

THE EUROPEAN CHILD GUARANTEE

PHASE III OF THE PREPARATORY ACTION:
“TESTING THE EU CHILD GUARANTEE IN THE EU MEMBER STATES”



Funded by
the European Union

Phase III of European Child Guarantee: The Fundamentals

The **‘European Child Guarantee,’** is the initiative of the European Commission which aims to ensure that children in need and facing disadvantages in the European Union enjoy effective access to key essential services to ensure progressive realisation of child’s rights in Europe.

The Council of the European Union unanimously adopted the [Recommendation establishing a European Child Guarantee](#) on 14 June 2021. Its objective is to prevent and combat social exclusion by guaranteeing effective access of children in need to a set of key services such as early childhood education and care, education and school-based activities, healthy meal every school day, and healthcare. The Recommendation foresees that within 9 months after its adoption (i.e. by 15 March 2022) Member States will develop national action plans, which should cover the period until 2030, identify specific groups of children who should benefit from the guarantee, set targets to be achieved, outline corresponding measures, indicate the sources of necessary funding and outline monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

To test how the European Child Guarantee could work in practice, the European Commission has partnered with UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (ECARO) to run, until July 2022, pilot projects in seven Member States: **Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania and Spain**. The 24-month pilot programme will inform the implementation of the European Child Guarantee at the EU level as well as showcase innovative approaches and contribute to the development of European Child Guarantee national action plans for children in the seven Member states.

Programmatic
Update

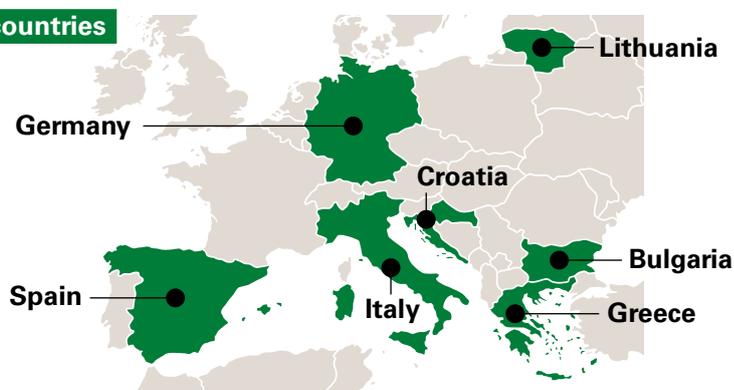
November 2021

The Main Results of the Phase III of the European Child Guarantee are:

1. **European Child Guarantee National Action Plans** to address child poverty and social exclusion of children are in development based on a comprehensive policy and programme deep dive analysis. The national action plans will serve as models for how the European Child Guarantee can be rolled out across EU Member states.
2. **Innovative and evidence-based models of services and interventions** focused on some of the most disadvantaged children are being developed, implemented and assessed as concrete strategies to reach the most vulnerable children.
3. **Inform the implementation of the EU-wide Child Guarantee** through recommendations and lessons learnt from all the different activities the pilot experience of Phase III.

Phase III of the European Child Guarantee in a Snapshot

7 countries



3 Pillars of Intervention

1) Evidence generation and analysis	2) Policy engagement and national action plans	3) Integrated models of services and interventions
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6 Target Groups



children with disabilities



children in precarious family situations



children residing in institutions



migrant and refugee children



children with a minority racial or ethnic background (particularly Roma)



children experiencing severe housing deprivation

5 Areas of Services



healthcare



education



early childhood education and care



adequate housing



healthy nutrition

Innovative and evidence-based models of services for the most disadvantaged children

In **4 countries** (Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece and Italy), in close cooperation with the national and local governments, **18 evidenced-based and sustainable models of services** and interventions for children from disadvantaged backgrounds are being implemented and tested for replicability. The services are integrated and coordinated across multiple sectors, while also being mainstreamed into local and national service provision systems. The theories of change have been developed and finalized for all models of services.

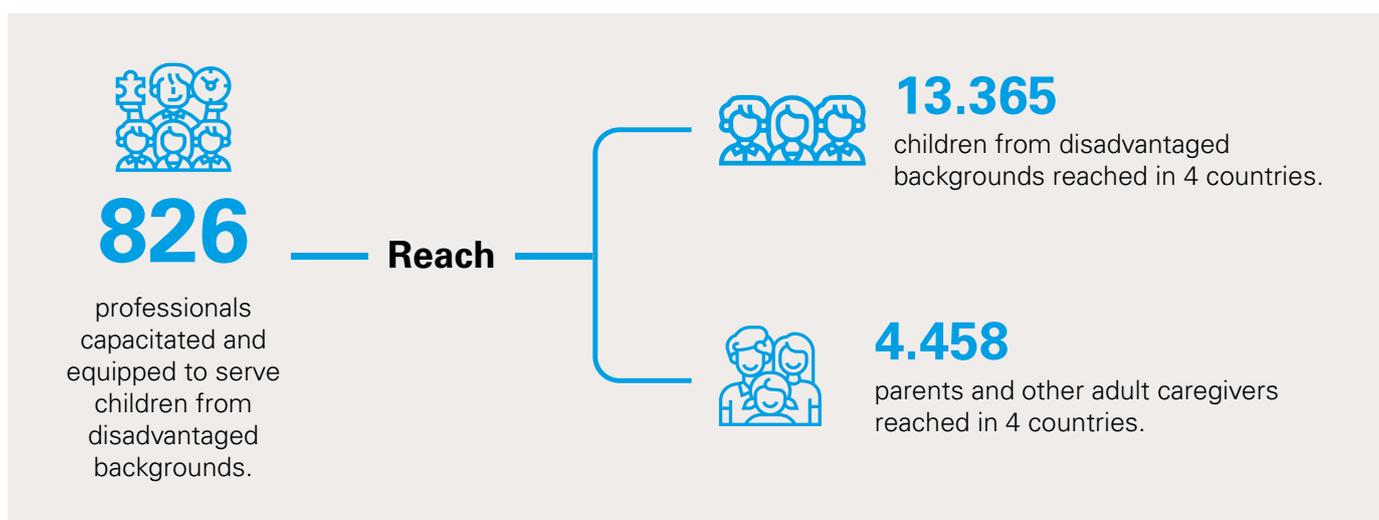
The interventions build on existing subnational responses, in order to leverage what is already working and in place and are supported by capacity-building, systems strengthening, and community mobilisation measures, as needed. These models ultimately aim to inform how children at risk and affected by poverty and social exclusion can be reached and linked to key European Child Guarantee services.

