

Why the Child Guarantee Council Recommendation is best launched in 2020

17 February 2020

Today, **23 million children grow up at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU**. At particularly higher risk of social exclusion, are children in vulnerable situations and disadvantaged groups such as Roma children, children in migration, children with disabilities, children living in institutional care, and children of single-parent or large families. This is unacceptably high for one of the most prosperous regions in the world.

The EU has committed to supporting the eradication of child poverty by developing a **Child Guarantee** that ensures children in the most vulnerable situations have access to key social rights.

The EU Alliance for Investing in Children welcomes the EU's prioritisation for the Child Guarantee and is calling on the EU to ensure that the Child Guarantee Council Recommendation is launched in 2020. This will ensure actions are in line with the next EU long-term budget and the programming of these financial resources by the EU Member States.

The EU Alliance for Investing in Children calls on:

- the **European Commission** to present its proposal for a Child Guarantee **immediately**. We urge the Commission to ensure that the proposed Child Guarantee Council Recommendation **builds on the 2013 Recommendation on Investing in Children**, which is based on three pillars- access to adequate resources, to affordable quality services and of children's right to participate.
- the **EU Member States** to **adopt within 2020 a Council Recommendation on the Child Guarantee** which will guide EU and national investments and policy development aimed at reducing child poverty.

Political momentum for a Child Guarantee

The European Parliament has proposed that the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) allocates **5.9 billion EUR** for the implementation of the Child Guarantee¹. The European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen has declared that realising the Child Guarantee will be a priority for her Commission² and she has entrusted the development and the coordination of the Child Guarantee to Commissioner Nicolas Schmit³ and to Vice President Dubravka Šuica⁴.

Given this political commitment, in October 2019, the Alliance for Investing in Children⁵ called on the EU to ensure that the Child Guarantee **encompasses not only financial resources but also a policy framework** that will guide Member States in tackling child poverty through national policies and through a strategic use of EU funds.

For this reason, the EU Alliance for Investing in Children called EU Member States to adopt a **Council Recommendation that will build on the 2013 Recommendation on Investing in Children**. The 2013 Recommendation on Investing in Children represents a comprehensive framework for tackling child poverty

¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2019-0020_EN.html

² https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_19_4230

³ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/mission-letter-nicolas-schmit_en.pdf

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/mission-letter-dubravka-suica_en.pdf

⁵ <http://www.alliance4investinginchildren.eu/a-call-for-action-to-european-union-member-states-for-an-investing-in-children-council-recommendation/>

and social exclusion in a “3 pillar approach” of the EC Recommendation on Investing in Children⁶. The new initiative should also build on the same horizontal principles, including the recognition of children’s rights and multidimensional nature of the issue.

The recently published **intermediate report of the Child Guarantee Feasibility study**⁷, also stresses the importance of the EU adopting a Council Recommendation on the Child Guarantee which will build on the comprehensive approach of the 2013 Recommendation on Investing in Children. It also stresses the importance of providing financial resources through ESF+ as well as other EU funding instruments for the implementation of the Child Guarantee.

In January 2020, the EC Communication on a Strong Social Europe for Just Transitions⁸ declared that the European Commission **will present the Child Guarantee in 2021 to ensure that children have access to the services they need and are supported until they reach adulthood. In late January 2020, the European Commission released its work programme for 2020.** Although the Child Guarantee was not included as one of the priorities of the EC for 2020, it is welcome that the press release⁹ accompanying the programme mentioned it as a priority for **2020**.

Why the Child Guarantee should be launched in 2020

Over the coming months the European Union will be negotiating the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for the 2021-2027 EU funding period. **It is expected that the next MFF will be adopted by June 2020 and the ESF+ as well as other EU Funding instruments (ERDF, AMF) are due to be finalised by autumn 2020.**

At the same time, EU Member States **are currently developing their Operational Programmes (OPs)** which will guide investments in the coming years. The Operational Programmes are expected to be **finalised by the end of 2020 and enter into force on the 1st January 2021.** In addition, EU Member States have already started developing their **national strategies on poverty reduction and social inclusion which will also include measures for the eradication of the child poverty**¹⁰. **It is essential that any financial resources directed towards the implementation of the Child Guarantee as part of the MFF 2021-27 are invested in line with a Child Guarantee Council Recommendation** that will guide Member States’ investments to tackle child poverty in a sustainable and strategic way.

By launching the proposal in 2020 we aim to avoid that EU Member States would have to re-programme the use of EU funded budgets in line with the Council Recommendation and re-open their national strategies on poverty reduction to accommodate the priorities included in the Council Recommendation.

The priority is to prevent:

a) severe delays in the implementation of the Operational Programmes

b) a risk that EU funding is used in an ad-hoc manner rather than for sustainable and strategic investments.

Given the links between the financial aspect and its EU policy guidance, the EU Alliance for Investing in Children urges EU institutions and Member States to start discussions on the Child Guarantee initiative as soon as possible, requiring the Commission’s first proposal to be issued in 2020.

⁶ Access to resources, access to affordable and quality services and access to cultural activities and children’s participation in decision making <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32013H0112>

⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1428&langId=en#navItem-relatedDocuments>

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs_20_49

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_124

¹⁰ Aligned with the enabling condition 4.3 of the proposed Common Provisions Regulations 2021-2027

Endnote

The EU Alliance for Investing in Children has been advocating for a multidimensional, rights-based approach to tackling child poverty and promoting child well-being since 2014.

This statement was endorsed by the following partner organisations of the EU Alliance for Investing in Children:

Alliance for Childhood European Network Group;

ATD Quart Monde;

Caritas Europa;

COFACE Families Europe;

Don Bosco International;

Dynamo International – Street Workers Network;

Eurochild;

Eurodiaconia;

EuroHealthNet;

European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities – EASPD;

European Anti-Poverty Network – EAPN;

European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless – FEANTSA;

European Public Health Alliance – EPHA;

European Social Network – ESN;

Lifelong Learning Platform

Mental Health Europe;

Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM);

Roma Education Fund;

Save the Children;

SOS Children’s Villages International;

UNICEF EU Office.

This statement is further supported by the following organisations beyond the Alliance:

Lumos

Centre for Global Health Inequalities Research (CHAIN)

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