- produce oral and written statements;
- attend information meetings, forums, commissions organised by the UN;
- be an active agent in panel discussions;
- actively participate in Working Groups on issues linked with the MMM mission;
- address petitions to the Secretary General office.

Representation and work at the UN and the EU involve a lot of interaction with other international and European organisations. Although every organisation has its own specific mission and identity, effective partnership including joint ventures, petitions and statements are recognised as having the greatest impact. MMM works with a wide range of Member Associations throughout the world and is likewise challenged navigating the diversity of organisations it collaborates with. Finding common ground and consensus is essential, but being at the crossroads between women's and family issues and contributing to groups dealing with both these issues gives MMM broadened perspectives which are most useful for an inclusive approach to family and mothers' concerns.

United Nations and EU Representatives send MMM regular reports that the head office summarises and disseminates to its members. Members are also invited to attend UN and EU meetings on which they have specific expertise. They are also asked to send regular contributions on issues proposed by the UN and EU agendas to be relayed by MMM representatives in debates/working groups. Contributions may also concern publications such as what is projected presently by the branch of family affairs at DESA (ECOSOC Department of Economic and Social Affairs) on "Family policy and men in families" and by FAMILYPLATFORM at the EU on "The State of mothers in Europe".

An important means of raising awareness of mothers' issues, of transmitting MMM's message, of networking with other NGOs, and reinforcing MMM's network of members and partner organisations are conferences, and these have included:

- conference in Beirut (2003): *The Role of Mothers in Peace Building and Security*;
- seminar in Madrid (2005): *Conciliating Family and Professional Life*;
- congress at UNESCO (2007, Paris): *Mothers Work for Peace*;
- conference at the academy of Defence (2008, Oxford UK): *A Secure Society for the 21st Century – Why Mothers Matter*;
- session at the United Nations DPI (Department of Public Information) conference in UNESCO (2008, Paris for the 60th Anniversary of the declaration of Human Rights): *Mothers, a cohesive force: Mobilising mothers for the implementation of Human dignity and Rights for everyone and fighting discrimination*.

European Activities: MMM Europe has its own status as a Regional MMM Association and represents the European members of MMM to the European institutions. It is comprised of a team of volunteers with specific responsibilities. When required by specific projects, MMM Europe hires a project manager paid by the project commissioner. MMM Europe brings a global perspective to European family matters, and –

- brings the practical grassroots expertise of MMM members to the EU;
- follows reports (initiative and legislative) presented and discussed at the European Parliament and attends specific Parliamentary Commissions;
- contacts MEP to discuss specific matters related to MMM's mission;
- writes position papers;
- attends and participates in conferences, meetings and colloquia;
- takes part in European projects;
- communicates with its members through a web site.

Interactions with National Governments: Actions include –

- MMM France, which maintains regular contacts with government officials, deputies and ministries concerning women's issues - raises awareness and makes proposals - currently concerning parental leave and mothers' pensions.
- MMM Lebanon, which participates in an NGO network lobbying government to reinforce women's rights and more specifically campaigns for the right of Lebanese women to transmit nationality to their children.
- Donneurope Federcasalinghe (Italy), which has contributed to a law protecting women's rights in the context of domestic accidents and raises awareness on issue of mother's pensions.

Barriers and Challenges

Organisations such as MMM often face challenges, some shared by other global-level NGOs and others specific to MMM.

Unpaid work: Whether it takes place at home or in voluntary organisations, volunteering is often underestimated in its scope and impact. Volunteers must reconcile voluntary service with their family and workplace commitments, and this means that their valuable input is always part-time. Maintaining continuity and follow-up is an additional priority and challenging task for their organisation. However, volunteers show a deep understanding of and commitment to their cause; they are grounded in the practical, and use their time effectively. In short, they are not 'just doing a job': they give of themselves wholeheartedly to the cause.

Funding: Is always an issue, particularly in the current financial climate. It is clear that regular funding is vital for the effective functioning of any organisation. However, MMM only taps sources of funding that respect and preserve its innate independence. MMM also encourages and helps its regional, national and local associations to benefit from funding for relevant concrete projects.

Communication: With no travelling budget, it is difficult to help some member association representatives with their travelling expenses. These expenses are

essential to ensure participation at MMM meetings and facilitate the “person-to-person” contacts that provide the necessary cement to communication and collaboration. In the same way, MMM staff members do not have a budget to visit Member Associations in their own country.

Other concrete factors also impact on close communication with some members: the international context of restrictive security measures for instance, does not help members who wish to travel from reputedly unstable countries. Obtaining a visa, for instance, can turn into an exhausting hurdle of obstacles that discourages people who already face difficult life conditions. Infrastructure in some countries is not always reliable and this can be a challenge to effective and regular collaboration.

Mothers: MMM’s mission is not always well understood: “*Why* would mothers need help?” is a quote from correspondence with the UK Charities Commission when MMM England applied to become a charity. Single, black, teenage mothers can be considered a ‘charitable purpose’ but not mothers in general. And yet, we find that they are in need, and ask for support balancing responsibilities inside and outside the home. They need recognition for their investment in the future.