Effective engagement with regional and local government and other stakeholders has been established in all 4 countries, including through agreements and **sub-national multi-sector coordination structures** which oversee and monitor the planning and implementation of the models of services and interventions.

Figure shows the key results for the first year of implementation of the Phase III of the European Child Guarantee



Testing the conditions required for bridging implementation gaps in ECG policy areas for children in need through 18 models of services and interventions in 4 countries.





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BULGARIA



4 Interventions

- Home Visiting
- Early Childhood Intervention Services
- Inclusive pre-school education services
- Outreach child and family-centered preventive and support services

3 target groups

- Children with disabilities;
- Children in precarious family situations
- Children with a minority racial or ethnic background (particularly Roma)

3 Districts

- Burgas
- Sliven
- Stara Zagora
- > 10 Municipalities

In **Bulgaria** the interventions in the framework of Phase III of the European Child Guarantee aim to improve the living conditions and increase access and use of integrated services for children with disabilities and children in precarious family situations- including children in poor households and extremely poor households and Roma children- through the testing and scaling up of 4 innovative models in three districts of the country.

<p>Home visiting program</p> <p>What: Home visiting service and the provision of individualized guidance, information and support for caregivers of children 0-3 years old and pregnant women, with a particular focus on families in precarious situation and children with disabilities. Support is tailored to the specific needs of families and children and includes referral to other services (social, educational and health).</p> <p>Where: All four municipalities Sliven district: Sliven, Nova Zagora, Kotel and Tvarditsa</p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,790 families with young children (0-3 years) in Sliven district have received individual counselling for the provision of nurturing care to their children through more than 10,270 home visits, conducted by the Centre for Child and Maternal Health. • 16 home visiting staff have been capacitated on monitoring child development and screening/early identification of developmental difficulties. 	<p>Early childhood interventions</p> <p>What: Early childhood intervention (ECI) services for families with young children with disabilities and developmental difficulties. This model ensures families with young children with developmental difficulties and disabilities, receive timely and quality family-centred support through integrated ECI services in three pilot municipalities where specialists from health, education and social services work together in a systemic way.</p> <p>Where: 3 municipalities: Chirpan, Sliven and Stara Zagora</p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 additional specialists hired in 3 ECI services and 3 outreach teams established. • 31 staff of the ECI services in 3 districts have completed an intensive and comprehensive introductory training programme. • 20 health specialists have participated in training webinar on <i>“Early manifestations of childhood developmental disorders with a focus on psychomotor development, organized by the Bulgarian Pediatric Association”</i> • 23 parents have participated in a webinar on Early Childhood Intervention 	<p>Early Childhood Development</p> <p>What: 30 pilot kindergartens will provide quality inclusive pre-school education services for children with disabilities and learning difficulties. The capacities of 30 pilot kindergartens in 10 municipalities have been strengthened to provide quality inclusive pre-school education for children with disabilities and special learning needs, and to engage effectively with parents through training of pedagogical and non-pedagogical staff and through the hiring of additional specialists</p> <p>Where: 10 pilot municipalities in Burgas, Sliven and Stara Zagora districts.</p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6,152 children receiving inclusive pre-school education. • 44 additional specialists from various disciplines have been hired to support the kindergartens. • 426 teachers and specialists participated in specialised training modules, 298 participated in introductory webinar series, and 178 participated in training on working with bilingual children. • 65 staff from 3 Regional Centres for Supporting the Process of Inclusive Education participated in trainings. • 315 staff from pilot kindergartens received methodological support
<p>Integrated child protection and family support</p> <p>What: Ensure that children in precarious family situations and their families have access to integrated child and family-centered support services that address their specific vulnerabilities and prevent child-family separation. This intervention aims to improve the quality and strengthen the prevention capacities of existing family support social services by establishing mobile teams for outreach support to children and families in precarious situations with a focus on marginalized Roma communities in 7 pilot municipalities</p> <p>Where: 7 municipalities in three pilot districts Burgas, Sliven and Stara Zagora</p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,277 vulnerable children and 976 parents/ caregivers mapped and provided with tailored support. • 190 parents/ caregivers were referred to and accessed mainstream services and social benefits. • 166 children have been provided facilitated access to healthcare and educational services • 22 newly hired professionals in the social services trained in outreach work. • 11 new social workers hired in Child Protection Departments to strengthen CPD capacities 	<p>Local level Coordination</p> <p>3 District Coordination & Monitoring Committees have been established in the 3 Districts where the models of services are being piloted. These are chaired by the respective District Governors and include representatives of key regional structures of the line ministries and agencies. In addition, 7 Municipal Coordination & Monitoring Committees have been officially established and are chaired by the respective Mayors of the pilot municipalities and include representatives of UNICEF, service providers, health and educational institutions, child protection departments, social assistance departments, and local NGOs. In two smaller municipalities –where only one model intervention is implemented (provision of inclusive pre-school education) – it was decided to establish lighter coordination mechanisms through the convening of regular working meetings by the Mayor with the participation on all stakeholders involved.</p>	



BULGARIA

Working together as a team for Alex

6-year-old Alex is a curious and playful boy. Only eight days after his birth Alex was diagnosed with hydrocephalus, a condition where fluid gathers on the brain. A shunt with a valve had to be placed in his head to drain the accumulating fluid to relieve the pressure in his brain. His mother, Katya, carefully monitors the functioning of the valve and is wary of activities that might cause him to knock his head and dislodge the valve.

Help for Alex has proved hard to find in Burgas. When it came time to start kindergarten, Katya visited many schools in the search for the specialist care Alex would need. She eventually found it at this small kindergarten housed in an old building in the city center of Burgas.

In the classroom Alex plays with a group of other children, some of them, like him, with special needs, others from the general community. The Director emphasizes that an integrated classroom benefits everyone.

