

LEADING THE WAY FOR EUROPE'S CHILDREN

Phase III of the Preparatory Action for a European Child Guarantee

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The ECG Recommendation aims to prevent and combat social exclusion of **children in need, with a particular focus on 6 target groups of children**



children with disabilities



children experiencing severe housing deprivation



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



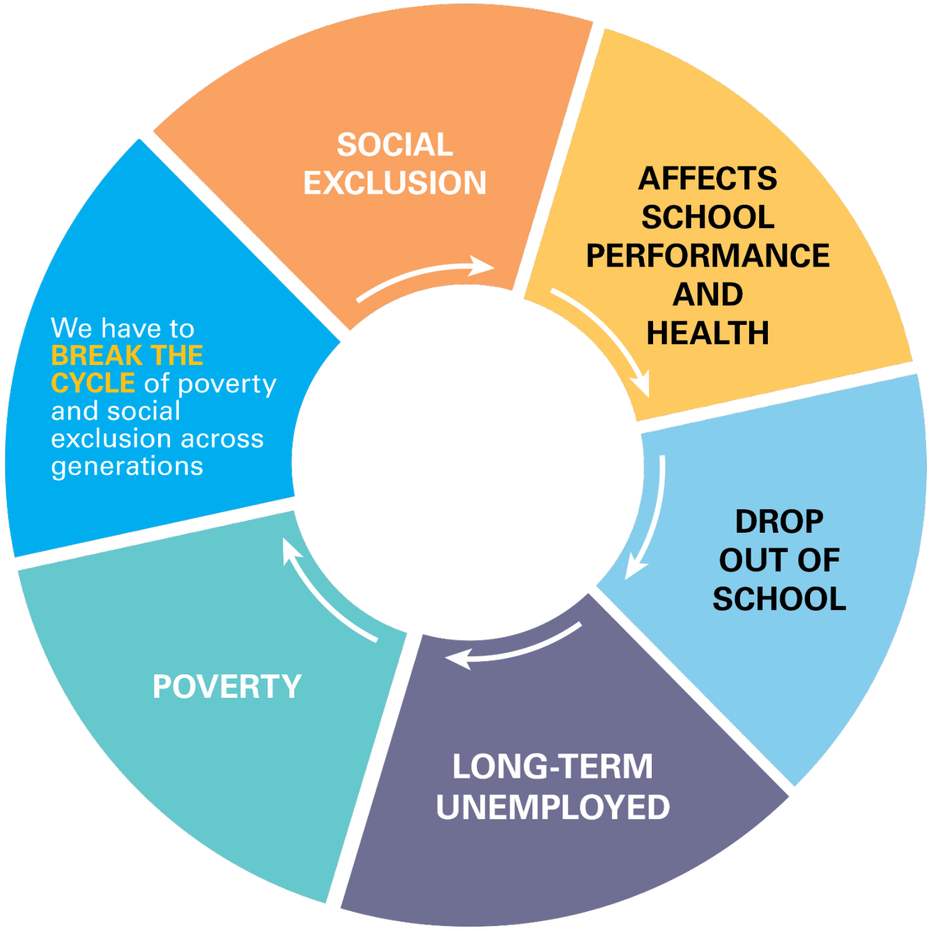
children in precarious family situations



children residing in institutions



migrant and refugee children



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The objective of this Recommendation