Discrimination: “What about fathers?” This is an accusation sometimes levelled at MMM. The principles of MMM underline the importance of the different, but complementary nature of the input of mother and father. While MMM encourages and approves of any approach highlighting the role of both parents, MMM’s specific mission is to focus on mothers. It is therefore important, to build good collaborative relations with many different, but like-minded entities, to identify common ground and to build effective working relationships with other organisations. In this way, family-focused organisations can put an international spotlight on the importance of the family.

From the Grassroots to the Policy Level

The following few examples of MMM’s work demonstrate how activities can reach from the grassroots family level to the policy level, and how the international reach of MMM benefits and enriches activities of its Member Associations at local, national and regional level. At the same time this interactive, dynamic relationship underpins our partnerships with other institutions regionally (such as with the EU and NATO) and globally (MMM input at the United Nations). The first example shows how MMM, working with international institutions, integrates and stimulates the work of associations at local, national, regional and international level.

From UNESCO’s *Decade for a Culture of Peace* to MMM Mothers’ Workshops: The starting point of MMM’s renewed focus on the role of mothers in building peace and security was the implementation of the *Decade for a*

Culture of Peace programmed by the United Nations. UN Resolution 1325 (adopted in 2000), confirmed the “importance of the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace building”. It underlined the “equal importance of their participation and total involvement in peace-keeping and security”. Kofi Annan also declared: “In war-torn societies, women keep society going. They maintain the social fabric... Women are often the prime advocates of peace. We must ensure that women are enabled to play a full part in peace negotiations, in peace processes, in peace missions”. MMM felt it appropriate to highlight how women in their role as mothers can contribute to peace building

In 2003, MMM organised a conference at the UN building in Beirut entitled *The Role of Mothers in Peace Building and Security*. This event brought together 350 women, mostly mothers from all of the communities present in Lebanon. These women, who had not been in contact in the 12 years since the war, started talking to each other. The outcome was the creation of MMM Lebanon, which aimed to continue this dialogue focusing on family and the role of mothers in building a secure society. Another outcome of the Beirut conference was to raise awareness among MMM members: they could see their local, national and regional activities in the context of the international scene. The following year, MMM made a presentation at the UN about this work at the Commission on the Status of Women addressing the main issue of “Women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post conflict peace building” to raise awareness about the role mothers can play in building peace.

A further outcome of the Beirut international conference was its impact on the work of MMM France. Research carried out by MMM France had identified that mothers often feel isolated and less able to cope with their children. The traditional “mother-to-daughter” transmission of parental skills falls short when it comes to coping with new educational challenges in a fast changing world. A relevant example is how to educate children to use new technologies: computer equipment, videos, internet social networks, mobile phones – and the subsequent increase of peer influences. A need of connecting with other mothers experiencing the same type of situations was expressed. Starting with informal discussion groups between themselves, a “mothers talk to mothers” workshop activity was initiated: the facilitator, a mother herself, was there not for explicit training purposes, but to help mothers realise that they have many innate skills, can share experience and build mutual understanding.

MMM's global outreach and activities helped MMM France to develop this action one step further. After the Beirut conference, MMM France widened the scope of workshops by implementing “Relay Mothers' Workshops” targeting mothers in difficult French suburban areas riddled with underlying community conflicts: mothers at the heart of the family proved that they can help to build social cohesion. An important part of the programme was the involvement of the local authorities to give mothers the necessary recognition to reinforce their natural

authority as mothers and motivate them to become more proactive – not only in their families but in their neighbourhoods.

Rioting in the suburbs of Paris in 2005 sparked heightened interest in MMM's workshops on social cohesion: the district of Colombes, where MMM workshops had been running, would have been expected to be in the forefront of the violence, but actually remained calm. This led the French government to sponsor a survey and programme through the national *Living Better Together Agenda* which was completed in 2008: a practical tool for collaborative decision-making and joint action between the local actors and mothers to deal with dysfunctional communities.

MMM's 60th Anniversary Congress in 2007 at UNESCO Paris was titled *Mothers Work for Peace*, and further highlighted this best practice among other MMM members. The outcome was that many Member Associations, such as Spain, England, Lebanon and the Ivory Coast, wanted to implement the workshops in their own countries, addressing specific issues of concern to them, such as integration for migrant women in Spain, or the prevention of recruitment to violent extremism and radicalisation in England.

In 2008, MMM England hosted MMM's international AGM and organised, in partnership with the Institute of Statecraft and Governance, a conference at the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom entitled *A Secure Society for the 21st Century – Why Mothers Matter*.

The UK armed Forces are currently faced with the challenge of ensuring security in a globalised world in which the nature of conflict has changed and has taken on multiple forms (economic, technological, societal, and ideological) which far exceeds a traditional mission of defence. This involves new approaches which include the necessity of civilian input where the intervention of institutions has not proven adequate and reactive enough: the speed of change outpaces the capacity of the institutions to adapt. Subsequently, the Academy of Defence is looking into strategies to anticipate conflict situations that would be best resolved by the actors of civil society themselves, and therefore organises seminars of research with civil society organisations such as MMM.

