

## **A EUROPE 2020 FOR CHILDREN**

In February 2013 the European Commission adopted the Recommendation *Investing in Children – Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage*,<sup>1</sup> which called for concerted efforts across Europe to end child poverty and promote child well-being.

The Recommendation stresses the importance of preventative measures aimed at breaking the cycle of disadvantage in a child's early years, and proposes a comprehensive strategy based on three interconnected pillars: access to adequate resources for children and their families, access to affordable, quality services and children's participation. It recognises children as individual rights holders. It also promotes a universal approach benefiting and involving all children, coupled with targeted measures to the most vulnerable.

For the EU Alliance which brings together over 20 European networks sharing a commitment to end child poverty and to promote children's rights and child well-being across Europe, the Europe 2020 strategy is the main tool to realise integrated child poverty strategies in each EU Member State.

However, the situation for children across Europe is getting worse. Latest Eurostat figures estimate more than one in four children are experiencing poverty and social exclusion, while 2012 reports highlight an increase in homeless families. Furthermore, in reality the priorities pursued by the Europe 2020 strategy are not balanced, making it a significant obstacle to realise the cross-cutting priorities of providing material security to families, to ensuring access to quality services (early childhood, education, health, housing etc.), and to involving children and young people in decision-making. The Recommendation is still lacking a roadmap for implementation, which is necessary to ensure its real impact on policy reforms and outcomes for children and young people in Europe.

The EU Alliance for Investing in Children joins the forces of EU networks, building on their respective areas of expertise. Our members are uniquely placed to bring evidence on what policies and practices work in terms of preventing child poverty and promoting child well-being. Yet stakeholder engagement at national level is disappointing, and national members are losing the motivation to engage.

The role of stakeholders in promoting and supporting the necessary reforms at national, regional and local level must be recognised. The European Commission should realise its commitment to develop guidelines on stakeholder engagement in Europe 2020 which can then be systematically monitored.

The headline target to lift 20 million people out of poverty or social exclusion by 2020 is the right one and should be kept. The national targets are clearly necessary and Member States should increase their ambition to ensure the collective target is taken seriously. The three indicators to measure the risk of poverty and social exclusion should also be retained, and used consistently by all EU Member States' to ensure comparability. To facilitate meeting the targets, Member States should be required to either set a specific national (sub-) target for the reduction of child poverty and social exclusion - or to indicate what proportion of their overall Europe 2020 poverty and social exclusion is expected to lift children out of poverty.

---

<sup>1</sup> 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>

Child poverty is multi-dimensional and requires a coordinated and comprehensive response. The EU Alliance for Investing in Children reflects the need to work together across sectors. The EU Alliance promotes national alliances to advocate nationally for investment in children using the leverage of Europe 2020 and the Structural and Investment Funds. Such cross-sectoral cooperation among national organisations, as well as their European network counterparts is vital for the effective planning, implementation and monitoring of Europe 2020.

-end

See the response of the EU Alliance to the European Commission's questionnaire on Europe 2020 at [http://bit.ly/Alliance\\_response\\_Europe2020](http://bit.ly/Alliance_response_Europe2020)

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

**Contact:** Eurochild, [info@eurochild.org](mailto:info@eurochild.org) Avenue des Arts 1-2, 1210 Brussels, Belgium

---

<sup>i</sup> 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>