She goes on to say: "I would like to make sure we have a psychologist, a resource teacher and a speech therapist that are permanently part of our staff here, as the number of children with special needs is increasing." But finding the specialist staff is challenging, both due to funds and complicated administrative process.

The European Union Child Guarantee pilot program is supporting 30 kindergartens in 3 districts with the aim to introduce early childhood intervention and inclusive pre-school education services in Bulgaria.

For Alex, now in his fourth year at the kindergarten, the support and help he has found here have been life changing. Next year he will be leaving kindergarten and starting school.

The Director confirms, "Over the past three years Alex has achieved so much and the tests are showing he now complies with the state educational norms. He is ready for school."



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CROATIA



3 Interventions

Integrated child protection and family support services
Early Childhood Intervention Services
Access to quality pre-primary education

3 target groups

Children with disabilities;
Children in precarious family situations
Children with a minority racial or ethnic background (particularly Roma)

1 Districts

Medjimure
--> 7 Municipalities

In Croatia the specific interventions in the framework of Phase III of the Child Guarantee pay particular attention to early identification of boys and girls, and their families who live in particularly deprived environments, face specific disadvantages and for which early intervention is crucial to break the cycle of disadvantage and provide them with opportunities for developing at their maximum potential. These models of services aim to improve the living conditions and increase access and use of integrated services for *children living in precarious situations such as families living in poor households, Roma children and families and children with disabilities in the Medjimurje County in Croatia.*

<p>Child protection and family-support services</p> <p>What: Integrated child protection and family support services. This model of service is directed towards the early identification of girls, boys and their families who live in precarious and deprived environments and promotes accessible, high-quality, timely and appropriate family support and child protection interventions, that include outreach services in communities at the highest risk of poverty and social exclusion. It is implemented through the partnership with the two Centres for social welfare in Medjimurje County, (Prelog and Čakovec).</p> <p>Where: Medjimurje County</p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 227 children benefitted from the family support programmes and the play and creative activities • 206 parents acquired new parenting knowledge and skills, including 19 parents considered at high risk of harmful practices, child abuse and neglect. • 55 professionals and 21 Roma cultural mediators acquired knowledge and skills to conduct parenting support programmes (32 educational professionals acquired knowledge and skills to conduct universal parenting, 7 for the parenting programme for parents of children with disabilities and 16 educational professionals and 21 Roma cultural mediators trained to conduct the new parenting support programme aimed at the needs of Roma families). • 58 professionals from centres for social welfare acquired new knowledge and skills on multicultural perspective in social work, from which additionally 8 management staff acquired new knowledge and skills on leadership and management and 16 professionals participated in training on personal and professional change by addressing and overcoming their own stereotypes 	<p>Quality pre-primary education</p> <p>What: All vulnerable children (including Roma, children with disabilities and children living in precarious family situations) have effective access to quality pre-primary education to prevent social exclusion and early school-drop out. This includes strengthening capacities of pre-primary education professionals and parents, establishment of new facilities, and development of a regulative framework for local government.</p> <p>Where: Medjimurje County</p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 new Play Hubs (in Kursanec and Mala Subotica) have been opened and 1 existing in Orehovica has been supported with additional staff, capacities and resources. • Over 200 of the most educationally-at-risk children and their families have been reached through the 3 Play Hubs. • 3 Roma facilitators and 3 professional educators have been hired in the 3 Play Hubs. • 16 teachers from 6 kindergartens have participated in carefully designed 8 days of training for leading personal and professional change by addressing and overcoming their own stereotypes. 	<p>Early childhood interventions</p> <p>What: Young children (0-7) with or at risk of developmental delay and those with disability and their families have improved access to integrated and coordinated early childhood interventions (ECI) services that timely and adequately address their developmental needs. This includes provision of coordinated and integrated quality early childhood intervention services, strengthened knowledge and skills of health, education and social protection professionals, parenting support and improved data collection.</p> <p>Where: Medjimurje County</p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 239 children and 259 adults benefitted from the ECI services provided by the outreach team and the ECI Assessment and Support Point. • An integrated Action Plan for ECI in Medjimurje County has been developed based on the mapping and analysis of the ECI services for young children.
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<p>Local level Coordination</p> <p>Coordination:</p> <p>The Programme Implementation Committee for Medjimurje County has been established and has met in person twice (in February and May 2021). It is chaired by the Perfect of the county and consists of 12 members, including representatives of the relevant municipalities, the Roma Council, and of County. The role and key responsibilities of the County Committee are to ensure effective programme implementation and monitoring, identifying and presenting potential adjustments during the implementation, reviewing data collected, generating evidence and lessons learned at the county level, and ensuring their integration in regional policies and programmes, but also in identifying and implementing long-term sustainability mechanisms at the local level for the period after the finalization of the 2-year testing phase of the programme.</p>
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CROATIA

Growing up together in Roma families

[The Workshops Growing Up Together Count Us In Plus](#) have been developed for parents raising children in difficult and resource constrained circumstances and additionally adapted for families of Roma national minority. The workshops are part of the Phase III: “Testing the Child Guarantee” pilot-programme, funded by the European Union and carried out by UNICEF Office for Croatia in cooperation with 11 implementing partners in Medjmurje County.

The program of the workshops consists of three parts: a workshop for parents, a workshop for children and a workshop for parents where they play together with their children. To make it easier for parents to apply what they learn at the workshops in the daily interactions with their children, comics, created in collaboration with experts from the School of Animated Film Čakovec, Center for Parenting Support Growing Up Together and UNICEF accompany each workshop.

[Jelena Bogdan](#) from Pribislavec attended the workshops with her two children and points out that the workshops helped her in her parenting role:

“These workshops meant a lot to me, they helped me realize that I can support my children. My children and I have changed positively thanks to everything we have learned.”

“As the workshops go on, a stimulating and friendly environment is created, in which parents share their experiences with confidence, get to know themselves better as parents and learn about parenting skills. Over time, parents become more open and more relaxed in sharing their own experiences and problems they face on a daily basis. A great progress can be noticed in parent’s behavior towards their children (especially in joint activities),” explained the workshop leader Suzana Blagus.