The conference was an opportunity to exchange and share experiences between mothers belonging to MMM Member Associations, other community-based organisations fighting violence and the UK Armed Forces on common concerns such as violence, drugs, delinquency and extremism in society. Representatives of the Armed Forces and the Home Office were particularly interested in MMM's programme of workshops for mothers in disadvantaged urban areas. An in-depth seminar was organised by the Defence Academy and MMM England in which MMM France made a presentation on *Living Better Together Agenda* – powerfully highlighting the link between what is taught at home in the family and behaviour in the community. MMM's association in Spain has begun the

Entremadres workshops and plans to disseminate this model in Spanish-speaking countries in South America, and Repères (Reference Points) in the Ivory Coast plans is to use the model in their training for young people in responsible parenting.

This example underlines how international partnerships and interaction at all levels make MMM effective in its field of activity – enabling mothers to ensure peace and human security for their children and families.

MMM Serbia in an advanced research workshop in partnership with NATO:

The second example shows that despite MMM's multi-directional dynamism, follow-up remains a major challenge which cannot always be met.

MMM Serbia - a grassroots association - had requested MMM's assistance in dealing with the emerging symptoms of trauma in their children. Partnering with NATO gave MMM the opportunity of co-organising an Advanced Research Workshop on *Developing Strategies to Deal with Trauma in Children and Adolescents: A Means of Ensuring Conflict Prevention, Security and Social Stability* (see ARM, 2005), precisely focusing on the case brought up by MMM Serbia.

During the workshop, professionals and non-professionals from nineteen countries looked at integrated strategies of practical activities in which non-professionals complemented the work of professionals to deal with the consequences of conflict in children and adolescents – as victims, witnesses and perpetrators of this violence. It soon became apparent, however, that many Serbian participants were themselves traumatised, and that this needed to be addressed before any work on traumatised children and adolescents could properly take place.

Attempts at organising workshops to address this trauma failed due to the great difficulty of co-ordinating disparate agendas and availabilities of potential volunteer facilitators, translators and workshop participants. MMM Serbia did manage to develop a programme *For children with children* aiming to raise awareness of children's rights, and develop active participation of children to local community plans with adults and helped by professionals in many Serbian localities. One of the outcomes for MMM was providing MMM Serbia with tools and contacts to implement the strategy but irregular contact up to 2007, and a subsequent loss of contact with MMM Serbia has not enabled MMM to support MMM Serbia towards a fully successful outcome.

Mainstreaming family policy at the global level – The Doha Process: A powerful example of this effective, collaborative and global outreach is the Doha Process that proves that very different transnational actors with a common vision and mission can effectively bring family issues to the fore on a global level. The Doha International Conference for the Family in 2004 was the culmination of

preparatory sessions held worldwide; MMM attended the sessions held in Geneva.

The event celebrated the United Nations' 10th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family. It brought together global research and studies on the family with the views and experience of representatives of civil society and international institutions and organisations. The conference agreed the text of the Declaration of the Rights of the Family as the reaffirmation of long-standing international commitments to the natural family. This was ratified by the UN General Assembly as the "Doha Declaration".

MMM contributed a chapter to "The Family as a Source of Strength and Life-skills: The Role of Authoritative Parenting in Building Resilience" (Loveless & Holman (eds.), 2007), which was an outcome of this process of the Doha International Conference for the Family. Collaboration in the Doha Process has led to further involvement in international family-focused events. As it becomes increasingly evident from research in many countries of the world that one of the major signs of the disintegration of traditional values, attitudes and institutions is the unprecedented breakdown of family - the foundation of social stability and wellbeing - it is vital that cohesive and collective action is taken to reverse this trend.

Conclusion: Commonalities and Consensus Principles

For MMM, promoting the family - with the mother as its pivotal force and a role model in the community - must be a continual process at all levels. At the global level, organisations such as MMM can stimulate and enable collaborative projects between local, national, regional and international entities and can continue to raise awareness in an attempt to mainstream beneficial family policy.

Such a sensitive and culturally specific issue cannot be the subject of "global policy" – and probably not a regional one either. It is not just an issue of national sovereignty, but rather of a national government's intimate knowledge in collaboration with civil society of the diverse families that make up its population. MMM targets a wide range of sensitivities and cultures and mothers reflect this immense diversity; their various concerns are addressed in totally different ways around the world. In the EU, mothers' needs could be a better conciliation of family and work, to have the time to be with their children. In developing countries, it would be developing resource generating activities to support themselves and their children and an improved status as women.

Yet, experience shows that there are strong commonalities between all mothers and this is what has to be highlighted in the search for "common ground" to work upon. These strong commonalities, such as addressing and meeting children's needs, fuel the responsive and responsible attitude of mothers over the world.

They emphasise 'common knowledge', such as "Educate a woman, and her whole family will be educated", or that an overwhelming majority of micro credit clients are women because of their reliability.

Moreover, awareness about the importance of women being part of decision-making processes is increasing all the time and concerns every field of activity: business, peace building, policy making and social issues. Implementation is slow and patchy, but the top-to-bottom and bottom-up process from UN resolutions to grassroots implementation and up again is nevertheless present with challenging success stories and best practices which should inspire further implementation.

Among women, mothers are a pivotal force in their families; they are the main actors affected by family policy measures. For these reasons and in the context of what has been said here above, women as mothers should participate in the family policy making process. Mothers' active contributions guarantee that family policy measures adequately respond to the real needs of families.

