

EU anti-poverty package

25th meeting of Child Guarantee coordinators

19/05/2026



A close-up photograph of a hand with light skin counting several Euro coins on a white surface. The coins are of various denominations, including 2 Euro, 1 Euro, and 50 Cent. The hand is positioned in the lower-left and center of the frame, with fingers moving across the coins. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

The package

- **Commission Communication on the EU Anti-Poverty Strategy** (and analytical SWD and SWD on Principles on effective anti-poverty policies)
- Proposal for a **Council Recommendation on fighting housing exclusion**
- **Commission Communication Breaking the cycle of child poverty - strengthening the European Child Guarantee** (and analytical SWD)

Commission Communication

EU Anti-Poverty Strategy

Addressing and preventing poverty from childhood to old age



Why an EU Anti-Poverty Strategy?



Fundamental rights rationale — Living in dignity is a fundamental right and the EU has committed to respect it and protect it (art. 1 Charter of Fundamental Rights)

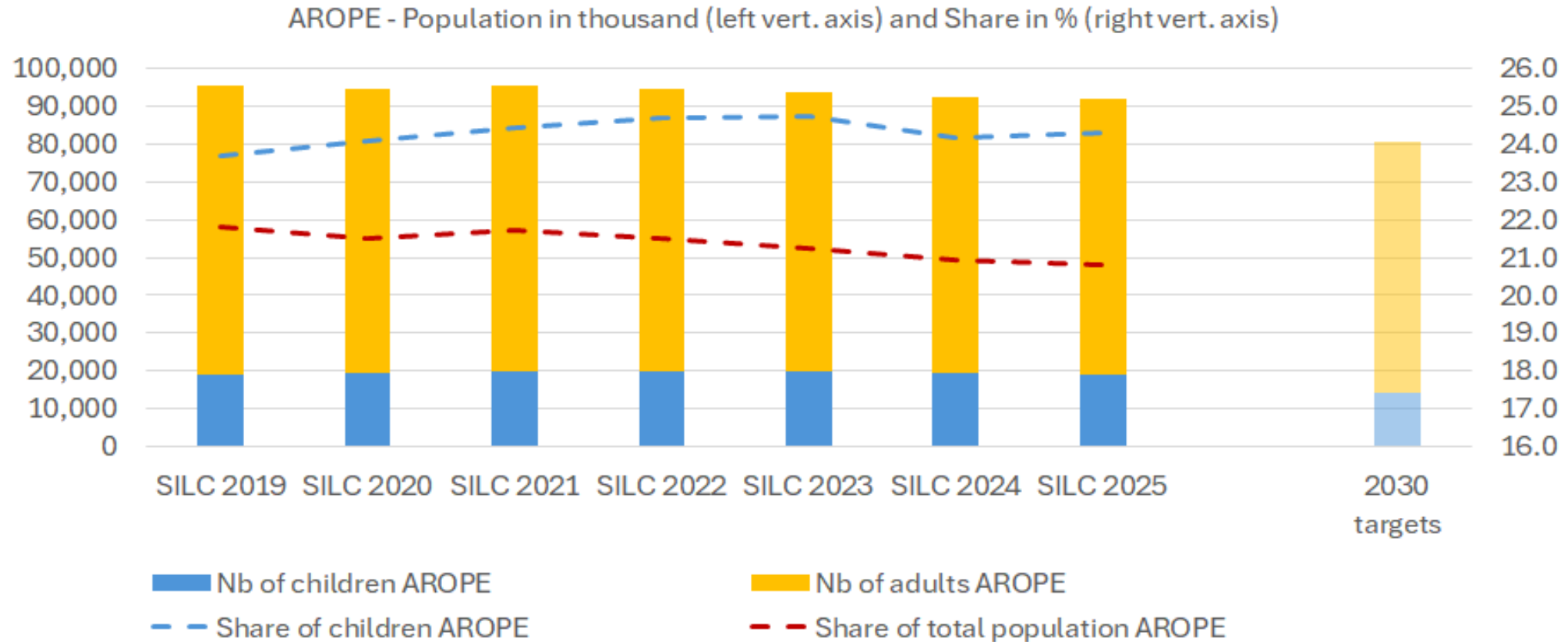


Political rationale — To enhance social cohesion, address growing distrust in institutions and make our societies more resilient