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GREECE



5 Interventions

- De-institutionalisation
- Foster care
- Supported independent living
- Skills development
- Inclusive education

4 target groups

- Children with disabilities
- Children in precarious family situations
- Children and young people in migration
- Children in institutions/ alternative care

1 Region

Attica Region

In Greece the interventions in the framework of Phase III of the Child Guarantee pay particular attention to the needs of children without parental care, including non-Greek migrant children and aim to build a solid evidence, practice and operational base to inform the national Deinstitutionalisation reform which takes stock of the best practices developed by UNICEF and its partners in the framework of the migrant response in Greece. The other two models of services are looking into skills building for young people and inclusive school education.

<p>De-institutionalisation</p> <p>What: De-institutionalization (DI). This intervention aims to support a clear national strategy for de-institutionalization and support the local authorities in the pilot region of Attica to facilitate deinstitutionalisation and identify alternative care options for vulnerable children. Strengthening a gatekeeping system and the capacities of the social workforce are key elements of this approach.</p> <p>Where: National / Attica region</p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF has finalised the partnership with 5 residential care institutions including 3 public and 2 private ones, to participate in the DI process. Specific methodology, guidelines, tools and DI transformation plans have been developed for the selected institutions, incorporating the views of children and professionals. • Standardised procedures for the prevention of family separation and provision of family support services. • The curriculum for the capacity building of social workers and other relevant personnel of community social services have been developed. More than 200 professionals from 44 municipalities in Attica region are undergoing training. • Two round tables with the participation of approximately 30 key professionals and authorities to discuss and align views on DI methodology and process. 	<p>Foster care</p> <p>What: Foster Care System development. This intervention aims to enable an effective national foster care operational framework through the evaluation, training and support of potential and registered foster families in all stages of foster care. In addition, this intervention aims to pilot foster care programs in the Region of Attica with a view to national scale up.</p> <p>Where: Attica region</p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific protocols and tools have been developed on different stages: from the matching until the support after the placement of children with foster families. • Capacity support for professionals in 4 child care institutions: a) assessment of training needs and development of training plans b) ongoing on-the-job training c) drafting relevant methodology protocols and guidelines. • The first national campaign on foster care was launched in May 2021 with MoLSA. • UNICEF supported the MoLSA to further develop the foster care registries and initiate, for the first time, a foster care allowance as a new social benefit in Greece. • UNICEF has successfully advocated to expand age limits for foster carers, which was established by Law 4837 on 30th September/2021. • In partnership with SOS Villages, 67 children have been supported to transition to family-based care, which includes support provided to 85 caregivers (54 families). 	<p>Supported independent living</p> <p>What: Supported Independent Living (SIL) is integrated as a standard alternative care modality of the national child protection system. This includes an evaluation of the SIL model as it was developed and implemented for Unaccompanied Children, the integration in the national regulatory framework to expand the service and integrate into the national childcare system and piloting in the selected region.</p> <p>Where: Attica region</p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lessons-learned assessment of the SIL model of care for migrant children supported by UNICEF in 2018, has been developed and validated with key state actors. • UNICEF is supporting MoLSA to develop the necessary secondary legislation for the operationalisation of SIL as per the Law 4837 of September 2021. • 13 Focus Group discussions with professionals and children and young adults in institutions as well 5 key informant interviews were undertaken to inform the SOPs and operational framework of the SIL model of care. • Assessment and referral procedures and pathways have been developed for children assessed and referred to SIL.
<p>Integrated skills development</p> <p>What: Access to skills development and opportunities for social and economic inclusion of young people. The purpose is to develop a model on skills development, supporting adolescents and young people in challenging living conditions, to benefit from better employment or entrepreneurship opportunities and become engaged members of civil society.</p> <p>Where: Attica region</p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 63 young people have completed interviews to outline their profile around their skills, educational background, professional experience and prospects. A draft version of a web-based portfolio for skills assessment and job matching has been developed, and adjustments are on-going. • 80 adolescents and young people have participated in job orientation workshops, including workplace visits (job shadow). • A labour market feasibility study accompanied by a bottleneck analysis for marginalized adolescents and youth – with a focus on Attika region- has been completed and will be presented in the technical Working Group on 3rd November. 		

Inclusive education

What: **Schools become more inclusive**, ensuring quality education for all children, including those with disabilities in families or in institutional care and migrant children. This will include a teacher capacity building programmes, piloting the intervention in Attica region and a sensitisation campaign on the power and benefits of inclusive education.

Where: Attica region

Progress:

- The **bottleneck analysis** on the implementation of an inclusive school in Greece is finalized and will be presented in the technical Working Group on 3rd November. UNICEF in collaboration with MoE is in the process of identifying the 30 schools for the capacity building activities.
- The **campaign on inclusive schools**, focused on the inclusion of children with disabilities was finalised and made public on 30th of September.

Coordination

The **national Child Guarantee Steering Committee** (Co- chaired with MoLSA) includes both representatives of the central government as well as of local authorities, such as the Social Welfare Centre of Attika. The Committee is complemented by 4 technical groups aiming to inform the implementation of the models of services and results areas, one technical Working Group on the Deep Dive analysis in Greece and 3 which look at specific models of services: de-institutionalization and foster care, a second one for SIL, and a third on youth employability and inclusive education.





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ITALY



6 Interventions

- Mainstreamed foster care
- Supervised Independent Living
- Social housing and skills building for care leavers
- Integrated skills development
- Innovative family support service
- Contrasting educational poverty

5 target groups

- Children and young people in migration
- Children with disabilities
- Children in institutions/ alternative care
- Children in precarious family situations
- Children with mental health issues

7 regions

- Sicily
- Lombardy
- Latium
- Veneto
- Emiglia Romagna
- Tuscany
- Campania
- (others being defined)

In Italy, the scope of the intervention in the framework of Phase III of the Child Guarantee has been expanded in close consultation with governmental counterparts. It aims at addressing the needs of children affected from migration and those without parental care, as well as children in precarious family situations, children with disabilities and children with mental health issues.