In a search of general family policy guidelines in the frame of FAMILYPLATFORM, MMM recommends that the direct contribution of European mothers themselves be encouraged and facilitated. They represent the diversity of cultures and are bonded by the strong commonalities. Consulting them and integrating their expertise, not only at a professional level, but also as mothers in decision taking processes, would not only conciliate the necessity of respecting diversities, but also build common guidelines and consensus principles to help EU countries in encouraging innovative, coherent and productive measures to support families.

Bibliography

ARW - Developing Strategies to Deal with Trauma in Children: A Means of Ensuring Conflict Prevention, Security and Social Stability: Case Study: 12-15-Year-Olds in Serbia; IOS Press.

Beier, Hofäcker, Marchese & Rupp (2010) - Family structures and family forms in the European Union; FAMILYPLATFORM
<http://www.familyplatform.eu/en/doc/96/EF1_Family_Structures%26Family_Forms.pdf>.

Belletti (2001) - Fare famiglia oggi. 'Mission impossible' per le nuove generazioni?; Città Nuova, Roma.

Boffi (ed.) (1995) - Cittadinanza alla famiglia in Italia. L'associazionismo familiare si organizza; Città Nuova, Roma.

Boffi (ed.) (2000) Fuori e dentro casa. Lavoro e famiglia nella società di oggi, Città Nuova; Roma.

COFACE (1984) - Documents: Basic Approach for a European Family Policy; COFACE, Brussels.

COFACE (1986) - Documents: Families and Demographic Facts; COFACE, Brussels.

COFACE (1985) - Documents: Women's Rights and Family Policy; COFACE, Brussels.

COFACE (1989) - Documents: Families in a Frontier-Free Europe; COFACE, Brussels.

COFACE (1998) - Documents: Modernising and Improving Social Protection; COFACE, Brussels.

COFACE (2001) - Documents: Social Protection, a level against social exclusion and discrimination and for social cohesion; COFACE, Brussels.

COFACE (2006) - Men and Families: Men's changing family roles in Europe
<http://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/fr/binaries/men_%20and_families_tcm337-40478.pdf>.

COFACE (2008) - COFACE 1958-2008: The Voice of Families in the European Union <<http://coface-eu.org/en/upload/50/50-COFACE1958-2008-EN.pdf>>.

COFACE (2010) – Memorandum <<http://coface-eu.org/en/upload/docs/COFACE-MEMORANDUM-2010-EN.pdf>>.

COFACE HANDICAP (2001) - Financial Resources, Services, Time: The Three Parts of a Family Policy Triangle; COFACE, Brussels.

Donati e R. Prandini (ed.) (2003) - Associare le associazioni familiari. Esperienze e prospettive del Forum; Città Nuova, Roma.

Dal 'noi' coniugale al 'noi' familiare e al 'noi' associativo (2002), atti del Seminario di spiritualità; self-published, Napoli.

Dalla parte della famiglia (2004); self-published, Roma.

De Lestapis (1956) - The International Union of Family Organizations Nature and Aims of IUFO, in Marriage and Family Living, Vol. 18, No 3.

European Commission, DG Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs (1994) - Social Europe: The European Union and the Family; European Commission, Brussels.

La famiglia soggetto sociale (2002) - Radici, sfide, progetti, a cura di; Città Nuova, Roma.

La famiglia, sfida dell'Europa, atti del Convegno in occasione del GIF 2003 (2003); self-published, Roma.

Loveless & Holman (eds.) (2006) - The Family in the New Millennium: An Overview of the Books, the Need, and the Purpose; Praeger Publishers.

Prandini (ed.) (2000) - Un tetto da costruire. Famiglia e principio di sussidiarietà; Città Nuova, Roma.

Santolini e V. Sozzi, Famiglia (2002) - sussidiarietà e riforma dei servizi sociali; Città Nuova, Roma.

SocialPlatform (2010) - How to establish an effective dialogue between the EU and civil society organisations
<http://cms.horus.be/files/99907/MediaArchive/Policies/Participatory_democracy/SocialPlatform_EffectiveCivilDialogue.pdf>.

Stauber (2010) - Transitions into Parenthood; FAMILYPLATFORM <http://www.familyplatform.eu/en/doc/106/WP1_ER1_Transitions_Into_Parenthood.pdf>.