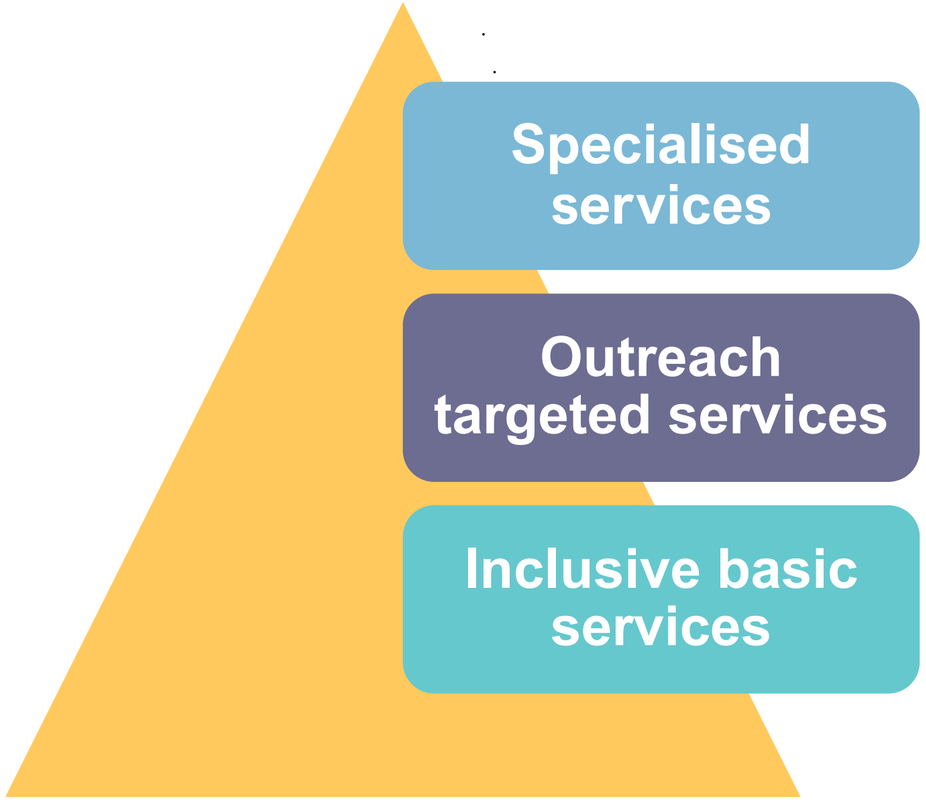
To prevent and combat social exclusion by guaranteeing the access of children in need to a set of key services, including mainstreaming a gender perspective in order to take into consideration the different situations of girls and boys, by combating child poverty and fostering equal opportunities.

- Children in need are persons under the age of 18 years who are at risk of poverty or social exclusion. This refers to children living in households at risk of poverty, or experiencing severe material and social deprivation, or with very low work intensity.

- In order to provide for effective access or effective and free access to key services, Member States should, in accordance with national circumstances and approaches, either organise and provide such services or provide adequate benefits so that parents or guardians of children in need are in a position to cover the costs or charges of those services.

- Particular attention is required to avoid any possible accompanying costs forming a barrier for children in need in low-income families to full access of the key services.

The ECG ensures **effective** or **free access** of **children in need to key services**



<u>Effective</u> and <u>free</u> access to:

ECEC, education (including school-based activities), at least one healthy meal a school day, healthcare.

<u>Effective</u> access to:

Healthy nutrition

Adequate housing

Effective access means:

Services are readily available, of good quality, provided timely, known to users.

Free access means that services are provided free of charge,

or subsidized, or in way that that financial circumstances do not pose an obstacle to equal access.

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ECG Governance

- **nominate a national Child Guarantee Coordinator**, equipped with adequate resources and mandate enabling the effective coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the ECG Recommendation;
- with a view to most effective targeting of measures to children in need, involve relevant stakeholders in **identifying children in need** and barriers they face in accessing and taking up the services;
- submit to the Commission an action plan, covering the period until 2030, to implement this Recommendation, taking into account national, regional and local circumstances as well as existing policy actions and measures to support children in need.

ECG National Action Plans should include

- **targeted categories of children** in need to be reached by corresponding integrated measures;
- **quantitative and qualitative targets** to be achieved in terms of children in need to be reached by corresponding measures, taking into account regional and local disparities
- **measures planned or taken** in implementing this Recommendation, including at regional and local level, and the necessary financial resources and timelines;
- **other measures planned or taken** to address child social exclusion and to break intergenerational cycles of disadvantage, based in particular on enabling the policy framework
- **a national framework for data collection, monitoring and evaluation of** this Recommendation, also with a view to establishing a common monitoring framework, as referred to in paragraph 12, point (d);
- **report every two years** to the Commission on the progress in implementing this Recommendation, in line with the national action plan

Monitoring and evaluation

The Council welcomes the Commission's aim to:

monitor progress in implementing this Recommendation

Working jointly with MS and national Child Guarantee Coordinators and the SP Committee to facilitate mutual learning, share experiences, good practices and follow up on the actions taken in response to this Recommendation

report regularly to the Social Protection Committee on the progress in implementing this Recommendation;

establish a common monitoring framework using existing data sources and indicators and, if necessary, develop further agreed common quantitative and qualitative outcome indicators to assess the implementation of this Recommendation

with a view to informing policy making, enhance the availability, scope and relevance of comparable data at Union level, including on children in need and their access to services, and adequacy and coverage of benefits targeted at children;

Strengthen awareness-raising and communication efforts and increase dissemination of results and good practice examples at Union level and among Member States and relevant stakeholders

3 PILLARS OF INTERVENTION OF PHASE III OF THE CHILD GUARANTEE

I.

Evidence Generation and Analyses

Data, analysis and recommendations provided for in the deep dive reports
Rapid evidence assessment on Policy Integration and coordination

II.