<p>Foster care</p> <p>What: Foster care mainstreamed in the childcare system. This intervention aims to map and document promising practices in the provision of alternative care for out-of-home children, including specialized foster care practices, and design, test and integrate into the mainstream childcare system a model of foster care for unaccompanied and separated migrant children and accompanied children with migration background whose families are in need of a temporary support through foster care. Additionally, the capacity of frontline workers (psychologists, social workers, pedagogists and professional educators) to accompany adolescents in alternative care in their transition to adulthood will be strengthened.</p> <p>Where: Sicily, Latium, Lombardy and Veneto and other locations to be defined</p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 41 migrant children have been placed in foster care and, together with the foster families, are receiving quality support and monitoring. • 197 foster families/individuals and social workers trained on foster care system. • 663 potential foster families/individuals reached with awareness campaigns. • Partnership Agreement signed with the University of Padua for the analysis of good practices of foster care. • Agreements with the National Councils of different professional clusters (psychologists, social workers, pedagogists and professional educators) for the development, delivery and sustainability of a training programme for frontline workers. 	<p>Integrated skills development</p> <p>What: An integrated skills development package will improve young people’s employability and social inclusion and ensure their effective transition to adulthood. UNICEF’s flagship initiative UPSHIFT will seek to empower marginalized adolescents to become social innovators and entrepreneurs. <i>Innovation & Creativity Camps</i> will generate ideas from adolescents on how to address community problems, which will then be supported through a 6-module programme delivered by trained teachers or a 12-week incubation course with business incubation experts and mentors. To complement, the Mygrants platform will enhance their hard and soft skills and support work internships and job matching.</p> <p>Where: Sicily, Latium and Lombardy</p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UPSHIFT skills building programme was piloted in 11 upper secondary schools selected to reach the most disadvantaged children. • 1412 students were involved in 13 “Innovation & Creativity Camps”. A total of 175 entrepreneurial ideas were created by the students. • 30 teachers were trained and a total of 659 students completed the entire skills building programme, resulting in 2 final events (Demo Days) in each location. • Following the incubation phase in Palermo, a winning team of 4 students was selected for a (post-UPSHIFT) mentorship programme with a local business incubator. • Over 500 students, 30 teachers and 120 mentors demonstrated an increase of their XXI-century skills through self-assessment surveys. 	<p>Social housing and skills building for care leavers</p> <p>What: Integration of social housing and skills building components into the National Care Leavers Programme, led by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies. The intervention will aim at complementing the already existing individualized support to care leavers to further support them in their school-to-work transition and housing autonomy. The intervention will include a mapping of good practices, support to local social services, capacity building activities and potentially direct support to care leavers.</p> <p>Where: Sicily, Latium, Emilia Romagna, Tuscany and Campania</p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities of intervention agreed upon with MoLSP. • 55 tutors and social workers involved in the National Care Leavers Programme received the training on the XXI-century skills building for the transition of care leavers to the labour market and to autonomy and adulthood. • 15 care leavers participated in an online skills-building activity (UPSHIFT Innovation & Creativity Camp), where they were supported by mentors in the analysis of challenges related to their transition to autonomy and in the creation of innovative solutions.
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<p>Community-based housing</p> <p>What: Supervised Independent Living (SIL). The intervention aims to identify, analyse and document for replication promising specialized practices of supervised independent living. The result will inform the update of the relevant policy standards to ensure a harmonized approach across the different regions of the country.</p> <p>Where: Sicily, Emilia Romagna, Latium and other locations to be defined</p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 promising SIL practices have been pre-identified (Bari – Apulia, Milano – Lombardy, Reggio Emilia – Emilia Romagna) and the scope and methodology of the documentation has been discussed with the welfare departments of the three municipalities. 	<p>Innovative family support service</p> <p>What: Peer support for vulnerable families, including families with children with disabilities. The intervention includes mapping of services already offered by the Family Support Centres of promising peer-to-peer experiences between families, the development of a standardized methodology, followed by a pilot phase of a model for family peer support in three selected Centres, which will include staff training and supervision.</p> <p>Where: To be defined</p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An initial scoping phase has been conducted, contacting Family Support Centres to gather their initial interests. The scope and methodology of the mapping of the capacity and activities of the Family Support Centres have been agreed upon with the institutional counterpart. 	<p>Contrasting educational poverty</p> <p>What: Interventions to effectively counter educational poverty– The aim of the intervention is to monitor and document the most promising practices financed by the Department for Family Policies (Educare, Educare Insieme and Educare in Comune), present them in a structured way and analyse their replicability and potential scale-up and inclusion in the CGNAP.</p> <p>Where: To be defined</p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promising practices have been longlisted- of these, the 9 more promising will be selected, to be monitored and documented.
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ITALY

Young Innovators find pathways to tackle pollution through UPSHIFT

Youth unemployment in Palermo, Sicily, is the highest in Italy with 37.5% of the population aged 15- 29 neither in education, nor employment, nor in training.

Mohammed is 17 years old and as a first-generation Italian from a Tunisian immigrant background, he saw few opportunities in the area where he grew up. Mohammed is a student at the nautical secondary school, Gioeni-Trabia, in Palermo, where he takes vocational courses to improve his job prospects, specialising in logistics and transportation. He also takes part in UPSHIFT, an initiative implemented through the pilot European Child Guarantee programme that aims to help youth from deprived communities break the cycle of disadvantage. Supported by UNICEF, UPSHIFT is a social entrepreneurship program which empowers young participants by enabling them to apply theory learned in class to realistic professional scenarios.

“My classmates and I developed a marine robot, built with recycled materials, that collects plastics in the deep waters. We have defined its construction in every small detail.” Said Mohammed. The aim of the project is to clean the city’s harbour of tons of micro and macro-plastics.

“We chose this project not because of Palermo, but because throughout the entire world, the sea is one of the most polluted areas.”

“UPSHIFT aims to involve these vulnerable adolescents and young people who are often not very self-confident and can benefit from the guidance and skills that can set them on a new path in life,” says Alessandra, from the partner organisation Junior Achievement Italia (JA) who serve as facilitators and student mentors.

For Mohammed, UPSHIFT was a life-changing experience, an opportunity to test his capabilities and determination and reflect on real-life problems while finding concrete solutions to help his community thrive. It also helped him acquire skills he thinks will turn out to be useful for the post-diploma job-hunt, and importantly, it gave him the chance to stay connected with his peers amid lockdowns and school closures during the pandemic.