Annex 1 – FDAF Member Organisations

1. AAF – Associazione Aiuto Famiglia (Helping Families Association) offers counselling for young people, engaged and married couples and divorced parents.
2. ABC – Associazione Bambini Cerebrolesi (Mentally-disabled Children Association) promotes the rights of children with mental disabilities and supports the role of the family as the first care-giver of disabled children.
3. ACI – Azione Cattolica Italiana (Italian Catholic Association): promotes education in catholic values for adults and children.
4. ACLI – Associazioni Cristiane Lavoratori Italiani (Christian Association of Italian Workers) helps in building networks of mutual help, promoting active citizenship and the family.
5. AFI – Associazione delle Famiglie (Families' Association), promotes the participation of families in civil society, and considers the family a primary resource.
6. AFN – Azione per Famiglie Nuove (Action for new Families) is involved in promoting family-related values.
7. AGE – Associazione Italiana Genitori (Italian Parents' Association) promotes the active citizenship of parents in the community and in school-life.
8. AGESC – Associazione Genitori Scuole Cattoliche (Association of Catholic Schools' Parents) promotes the involvement of parents in school-life and the freedom of choice in education.
9. AIART – Associazione Spettatori Onlus (Audience Association Onlus) protects ethical and cultural interests of media consumers.
10. AIBI – Amici dei Bambini is a non-governmental organisation created by a movement of adoptive and foster families.
11. AIFA – Associazione Italiana Famiglie ADHD helps and supports families with children affected by Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.
12. ALLEANZA CATTOLICA promotes family according to the social teaching of the Catholic Church.
13. ANFE – Associazione Nazionale Famiglie Emigrati (National Association of Migrant Families) helps migrant families.
14. ANNI – Associazione Nazionale Nuova Idea (National Association New Idea) supports older and disabled people, and military families.
15. ANSPI – Associazione Nazionale San Paolo Italia – Oratori e Circoli (Saint Paul National Association) supports young people in informal communities dedicated to education and assistance (e.g. Oratori).
16. ASC – Associazione Salesiani Cooperatori, especially devoted to young people.
17. Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII is an association of families devoted to help marginalised persons: migrants, orphans, prostitutes.
18. Associazione Famiglie per l'Accoglienza is a movement of adoptive and foster families.
19. Associazione Far Famiglia supports parenting.
20. Associazione Nazionale Famiglie Numerose (National Association of Large Families) is a network of large families (4+ children, naturally born or adopted).
21. Confederazione Italiana Consultori Familiari di ispirazione cristiana is involved in sexual education and counselling, for couples and young people: sexual and fertility problems, prevention, education.

22. CHP – Associazione Charles Péguy (Charles Péguy Association) promotes initiatives in support of childhood.
23. CIF – Centro Italiano Femminile (Italian Female Association) promotes the role of women in society and in the family.
24. COLDIRETTI supports rural families and family-run rural enterprises.
25. Confederazione Italiana dei centri per la regolazione naturale della fertilità, promotes the knowledge of methods for the natural regulation of fertility
26. CONFEDEREX – Confederazione Italiana Ex Alunni di Scuola Cattolica groups together all the persons who formerly studied in Catholic schools.
27. FAES – an alliance of teachers and parents built in order to create schools in which education is personalised and “tailored” on pupils.
28. Associazione Famiglie Separate Cristiane helps divorced and separated families.
29. Federazione Italiana ex allievi di don Bosco groups together all the persons who studied in Salesian Catholic schools and their families.
30. FISIAE – Federazione Italiana Sportiva Istituti Attività Educative (National Sport Association) promotes the educational aspects of sport.
31. GRIS – Gruppo di Ricerca e Informazione Socio-Religiosa (Research Group on Social and Religious Information) promotes meeting and discussions on media and information.
32. Il Melograno (The Pomegranate) promotes civil and social rights of widowed people.
33. Istituto Pro Familia (Pro-family Association) promotes the values of family and marriage
34. Istituto Santa Famiglia (The Holy Family Association) is a laical order for married people.
35. KFS – Katholischer Familienverband Sudtirol (Catholic Families of Sudtirol) promotes family in the north-eastern Region of Alto Adige in Italy.
36. Lega Consumatori (The Consumers League) monitors and defends consumers’ rights.
37. MCL – Movimento Cristiano Lavoratori (the Christian Movement of Italian Workers) helps build networks of mutual help and promote active citizenship of workers and the family.
38. MOICA – Movimento Italiano Casalinghe (Italian Housekeepers Association) is a movement of housekeepers.
39. MPV – Movimento per la Vita (Pro-life Movement) it works in the national pro-life field.
40. MRC – Movimento di Rinascita Cristiana (Christian Renewal Movement) is a catholic cultural movement.
41. Movimento Tra Noi is a movement helping immigrants, especially young women.
42. NOI – Oratori e circoli parrocchiali, supports young people in informal communities dedicated to education and assistance (e.g. Oratori) especially in parishes.
43. OFS – Ordine Francescano Secolare is the laymen branch of Franciscan movement.
44. RNS – Rinnovamento nello Spirito (Renewal in the Holy Spirit) is a catholic movement of laymen and families.
45. Separati Fedeli is an association of people with a broken marriage, faithful to catholic teaching.
46. SIDEF – Sindacato delle Famiglie is a pool that promotes the participation of families in civil society, considering family as a primary resource of the society.
47. UCIPEM is involved in sexual education and counselling, for couples and young

- people.
48. UFHA – Unione Famiglie Handicappati is a national association that supports the role of the family as the first care-giver of disabled children.
 49. UGCI – Unione Giuristi Cattolici Italiani (Italian Catholic Jurist Association) is a federation of catholic jurists especially involved in marriage and family topics.

Source: <http://www.forumfamiglie.org> (in Italian).