Economic rationale — To reduce the cost of poverty and make EU more competitive through enriched human capital and larger labour force

There is a need to accelerate the pace of poverty reduction, especially for children



Definition of at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE): persons are AROPE when they are either at risk of poverty, or severely materially and socially deprived, or living in a household with a very low work intensity. Persons are included only once even if they are in more than one of the situations mentioned above. For more information about the definition, please see [here](#).

The Anti-Poverty Strategy

I. Life-cycle approach: comprehensive measures to tackle poverty specific to each age category

- **Children:** improving child/family benefits + access to services (Strengthened European Child Guarantee)
- **Youth:** boosting the implementation of the Youth Guarantee
- **Working age:** for those who can work, including the transition to quality jobs, as the first and best tool to prevent poverty: strong focus on activation (legal instrument) + addressing in-work poverty (dedicated guidance)
- **Old age:** integrated policies for a dignified old age
- **Transitions**

II. Horizontal challenges that exacerbate poverty

- **Discrimination and stigma:** cross-reference with equality strategies + tackling socio-economic discrimination
- **Coverage of basic needs:** affordable food, energy, transport, housing (CR on fighting housing exclusion) + importance of consumer protection and financial literacy
- **Access to services:** Focus on easier and integrated access to social services.

The Anti-Poverty Strategy

III. Governance, funding and monitoring

- ***Focus on engaging with national, regional and local authorities***
 - Call to ensure anti-poverty policy frameworks are in place + Guidance to help them (SWD Principles for effective anti-poverty policies)
 - Call for Member States to appoint an Anti-Poverty Coordinator at the highest level
- ***Focus on the role of the private sector and philanthropy: new Coalition Against Poverty***
- ***Involving persons experiencing poverty: new dedicated structured dialogue***
- ***Joint work with other EU institutions:***
 - Informal structured dialogue with EP (Intergroup on Fighting Poverty)
 - Joint Action Plan/cooperation agreement with CoR and EESC (EU Social Inclusion Award with CoR)
 - Contributions of EIB/CEB

Proposal for a Council Recommendation on fighting housing exclusion



Challenges



Since 2013, **house prices have increased by more than 60%** across the EU, faster than income, while average rents have risen by around 20%.



Approximately one million people are affected by **homelessness in the EU**.



One in three people at risk of poverty faces **housing cost overburden**.



Almost 17% of the EU population live in **overcrowded housing conditions**.



Proposal for a Council Recommendation on fighting Housing Exclusion

Objective of the proposed Recommendation

- Support Member States in **preventing** and **addressing housing exclusion** of vulnerable persons in, or at-risk of, precarious housing situations and of homeless persons
- Promote the design, implementation and improvement of national, regional and/or local strategic frameworks based on **person-centered, housing-led** and **integrated** policies



Proposal for a Council Recommendation on fighting Housing Exclusion

Guidance for the implementation of strategic frameworks which include:

- **Data collection and identification** of persons experiencing or at-risk of housing exclusion
- Targeted and effective measures to **prevent housing exclusion**
- Comprehensive **support to people experiencing homelessness**
- **Access to adequate and secure** housing solutions
- Boosting supply of **social and affordable housing**
- **Multi-level governance** and effective **monitoring and evaluation** mechanisms

Commission Communication

Breaking the cycle of child poverty – strengthening the European Child Guarantee





Across EU, 1 in 4 children is at risk of poverty or social exclusion

No progress toward the 2030 target of reducing the number of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion by at least 5 million