Summary of models of services and interventions per country and per target group

Service models	Implementation countries				Target groups of children					
	Categories	Bulgaria	Croatia	Greece	Italy	Children with disabilities	Children in alternative, esp. institutional care	Children with migrant background	Children of minority ethnic origin (Roma)	Children in precarious family conditions
 Integrated child protection and family support practices	 	 								
 Home visiting services for families with young children (0-3 years)	 									
 Early childhood interventions (ECI)										
 Inclusive and quality education (pre-school and school)										
 Deinstitutionalisation of children										
 Supported/supervised independent living										
 Foster care										
 Enhancing life skills, job readiness, and transitioning to adulthood										
 Social housing and skills building for young people leaving care										
 Peer support between families										
 Educational Poverty										



Deep Dive Analysis

Deep Dive Analysis are designed to tackle key unanswered questions and provide information and evidence that the governments in the seven pilot countries need in order to develop evidence-informed European Child Guarantee National Action Plans (CGNAPs). One of the main aspects requested by the Commission in these plans are data to map out the number of children that need services, and indicators to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the European Child Guarantee (ECG). In addition to responding to these requests, the CGNAPs also generate knowledge on what has determined the success of interventions and policies at national, regional, and local level across the key service areas of the ECG to advise governments on possible measures for implementing the ECG.. They have been tailored to the needs of each country for evidence around child poverty and social exclusion and are developed in a coordinated and multi-sector manner. Led by governments, the analysis undertaken for the deep dives will further inform the CGNAPs . **All Deep Dives will be carried out by the end of 2021.**

In parallel, governments in the seven pilot Member States have begun development of coordination mechanisms for the CGNAP development, under the leadership of national coordinators. UNICEF is supporting Member States as they drive the process for the development of evidence-based and –informed, costed, and monitorable action plans. In several cases, Steering Committees established for the development and coordination of Deep Dives have served as models for the coordination mechanisms established for national action plan development. UNICEF has been providing on-demand technical support to governments as they begin CGNAP preparation, including through direct participation in Steering Committees and recruitment of seconded staff to support the coordination and development processes. UNICEF together with the governments is working to ensure that these plans are based on robust evidence and rely on the findings and recommendations of the Deep Dives analysis, and that they are participatory and have sound monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

Deep Dive Analysis:

“Analysis of policies, programmes, services, budgets, and mechanisms addressing child poverty and social exclusion in the countries to inform the Child Guarantee National Action Plans.”



Updates from the 7 Member States on Deep Dive Analysis and Coordination Mechanisms

Country	 Deep Dive Analysis	 Child Guarantee Steering Committee
Bulgaria 	<p>The methodology agreed includes desk research, interviews and an online questionnaire for regional and local administrations. A particular emphasis is placed on the situation of children since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The scope of the Deep dive includes also an analysis of child poverty and social exclusion and the main drivers behind it. This analysis of child poverty drivers was finalized in August. It shows that child poverty is much higher in single-parent households than in other types of households. Ethnicity also has a significant differentiating effect on child poverty, with Roma households appearing to have the highest poverty rates. Regional disparities in child poverty and social exclusion are also documented.</p> <p>The draft report of the Deep Dive analysis has been finalized and submitted for review to the Inter-institutional working group, established by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy to support the Deep Dive analysis.</p>	<p>The National Steering Committee has been established following a memorandum of understanding signed between UNICEF, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, other key line ministries, the Council of Ministers, and the three pilot district administrations. It is tasked to provide overall guidance and support to the implementation of Phase III of the Child Guarantee.</p> <p>The first meeting of the National Steering Committee was held on 31 March 2021, chaired by the Minister of Labour and Social Policy and which approved the Annual Work Plan for the implementation of the pilot Child Guarantee project. UNICEF is working closely with the National Coordinator and will support the process for the development of the Action Plan.</p>
Croatia 	<p>The Deep Dive has been planned in consultation with the National Steering Committee and County Committee in their regular meetings. The literature review was finalized in June 2021. The recommendations and findings of this review were discussed with representatives of the Working Group for Developing National Plan for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2021 – 2027. The interim/draft of the Deep Dive is prepared and is being reviewed by all relevant stakeholders. The analyses will be available by the end of 2021.</p>	<p>The Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy co-chairs the National Steering Child Guarantee Committee together with UNICEF. The Committee meets quarterly and comprises of major line ministries, the Governor of the selected county (Medjmurje), the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities and one Roma representative. First Steering Committee meeting was held on 18th of February 2021 and the second took place on 25th of May 2021 to discuss the findings from the literature review as part of the deep-dive analysis. Overall implementation of the programme and thus far results were discussed in these meetings, and the focus was on instigating opportunities for ensuring the sustainability of interventions implemented through the programme or incorporating measures and recommendations into the relevant cross-sectoral national strategic plans.</p> <p>UNICEF is working closely with the National Coordinator and will support the process for the development of the Action Plan.</p>
Greece 	<p>A topic of particular interest for the Deep Dive research in Greece is bringing together evidence on child poverty and social exclusion in the effort to inform a Child Guarantee National Action Plan. In October a summary of the analysis on access to healthcare was shared with the National Centre of Social Solidarity (EKKA), a public independent body under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour which was appointed as the National Coordinator for the Child Guarantee. The Deep Dive expected to be finalized by mid to end November 2021.</p>	<p>The Steering Committee for Child Guarantee has been established and is co-chaired by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and UNICEF and includes as members different Ministries at Secretary General level. The First Steering Committee meeting was held on 11 November 2020; Technical working groups to oversee specific pillars of work have also been established. The second meeting of the Steering Committee is planned to take place mid-November 2021.</p> <p>UNICEF is working closely with the National Coordinator (EKKA) and will support the process for the development of the Action Plan.</p>

Updates from the 7 Member States on Deep Dive Analysis and Coordination Mechanisms