Annex 2 – FDAF Conferences

Each year on the 15th of May, FDAF has organised a conference to celebrate the International Day of Families, promoted by the United Nations in 1994. The subject of these conferences is listed below:

Year	Conference
2002	<p><i>The Family: A Social Subject and a Resource for the Whole Community</i></p> <p>In collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and the Lazio Region, the first conference focused on the importance of having an explicit and coherent family policy at national and local level.</p>
2003	<p><i>The Family: A Challenge for the European Union</i></p> <p>“The Family should be considered the basis of the social cohesion in the European Union”. According to this statement, this conference focused on how family policies can be delivered at European level.</p>
2004	<p><i>Work-Life Balance: A Family Choice, between Conditionings and Opportunities</i></p> <p>This conference focused on work-life balance, considering not only difficulties, but also the richness that the family can bring to the economic sector. Special attention was paid to choices that families make regarding care and commercial care.</p>
2005	<p><i>Family and Care: A New Alliance</i></p> <p>It is possible to raise children without families, though society has to enhance its capacity and to support foster and adoptive families, in order to give each child a right to live in a family.</p>
2006	<p><i>The Family: Cost or Investment?</i></p> <p>This conference aimed to discuss good practice local family policies, in order to promote new partnerships between public institutions and family associations.</p>
2007	<p><i>Family Day: Family Builds the Future for Everyone</i></p> <p>FDAF organised a huge demonstration of more than one million people in Rome, in support of the family, the need of family policies, and calling for no equalisation of marriage with other forms of living arrangements.</p>

- 2008 *The European Alliance for Families: the Family Associations as Main Actors*
- This conference presented the European Alliance for Families, which is also an alliance of the family with political institutions and other partners of the civil society.
- 2009 *The Challenge of Subsidiarity*
- Developing a social system based on subsidiarity is seen as the effective means of promoting the action of family associations and the family as social player. Attention was focused in particular on reform of the taxation system, which is considered an urgent issue by Italian families.
- 2010 *The Colours of the Family: Inter-Culture is the Future of Italy*
- FDAF aimed to underline that inter-culturality is a value for the whole of society and that migrant families offer richness for the whole of Italy. Moreover, the conference also focuses on family as the privileged place where a peaceful encounter among different cultures is still possible.

Source: Provided by email.

Annex 3 – COFACE Member Organisations

Country	Member Organisation(s)
AUSTRIA	1. Katholischer Familienverband Österreichs (Association of Catholic Organisations of Austria)
BELGIUM	2. Association de parents et professionnels autour de la personne polyhandicapée 3. Femmes Prévoyantes Socialistes 4. Fonds du Logement Wallon (The Wallonian Housing Fund) 5. Ligue des Familles (Family League) 6. Gezinsbond (League of families) 7. Centre d'action laïque (Centre for Secular Action) 8. Association Aidants Proches (Association of Family Carers)
BULGARIA	9. Center of Women's Studies and Policies 10. Women and Mother Against Violence
CYPRUS	11. Pancyprian Organisation Polyteknon
CZECH REPUBLIC	12. Sdruzeni Ochrana Nenarozeneho Zivota (Assistance and Counselling for Women and Girls)
DENMARK	13. Børnesagens Fællesråd (The Joint Council for Child Issues in Denmark)
FINLAND	14. Västöliitto Ry (The Family Federation of Finland)
FRANCE	15. Aide à domicile en milieu rural (Rural Assistance at Home) 16. Association des paralysés de France 17. Association nationale pour le Spina Bifida et handicaps associés (National Association for Spina Bifida and Associated Disabilities) 18. Confédération syndicale des familles 19. Confédération nationale d'associations familiales catholiques 20. Familles Rurales 21. Familles de France 22. Union nationale des associations familiales (National Association of Family Organisations) 23. Union nationale des associations de familles de traumatisés crâniens (National Union of Families with Brain Injury) 24. Associations de parents d'élèves de l'enseignement libre (Association of Non-Religious Teaching) 25. Union nationale des associations de parents, de personnes handicapées mentales et de leurs amis
GERMANY	26. Arbeitsgemeinschaft Der Deutschen Familienorganisationen e.V. (Association of German Family Organisations)
GREECE	27. Confederation of large families' associations of Greece 28. Kendro Merimnas Oikoyenias Kai Pediou (Family and child care center)
HUNGARY	29. Panhellenic housewives union and family 30. Movement of Hungarian Childfriends 31. Pro Familia
IRELAND	32. Irish Countrywomen's Association

ITALY	33. Associazione italiana genitori (Italian Association of Parents)
	34. Movimento italiano genitori
	35. Il coordinamento dei familiari assistenti "Clelia"
	36. Associazione italiana per l'assistenza agli spastici
LATVIA	37. Latvijas daudzbernu ģimenu biedrību apvienība (Union Of Latvian Large Family Associations)
LITHUANIA	38. Sos Vaikų Kaimų (SOS Children's villages)
LUXEMBOURG	39. Association des parents d'enfants mentalement handicapés
POLAND	40. Fundacji domy samotnych matek z dziećmi (Foundation Houses of Lonely Mothers with Children)
PORTUGAL	41. Associação nacional de famílias para a integração pa pessoa deficiente
	42. Confederação nacional das associações de família (National Confederation of Family Associations)
	43. Liga portuguesa dos deficientes motores
ROMANIA	44. Fundatia familia si ocrotirea copilului (Family and Child Care Foundation)
SLOVAKIA	45. Klub mnohodedných rodín (Club of Large Families)
SLOVENIA	46. Družinska pobuda (Family Initiative)
SPAIN	47. Asociación general de consumidores de España (Association of Spanish Consumers)
	48. Confederación española de organizaciones de amas de casa, consumidores y usuarios (Spanish Confederation of Housewives and Consumers Organisations)
	49. Confederación española de familiares de enfermos de Alzheimer y otras demencias (Spanish Confederation of Families with Alzheimer's Syndrome or other Dementias)
	50. Asociación Salud y Familia (Association of Family and Health)
	51. Unión cívica nacional de amas de hogar de España (National Civic Union of Spanish Housewives)
	52. Unión de centros de acción rural (Union of Centres of Rural Action)

Source: <http://coface-eu.org/en/Member-organisations/COFACE-MEMBERS/List/>.