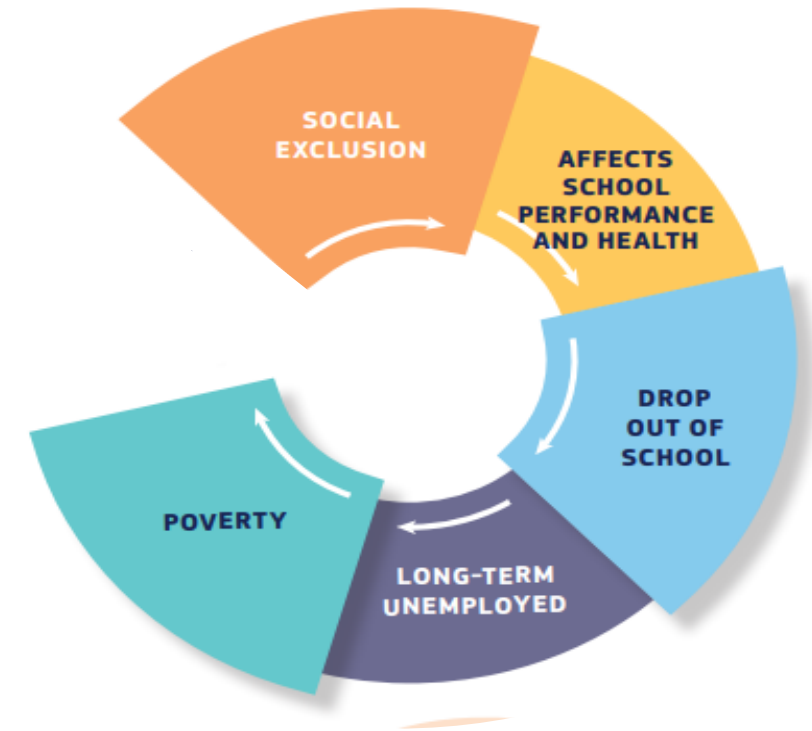
Rising cost of living pushes more families into precariousness

National child poverty targets

	National target (reduction of AROPE in 1000s vs 2019 figures)	AROPE population 2019 (1000s)	AROPE population 2020 (1000s)	AROPE population 2021 (1000s)	AROPE population 2022 (1000s)	AROPE population 2023 (1000s)	AROPE population 2024 (1000s)	AROPE population 2025 (1000s)	Mini charts of trends to latest available year	Overall change 2019-2025 (1000s)
BE	-93	532	516	492	459	461	478	446		-86
BG	-197	434	432	400	411	377	394	372		-62
CZ	-50	260	264	280	270	315	325	323		63
DK	n.a.	158	152	158	156	171	182	168		10
DE**	-300	2,874	3,144	3,357	3,549	3,526	3,377	3,382		508
EE	-13	50	44	45	43	49	44	51		1
IE	-45	303	269	281	274	293	253	289		-14
EL*	(-6.6 p.p. AROPE)	31	31	32	28	28	28	30		-1.6
ES	-713	2,571	2,608	2,750	2,604	2,768	2,756	2,648		77
FR+	-300	3,194	3,138	2,934	3,498	3,320	3,421	3,562		368
HR	-40	134	126	127	119	113	125	100		-34.0
IT	n.a.	2,658	2,797	2,851	2,660	2,471	2,421	2,401		-257
CY	-3	37	33	33	33	29	26	25		-12
LV	n.a.	67	72	75	73	75	65	62		-5.0
LT	n.a.	128	115	108	110	111	117	99		-29
LU	-1	28	30	36	31	34	33	34		6
HU	n.a.	469	463	444	360	415	386	381		-88
MT*	(-6 p.p. AROPE)	24	22	23	23	25	27	23		-0.4
NL	n.a.	519	526	493	459	526	518	417		-102
AT	-102	312	345	368	353	376	344	411		99
PL	-300	1,089	1,096	1,140	1,138	1,136	1,070	1,022		-67
PT	-161	380	378	388	339	379	351	322		-58
RO	-500	1,426	1,483	1,508	1,496	1,360	1,255	1,163		-263
SI	-3	45	47	43	41	43	47	47		2
SK	-21	207	183	202	252	259	237	236		29
FI	-33	147	152	138	155	144	178	173		26
SE	-5	510	453	437	441	481	458	508		-2