Country	 Deep Dive Analysis	 Child Guarantee Steering Committee
Italy 	<p>The scope of the Deep Dive and its timeline have been reviewed and approved by the Steering Committee. A preliminary desk review, the research protocol with the updated methodology, the outline for the Deep Dive and a first interim report have been finalized. 35 interviews and 2 focus group have been carried out with key stakeholders.</p> <p>The analysis has started with the collection of information on strategies, policies, programmes and services implemented at the national level to combat child poverty and social exclusion. The analysis adopts an integrated approach, crossing the data on potential recipients with those of policy areas of instruments. It aims to identify specific promising interventions and most in need children, taking into account the national policy framework and ensuring the coherence of policies in the various sectors. The Deep Dive expected to be finalized by December 2021.</p>	<p>An inter-institutional Child Guarantee Steering Committee has been established comprised of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Department for Family Policies, UNICEF and the Italian National Committee for UNICEF. Its main role is to lead and oversee the testing of the Child Guarantee in Italy.</p> <p>The first meeting of the Steering Committee was held in November 2020. Since then, the Committee has been meeting an average of once per month, with additional meetings on an as-need basis. Last meeting on the Interim Report of the Deep dive was held in mid-October 2021.</p>
Germany 	<p>The deep dive analysis was designed in close consultation with the German government (Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and the Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs) to focus on best practice achieved by Germany in the 5 ECG policy areas. The deep dive contains two streams of analysis: comprehensive mapping of policy initiatives and interventions across the ECG policy areas at the federal and subnational level, including those put in place during COVID-19, and compiling evidence on policies and services that have been formally evaluated. The deep dive will be finalised in November.</p>	<p>The synthesis report has been developed in close partnership with the government of Germany, and in particular with the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Regular meetings have been taking place to review the intermediary products of the Deep Dive analysis.</p>
Lithuania 	<p>The Deep Dive in Lithuania has a broad scope and looks at all target groups of vulnerable children. It includes a particular focus on the understanding of the role of civil society in service provision and the ways in which children and families can be empowered to address poverty and exclusion problems. The inception report and the literature review have been finalised. The preliminary findings were discussed at a stakeholder workshop in July, which was attended by representatives from relevant Ministries, civil society, and academia and the final version of the literature review report was finalised at the end of October. The first draft of the main deep dive report and the policy brief have been submitted and will be finalised in November.</p>	<p>The Steering Committee has been established and is chaired by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, with the participation of the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and Ombudsperson for Children's Rights Office. It will support process of developing a costed and monitorable National Action Plan for the Child Guarantee, based on the findings from the Deep Dive Analysis. The Steering Committee has met regularly to discuss and approve the TORs of the Deep Dive Analysis and provide feedback on the literature review and the main deep dive report</p> <p>UNICEF is working closely with the National Coordinator and will support the process for the development of the Action Plan.</p>
Spain 	<p>The Deep Dive includes among others a particular focus on the interplay and cooperation between different levels of government (national, regional and local), barriers to service access for the most vulnerable children, analysis of social protection systems and bring together available data most relevant for the monitoring and evaluation of the Child Guarantee. The deep dive final report has been reviewed by the Child Guarantee Management Committee, and Steering Committee, as well as consulted with regional and local authorities and civil society organisations. Children and young people had a chance to provide input into a synthesised version of the preliminary findings. The Deep Dive policy brief was presented on 13 October in Madrid (See video of event here), in which the Secretary of State of Social Right and the Social Affairs Minister participated among others. The deep dive literature review and the main deep dive report have been finalised and will be published online in November.</p>	<p>The deep dive Management Committee includes the office of the High Commissioner Against Child Poverty, Ministry of Social Rights and 2030 Agenda, UNICEF ECARO and UNICEF Spain.</p> <p>A Steering Committee representing all relevant ministries, local authorities, representatives of Catalonia and Valencia, a representative of the ESF+ management unit and the secretary of territorial cooperation has been set up to guide and validate the deep dive.</p> <p>The Management Committee has met monthly to oversee the process of the Deep Dive Analysis. The Steering Committee has also met twice to review the main deliverables of the Deep Dive Analysis.</p> <p>UNICEF is working closely with the National Coordinator and will support the process for the development of the Action Plan.</p>

Evidence generation and analysis on child poverty and social exclusion of children

In addition to the Deep Dive Analysis described above, 2 more activities related to evidence generation underpin Phase III of the Child Guarantee:

The Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA), which consists of a literature review that uses systematic and reproducible methods to identify, select and critically assess evidence. REA literature review method was selected as the most suitable type of systematic review.

The aim of this REA is to contribute to evidence generation and analysis of existing national policies by identifying the policy factors that enable or hinder cooperation and integration between all or some of the thematic areas of the ECG. More specifically, this REA aims to answer the following research questions: 1) What are the enabling and hindering components within the policies of Member States that lead to changes in horizontal and/or vertical policy integration of the ECG thematic areas? 2) How do these components affect/lead to changes in the horizontal and/or vertical policy integration (among major organisations) of the ECG thematic areas?

The report has been finalized and has highlighted three main categories of factors that emerged from thematic analysis were *social-psychological*, *organisational*, and *economic factors*. These factors reportedly operated as either barriers or facilitators to policy integration and cooperation across all or some of the Child Guarantee thematic areas.

An operational research, which is being carried out in the 4 Countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece and Italy) which are implementing specific models of services to address the needs of the most disadvantaged children. The operational research aims to build evidence on 'how things work' (planning, management, integration, sustainability, replicability, service delivery, inclusion and participation) in different contexts, generating generalizable evidence on the practicalities of implementing effective and efficient integrated services for children affected by poverty and social exclusion in Europe. The research is based on a standardized research approach across the 4 countries, on theories of change that were developed for each of the 18 models of services and interventions, and on a mapping of implementation plans and contexts. Research protocols have been finalised, the recruitment and training of the research agencies is almost completed, and the first of two rounds of data collection has started in late October.

REA literature review:

"Identifying the policy factors that enable or hinder cooperation and integration between all or some of the thematic areas of the ECG."

Operational research:

"Building evidence on 'how things work' in different contexts for the 6 disadvantaged groups of children, generating generalizable evidence and feeding this back directly to practitioners."

Cross-Cutting: Child and Adolescent Participation

Child participation is essential for reaching the most disadvantaged groups of children and is being integrated into all pillars of the Phase III. The “**Guidance on Child and Adolescent Participation as part of Phase III of the Preparatory Action for the ECG**” was drafted by UNICEF to provide a simple and synthesized guidance on how to mainstream child and adolescent participation in planning, design and monitoring and evaluation of the different activities while at the same time documenting the work that is being advanced in each of the pilot countries. The document is directed to the UNICEF Country teams as well as implementing and governmental partners involved in the implementation of the Phase III of the preparatory action of the pilot European Child Guarantee project.