Annex 4 – Recent Positions Adopted by COFACE

Position	Date
<u>COFACE's position on Sustainable development and families</u>	May 2010
<u>COFACE Memorandum for the new European Commission</u>	April 2010
<u>COFACE's comments on the Consumer Rights directive</u>	March 2010
<u>COFACE's position on Parenting and children at risk</u>	March 2010
<u>COFACE's position on Early school leavers and the role of parents</u>	March 2010
<u>COFACE's response to the EC public consultation on the preparation of a new EU Disability Strategy 2010-2020</u>	January 2010
<u>COFACE's response to the EC public consultation on the future EU 2020 Strategy</u>	January 2010
<u>COFACE response to the EU Consultation on the review of the Financial regulation</u>	December 2009
<u>COFACE position on siblings and persons with care needs</u>	November 2009
<u>COFACE position on the role of personal income taxation in preventing family poverty</u>	November 2009
<u>COFACE position on the role of maintenance payments in combating poverty among lone-parent families</u>	November 2009
<u>COFACE response to the EC Consultation on the Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010 and follow-up strategy</u>	October 2009
<u>COFACE's response to the EC Consultation on the report of the Expert Group on Credit Histories</u>	August 2009
<u>COFACE's response to the EC Consultation on Responsible Lending and Borrowing in the EU</u>	August 2009
<u>COFACE's response to the EC Consultation on Designating 2012 as Potential EY for Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity</u>	July 2009
<u>COFACE's critical analysis of the Revised Framework Agreement on Parental Leave</u>	June 2009

<u>COFACE's response to the Green Paper on the European Workforce for Health</u>	May 2009
<u>COFACE's response to the EC Consultation on Financial Inclusion: Ensuring access to a basic bank account</u>	April 2009
<u>COFACE's responses to the EC Consultation on EU action to reduce Health Inequalities</u>	April 2009
<u>COFACE's response to the Directive on Consumers Rights</u>	March 2009
<u>COFACE's report on the Evaluation of National Strategies for Social Inclusion and Social Protection</u>	March 2009
<u>COFACE's recommendations on active inclusion, a tool for fighting family poverty</u>	March 2009
<u>European Charter for Family Carers</u>	March 2009
<u>COFACE's position on Safer Internet</u>	March 2009
<u>COFACE's position on preventing over-indebtedness, personal finance education and action against banking and financial exclusion</u>	March 2009
<u>COFACE's position on preventing over-indebtedness: the "positive file" or the central credit history database</u>	March 2009
<u>COFACE's position on the proposal for a European Parliament and Council Directive on the application of patient's rights in cross-border health care</u>	March 2009
<u>COFACE's position on reconciling family life, private life and professional life to prevent poverty and social exclusion</u>	December 2008
<u>COFACE's position on alcohol and families</u>	December 2008
<u>COFACE's position on nutrition and obesity</u>	December 2008
<u>COFACE's reaction to the revision of the Toy Safety Directive</u>	December 2008
<u>COFACE response to the European Commission Green Paper on "Migration & Mobility: Challenges and Opportunities for EU Education Systems" – Strengthening Support to Migrant Parents in their Children's School Education</u>	December 2008
<u>COFACE's position on E-inclusion of families</u>	December 2008
<u>COFACE's contribution on the return of women to the labour market</u>	November 2008

<u>Briefing on the texts adopted by the EC on 3 October 2008 concerning work-life balance</u>	October 2008
<u>Response to the EC consultation on Directive 86/613/EEC on the application of equal treatment of men and women for self-employed workers and assisting spouses</u>	July 2008
<u>Response to the EC Consultation on Reconciliation of professional, private and family life</u>	March 2008
<u>Response to the EC communication on “Modernising social protection for greater social justice and economic cohesion: taking forward the inclusion of people furthest from the labour market”</u>	February 2008
<u>Response to the EC Consultation on anti-discrimination</u>	February 2008
<u>Response to the EC Consultation on Europe’s social reality</u>	February 2008

Source: <http://coface-eu.org/en/News/Policy-positions-2010/>.

Annex 5 – Other Family Organisations Active at a European Union Level

European Federation of Unpaid Parents and Carers at Home (FEFAP)

“F.E.F.A.F

represents European at-home Parents and Carers at European Union level and at the UN informs them of their economic, social, juridical and political rights contributes to an exchange of information between its members is pluralist, non-party political and non-sectarian works with European, African, Asian, North and South American NGOs is a member of the European Platform of European Social NGOs and the European Women’s Lobby”²⁴.

