

## **Fourth Annual Convention of the European Platform Against Poverty and Social Exclusion**

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| <b>NATALIA'S OPENING SPEECH</b> |
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*Hello everybody. My name is Natalia, I'm thirteen years old and I have a message to you.*

The world is amazing, at least for us the children. The elements of the world are changing every single day, all of them having a purpose. They make things work... nothing in this world is purely decorative. And neither are we, the children. We are affected by everything that happens in the Earth.

Should someone forget this important and basic fact? Let me remind you that the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children have the right to express our views freely in all matters affecting us, because we are not always affected in a positive way by what happens.

Not only do we have the right to participate in decisions, but it is a vital necessity. It gives us the chance to surprise you adults with our creativity, curiosity, energy, honesty...etc. If you are looking for the best and most generous ideas, you can always ask children.

Don't you want to know how your decisions affect us? Would you like to know about some of the initiatives and ideas Spanish children have already worked on to make them fit in our real lives?

If my words have raised your curiosity. If you think that maybe young people have something really interesting to say. If you have the feeling that you don't understand some things about this world and that children's point of view could find the answer with a great idea... we hope that you will join us this afternoon for the side event on investing in children, so we can present our practices of children's participation carried out in our region Asturias, in the North of Spain.

Let curiosity get the better of you, like when you were children. It won't do you any harm.

Thank you so much for having us here on the 25<sup>th</sup> (*twenty-fifth*) anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.