Based on this guidance, child and adolescent participation has been mainstreamed in the different activities of the Phase III of the preparatory action for the ECG: in evidence generation, policy/decision making and service design and delivery, monitoring and evaluation as well as in advocacy and communication.



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Child Participation in:

Evidence generation	Case management
Policy Making	Monitoring and Evaluation
Decision-making	Advocacy and Communication
Service Design and Delivery	

Child Participation in Evidence Generation activities

In Spain, UNICEF organized two focus group discussion with children in June 2021 engaging a total of 24 children. One of the focus groups focused on the needs of Roma children, while the other more broadly on all areas of the ECG was organized with members of some local councils and UNICEF Spain child participation council. Two reports were produced which summarize the contributions and views of children.

In Bulgaria, UNICEF has supported the implementation of the child-led research on key topics of the ECG – access to quality health, education, childcare, decent housing and adequate nutrition – by 3 teams of adolescents, established in the three pilot districts. 18 adolescents (10 girls and 8 boys, aged between 12 and 17 years) identified by the local partners for conducting their own research on the main topics of the ECG with support from 6 adult mentors. The 3 teams of adolescents presented the results, key findings and recommendations from their research on the access to health for vulnerable children at a public event “[Making the European Child Guarantee a Reality for Children in Bulgaria: The Voices of Youth](#)”, which took place on 21 October 2021. The event was organized by UNICEF, the Embassy of Slovenia and the EC Representation in Bulgaria and was conducted under the auspices of Mr. Galab Donev, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Labour and Social Policy.

Policy and decision-making level

In Bulgaria, UNICEF conducted the first national poll on access to quality healthcare in May 2021 among 200+ young people. The second national poll on access to quality education was conducted in August 2021. The collected data from the two polls were analysed and presented on UNICEF [website](#), the website of the National Network for Children and shared through social media.

In Italy, a Children Advisory Board (CAB) is being established to support the Steering Committee in the different phases of the implementation of the pilot Child Guarantee and become part of a permanent child participation mechanism. The CAB is composed of adolescents and youth aged 15 to 21, ensuring gender balance and representation of the different child guarantee target groups. Additionally, in partnership with the Italian Care Leavers Network, children and young people leaving alternative care are developing recommendations and advocacy briefs covering areas included in the Child Guarantee, to be used to advocate with different levels authorities and other relevant stakeholders. 104 care leavers are currently involved in the process for the development of the recommendations.

In Greece, a Youth Steering Committee (YSC) for Child Guarantee was established and had its first meeting on 18th May 2021. The members of the Committee are children and young people representing the groups of children that the pilot Child Guarantee is focusing on in Greece, thus, children living in or having experienced institutional care, refugee and migrant children, children with disabilities and Roma children. The 2nd meeting of the YSC took place on 10th of September 2021 at "PIKPA Voula", an institution for children with disabilities. It plans to meet every 6 to 8 weeks.

In Croatia adolescent (13-19) from marginalized and disadvantaged communities are empowered and have strengthened skills for an effective participation in the pilot Child Guarantee project. UPSHIFT programme seeks to ensure meaningful participation of girls and boys from all communities in Medjimurje including Roma to promote their participation through empowerment, cooperation and trust-building. UPSHIFT is designed to build the capacity of the most vulnerable youth and adolescents through 3-day workshop for 10 teams and post-workshop 6 months mentorship programme for 6 teams. 43 adolescents participated in 3-day workshop supported by 10 youth mentors in Prelog Municipality. Following the workshop, 6 winning teams were selected for a post-workshop mentorship programme for up to six months.

Child Participation in Service Design and Delivery

In Croatia, different activities have been developed to enhance child and adolescent participation in service design and delivery, especially in case management. Focus groups have been organized with children to develop needs-based training materials and methodologies for the social workforce. During the focus group discussions, children provided an overview and insights into their experience with the Centre for social welfare experts and interventions as well as family expectations from the social welfare system in overcoming difficulties in upbringing, schooling and basic care about their needs. Children also provided their respective views about their status and position in society with emphasis on difficult access to services and discrimination children face in various systems and institutions.

In Greece, UNICEF focused on receiving children's input during the SIL lessons learned assessment including through conduction of focus group discussions with unaccompanied children currently living in SIL apartments and children that have aged out of SIL care.

High Level Event on European Child Guarantee

The high-level event "[Making the European Child Guarantee a Reality in the EU: Insights from testing the European Child Guarantee](#)", which took place in June of 2021, took stock of how the pilot has progressed in the pilot countries to inspire all Member States in their implementation of the European Child Guarantee. It provided an opportunity to share experiences and gave concrete examples of good practices, models and services that are proving successful in supporting children in need and addressing child poverty and social exclusion.

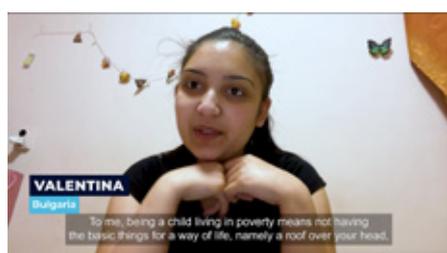
The high-level event was organised jointly by the UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia and the European Commission, in coordination with the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The high-level consisted of a panel discussion of ministers in charge of social affairs and other high-level

government representatives from Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Greece, Finland, France, Italy, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia and Spain. The event was joined by Portugal's Minister for Employment, Solidarity, and Social Security Ms. Ana Mendes Godinho, the Vice President of the European Commission, Dubravka Šuica, the European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights Mr. Nicolas Schmit and UNICEF's Director for Europe and Central Asia Region, Ms. Afshan Khan.

The President of the European Parliament, Mr. David Sassoli, addressed the event through a video message.

During this High-level event, [4 children's voices videos](#) were prepared and broadcasted, bringing the views and opinions of children from the most disadvantaged groups into the high-level platform of representatives from EU Member States. Several national videos with voices of children have also been produced and shared through social media channels.



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June 2021

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