“F.E.F.A.F. requests from National Governments, Decision-making Bodies of the European Union, and the UN

1. The recognition of the human, social and economic value of unremunerated “family-based work” - of attention, care and education - carried out at home toward a dependent relative: “CARE”
2. for those who carry out this unremunerated CARE: a social statute of their own
 - * to confer on them dignity and citizenship based on human and economic values;
 - * to ensure them of social rights (not linked to a statute of remunerated work) whilst upholding established rights
 - * to reduce the risk of poverty and precariousness to which they are exposed.
3. a family policy guaranteeing the rights of families and children, taking into account the needs and lifecycles of parents and children
4. collecting data in national and European statistics on At Home Women/Men, “carers”, and the needs of families and of each of their members
5. the possibility of a true civil dialogue by giving European NGOs adequate legal and financial means.²⁵”

European Large Families Confederation (ELFAC)

“The European Large Families Confederation (ELFAC) was formally constituted in 2004, gathering Large Families Associations across Europe. This Confederation represents more than 50 millions of European citizens who belong to the nearly 9 million large families. The idea of ELFAC was launched in the European Large Families Conference that took place in Madrid (Spain) on 2 November 2002, and the decisive part of its Statutes were agreed upon at a meeting held in Brussels (Belgium) on 25 October 2003.

The objectives of the Confederation shall be to represent the social and economic interests of families with children, in general, and large families, in particular, as the most appropriate environment for bringing up children, integrating them into society, and providing mutual support and solidarity among generations; as well as the promotion,

²⁴ From http://www.fefaf.be/qui_en.php.

²⁵ From http://www.fefaf.be/que_demand_en.php.

development and unity of the movement of large family organisations”²⁶.

Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe (FAFCE)

“The Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe (FAFCE), is acknowledged by the European Council as a Non Governmental Organisation with a participatory status and has regular contact with European Union institutions such as the European Commission and the European Parliament. The FAFCE serves as a European liaison platform for exchange of experiences of pastoral care of the family and family policy issues for its members. Our member associations provide important catholic expertise and contacts on local level and the Federation serves as a European umbrella organisation. Outwards we consider ourselves as a political representation for family interests from a catholic perspective, on the basis of the Catholic Church’s Social and Family teaching as well as of the testimony of faith and experiential knowledge of Christians in Church and in society”²⁷.

²⁶ From <https://sites.google.com/site/webelfac/Home>.

²⁷ From <http://fafce.org/cms/programm.html?&L=1>.

Annex 6 – MMM Member Organisations

Continent/ Country	Organisation
AFRICA	
Benin	1. Survie de la Mère et de l'Enfant
Cameroon	2. MMM Cameroun
Cameroon	3. Femmes en action contre la pauvreté
Ivory Coast	4. ONG Repères
Ivory Coast	5. ONG Ehuzu
Mali	6. ADDEN Mali
Mali	7. MMM Mali
Mali	8. Association des Mères du Mali
Morocco	9. Ligue Marocaine de Protection de l'Enfance
Mauritius	10. Mouvement Aide à la Maternité
Nigeria	11. MOMS CLUB
Rep. of Congo	12. Mouvement des Mères pour la Paix, la Solidarité et le Développement
Rep. of Congo	13. Mouvement pour la Vie
DR of Congo	14. ACADEC – Association Congolaise d'Appui au Développement
DR of Congo	15. Association des Femmes pour le Développement de la TSHOPO
DR of Congo	16. EALE – En Avant les Enfants
DR of Congo	17. Fondation BOAZ
AMERICA	
Argentina	18. Fundalam
Argentina	19. Multifamilias
Peru	20. ADES Perou
Uruguay	21. Centro por la Promotion de la Dignidad Humana (CEPRODIH)
USA	22. Solutions for Families
USA	23. W.O.W. Worldwide Organization for Women
USA	24. TeenStar U.S.A.
USA	25. United Families International
ASIA	
Bangladesh	26. Fondation de Reconstruction Rurale
Lebanon	27. MMM Liban
Europe	
Austria	28. ARGE Erziehungsberatung und Fortbildung – Fit For Kids
Belgium	29. Femmes et Foyer asbl
Belgium	30. La Ligne de Vie
Belgium	31. Le Chant d'Oiseau
Belgium	32. Liga Voor het Kind
Bulgaria	33. FIMB – Femmes International Murs Brisés

England	34. MMM England
France	35. Association pour le dialogue Mères Enfants (ADME)
France	36. Action des Mères pour une enfance sans drogue
France	37. Association Nationale pour l'Education Prénatale
France	38. Association Pour la Promotion de la Famille
France	39. Centre d'Education Pluridisciplinaire de la Personnalité (CEPP)
France	40. Droit@'Enfance
France	41. Fédération de la Médaille de la Famille Française
France	42. Femmes Actives et Foyer
France	43. Les femmes et les Enfants d'Abord, Secours aux Futures Mères
France	
Germany	44. MMM France
Ireland	45. Verband der Familienfrauen und Männer
Italy	46. Mothers working at Home
Italy	47. ANEP Italia
Italy	48. Donneuropee Federcasalinghe
Luxembourg	49. Holding Famiglia
Serbia	50. Action Catholique des Femmes du Luxembourg
Spain	51. MMM Serbie
Spain	52. Accion Familiar
Slovakia	53. Asociacion de Familias y Mujeres del Medio Rural (AFAMMER)
Ukraine	54. Donum Vitae
	55. DUMF Democratic Union of Many Children Families

Source: provided by email (similar list available from <http://www.mouvement-mondial-des-meres.org/eng/members/associations.html>).