Policy Engagement and Development

Development of the ECG NAPs
Led by ECG National Coordinators or other designated actors
Informed by direct consultation with children, families, service providers
Adapted to include measures for refugee children from Ukraine.

III.

Improving Supply, Demand and Service Quality

2,758 professionals and decision - makers capacitated to plan, provide and monitor services and interventions
30,345 children and young adults directly reached with services and interventions
16,037 adult caregivers directly reached with models of services and interventions

Cross-Cutting: Child Participation; Advocacy and Communication

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BULGARIA

Integrated services

Integrated child protection and family support services

Quality inclusive pre-school education

Early childhood intervention

Home visiting



CROATIA

Integrated services

Integrated child protection and family support services

Inclusive pre-primary-education

Early childhood intervention



GREECE

Deinstitutionalization and child-care reform

Family and community-based alternative care

Inclusive education

Innovative skills development package



ITALY

Child-care reform

Innovative models of family and community-based alternative care

Integrated and innovative skills development package

Opportunities to participation



Findings from the operational research

Aim

To learn from the planning and programming experience in the four countries, to generate key learning points on the practicalities of implementing effective and efficient services and interventions for children in need in Europe.

Method

Two waves of in-depth interviews involving 121 key stakeholders (including policy makers, implementing partners and UNICEF staff) in the 4 countries.

Topics

Research focused on seven key themes: planning, implementation, integrated working, monitoring and evaluation, participation, inclusion, and sustainability



Findings from the operational research

Key messages
1. Laying the foundations at the national level

1. **Working together effectively across structures**
2. **Improving and filling gaps in policy and legislation**
3. **Enhancing the workforce**
   Numbers, conditions and training
4. **Changing attitudes and tackling prejudice**
5. **Strengthening the evidence base**
   Fill gaps in evidence base for needs analysis and to monitor achievement of targets
6. **Achieving sustainability**
   Financial issues but also ensure the above building blocks to ensure sustainability

Key messages
2. Developing interventions at the local level

1. **Strengthening regional and local coordination**
   Including considering how to replicate the successes of local coordination in the pilots
2. **Conceptualizing and developing interventions**
   Including learning from international evidence
3. **Conducting effective needs analysis**
4. **Reaching the most disadvantaged**
   Among those children already defined as 'in need'
5. **Improving participation**
6. **Monitoring and evaluation**
   A stronger focus on impact evaluation that can answer 'what works in what contexts?'

Key messages
3. Support the Child Guarantee at the EU level

1. **Communicating the ideas and importance of the Child Guarantee**
2. **Maintaining focus and coherence**
3. **Balancing targeted and universal provision**
   'Progressive universalism'
4. **Supporting sustainability**
   Including potential use of EU funding as a support
5. **Improving the evidence base**
   Support harmonization of data-gathering, including sub-groups; support gathering data directly from children and young people; support and stimulate generation of high-quality evaluations.
6. **Coordinating and encouraging the exchange of learning**
   Including evaluation outcomes but also learning on integrated working, participation, etc.

Child And Youth Participation

- **Mainstreamed in the different activities of Phase III:** in evidence generation; policy/decision making; service design and delivery; monitoring and evaluation; advocacy and communication

- In line with the **'Guidance on Child and Adolescent Participation as part of Phase III of the Preparatory Action for the ECG'**, which has been finalized and shared widely

Communication & Advocacy



- **20+** **human interest stories** published about children and young people in need, demonstrating the impact of models of services and interventions
- **>53** **million impressions through digital outreach** with thanks also to amplification by partners and other stakeholders
- **>140** **web pages developed** including programmatic updates, deep dive analyses, report pages, human interest stories, photo essays, events, thematic webinars etc.
- **10** **key advocacy asks** developed to advocate for main streaming **European Child Guarantee** across Member States, through National Committees
- **1** **Campaign Activation** with the aim of reaching **10 Million+** people



Conclusions from evaluation

- Political momentum
- Local engagement
- Learning and buy-in
- Strategic alignment

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Recommendation from evaluation

Support the continued commitment of National governments to support the ECG.

Disseminate the knowledge secured from experience with pilot countries across a wider range of European countries (and beyond) and stakeholders who are developing and/or implementing ECG NAPs.

Ensure the establishment of long-term collaboration between different agencies

Establishment of broad coalitions of actors across a wider number of European countries, and between different European countries to support the effective engagement of the ECG Europe wide

Localise the implementation of the ECG - support local governments to find ways to integrate the relevant NAP elements into their own policy frameworks.

Develop standardised tools to support the updating of the deep dive policy analysis data to ensure that the data is current and enables ongoing policy analysis and the design of continued relevant policy actions

Strategically invest in creating, maintaining and strengthening the social service workforce.

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Thank you!

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