We have to break the cycle of child poverty

- **Growing up in poverty nearly doubles the risk of living in poverty as an adult**
- Children in poverty face hardships, which undermine their overall wellbeing, educational attainment and curtail life and employment prospects
- We do not start from scratch, with the **European Child Guarantee**. It aims to foster equal opportunities by providing children in need with access to a set of key goods and services.
- Since its adoption in 2021, Member States have used it to expand access. Yet gaps in its implementation persist while child poverty remains high. We need a more comprehensive and integrated approach



High cost of inaction: according to the OECD, child disadvantages and their lifelong effects are estimated to cost Europe 3.4% of GDP each year

VS

Social investment: investing in children from the earliest age onward yields a high rate of positive returns for children and for our economy, social cohesion and democracy.

Building blocks of the Communication Breaking the cycle of child poverty – strengthening the European Child Guarantee

01

Preventing and reducing poverty among families

02

Strengthening the impact of the European Child Guarantee

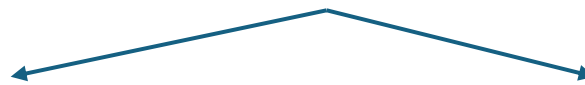
03

Reinforcing funding and governance

The Staff Working Document accompanying the Communication **reviews progress made in implementation of the ECG since 2021** (as mandated by ECG Recommendation).

1. Preventing and reducing poverty among families

- With rising cost of living, immediate actions required to help vulnerable households meet the needs of their children
- While broad affordability challenges, such as housing costs, are addressed in the **EU Anti-Poverty Strategy** and the proposal for a **Council Recommendation on fighting housing exclusion**, this Communication presents complementary actions targeting more directly families.
- The goal: **helping families secure adequate resources**



*Supporting parents' access
to employment*

*Robust safety nets for
households with children at
risk of poverty*

1. Preventing and reducing poverty among families

Supporting parents' access to employment

Challenge

75% of mothers with young children still cite family and care obligations as the primary reason for not being able to participate in the labour market

New action

2026

1st stage consultation of European social partners on possible EU action to support activation and equality between women and men with regard to labour market opportunities, including through childcare

Robust safety nets for households with children at risk of poverty

Challenge

Poverty-reducing impact of child benefits ranges from 4 to 16 percentage points across Member States

New action

2027

Commission Recommendation on enhancing efficiency of child-related benefit systems

2. Strengthening the impact of the European Child Guarantee

A threefold approach

1. *Scaling up access to services*

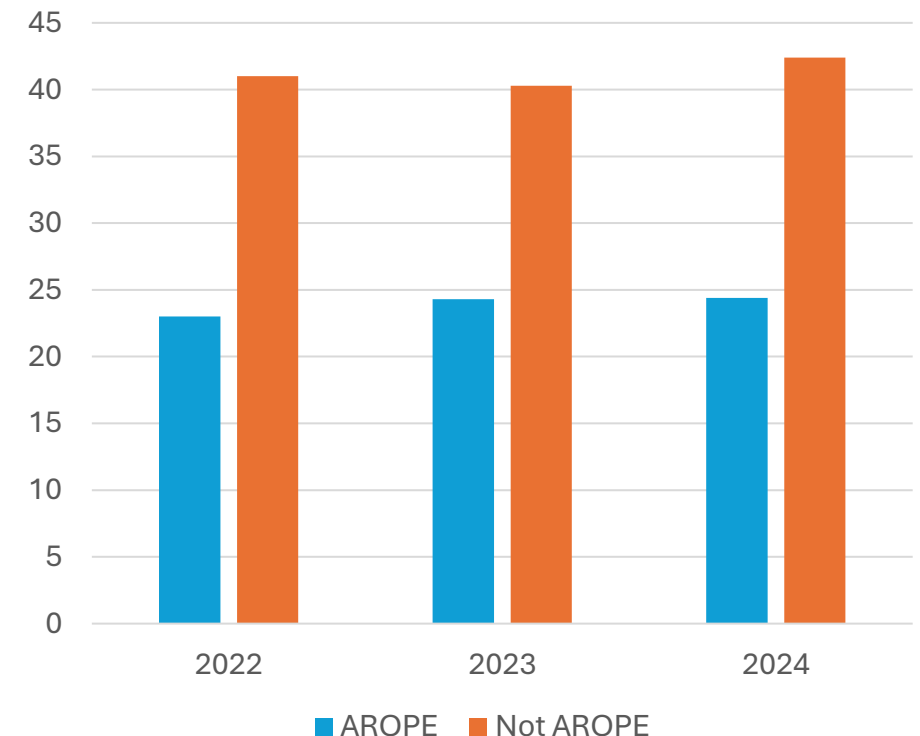
- Since the Guarantee's adoption, progress has been achieved. Yet access gaps remain to be bridged by scaling up what worked
- E.g. in ECEC, rise in participation rate of children in poverty below 3 by 2 p.p. which however is still 15 p.p. lower than that of more advantaged peers

