

Brussels, 5 November 2014

Press Statement of the EU Alliance for Investing in Childrenⁱ ahead of the adoption of the Annual Growth Survey 2015 by the European Commission

Make children a number one priority in Europe's political vision on Europe 2020

Children's rights and well-being must be made an explicit priority in the upcoming Annual Growth Survey (AGS) for 2015. It is the European Commission's last AGS before the results of the Europe 2020 mid-term review are announced. It is an important moment to translate the European Union's commitment to reducing poverty and ensuring an inclusive recovery to the crisis. Children must be an explicit priority for two main reasons: children are being disproportionately affected by the crisis, and tackling poverty in childhood is the most effective way of building more inclusive and prosperous societies in the long-term.

EU Member States have repeatedly affirmed their commitment to reducing child poverty. The 2013 Recommendation *Investing in Children: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage*ⁱⁱ adopted as part of the Social Investment Package provides clear policy guidance. It calls for EU tools such as the European Semester and Structural and Investment Funds to support its implementation. Nonetheless child poverty has reached unprecedented levels in Europe with some 26.5 million children at risk of poverty or social exclusion. That is half a million more children in just one year,ⁱⁱⁱ which means the economic, financial and social crisis is only putting even more children at risk.

The EU Alliance for Investing in Children believes the EU needs to do more. To trigger greater political will, the Commission should request that all Member States introduce **specific sub-targets on child poverty**. Some have already done so, but too few considering its political importance. These should be backed up by **integrated strategies** to tackle child poverty and promote well-being, based on the Recommendation's holistic approach of giving equal priority to providing material security to families, ensuring access to quality services (early childhood, education, health, housing etc.), and involving children and young people in decision-making. Child poverty is identified as a '*Trend to Watch*' in the Social Protection Performance Monitor of the Joint Employment Report. However, if there is no mention of child poverty in the Annual Growth Survey itself, Member States will perceive it as a secondary priority.

We are also calling for the scoreboard of social and employment indicators to include a specific **indicator on children at risk of poverty or social exclusion**, and for this scoreboard to become binding to reinforce the social dimension of the Economic and Monetary Union.

Finally, the Commission should request that all Member States carry out **ex-ante and ex-post impact assessments** of austerity measures to ensure that they do not negatively impact children's rights and well-being.

Making children number one priority in Europe 2020 and European Semester processes is a matter of urgency that requires political vision and courage. It will bear fruit in the short and long-term. If Europe invests in children in a way that supports parents and families, ensures access to quality affordable services, and empowers children and young people to participate in decision-making, we will build the foundations for a better society.

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Further information on the **EU Alliance for Investing in Children**: <http://www.alliance4investinginchildren.eu/>

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ⁱ The EU Alliance for Investing in Children is a temporary initiative developed in the framework of 'Module 1: Facilitation of joint actions' supported by the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity - PROGRESS / EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation.

Members of the EU Alliance for Investing in Children include:

- Eurochild
- Alliance for Childhood
- ATD Quart Monde
- Caritas - Europa
- COFACE – Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union
- Don Bosco International
- Dynamo International – Street Workers Network
- EAPN – European Anti-Poverty Network
- EASPD – European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities
- ELIANT Network
- ENSA – European Network of Social Authorities
- EPA - The European Parents Association
- EPHA - European Public Health Alliance
- ESN – European Social Network
- Eurodiaconia
- EuroHealthNet
- European Child Safety Alliance
- FEANTSA – European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless
- ISSA - The International Step by Step Association
- Mental Health Europe
- PICUM – Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants
- Save the Children EU Office
- SOS Children's Villages International
- UNICEF EU Office

This programme is implemented by the European Commission. It was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment, social affairs and equal opportunities area, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Europe 2020 Strategy goals in these fields. The seven-year Programme targets all stakeholders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-28, EFTA-EEA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.

For more information see: <http://ec.europa.eu/progress>

ⁱⁱ European Commission Recommendation of 20 February 2013 Investing in Children: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage (2013/112/EU) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:059:0005:0016:EN:PDF>

ⁱⁱⁱ Statistical office of the European Union, EU-SILC 2013

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/income_social_inclusion_living_conditions/data/database