2. *Strengthening implementation to ensure well targeted and impactful support until early adulthood*

- Need to move from fragmented support to more comprehensive support tailored to children's needs, beyond childhood, to break the cycle of poverty

3. *Protecting vulnerable children from increased threats to safety (online and offline)*

Share of children below 3 in ECEC (one hour or more, in %)



2. Strengthening the impact of the European Child Guarantee

Scaling up access to services

Challenges

In ECEC, children in poverty still face a 15-percentage-point enrolment gap compared to their peers

Nearly 1/4 of children in poverty remain excluded from regular leisure activities

Since 2021, the share of children in poverty reporting 'very good health' has fallen by 5 percentage points

New actions

2026

Horizon call for innovative solutions in ECEC

2026

Curriculum and pedagogical guidelines

2027

ESF+ call on culture and sport as tools for social inclusion

2027

Toolkit for mental wellbeing promotion

2. Strengthening the impact of the European Child Guarantee

Strengthening implementation to ensure well targeted and impactful support until early adulthood

Challenges

Need for more tailored support to children facing unique, intersecting barriers

In some instances, up to one-third of children do not take up benefits available to them

Children in need transitioning out of childhood are at high risk of becoming NEETs

New actions

2026

Development of mentorship

2027

Guidance on social inclusion of Roma children

2027

Pilot on European Child Guarantee Card

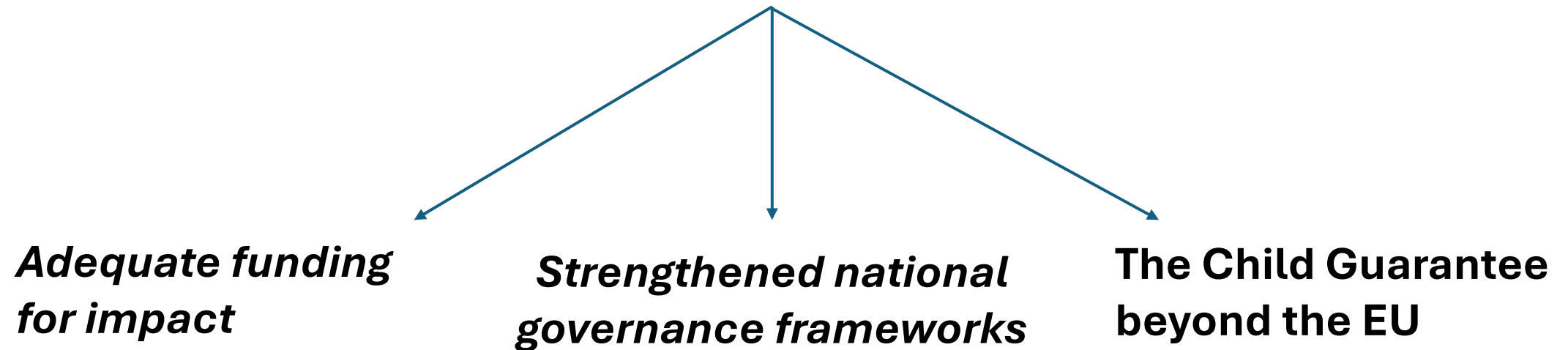
2027

Toolkit on pathways to adulthood for children in need

Protecting vulnerable children from increased threats to safety

3. Reinforcing funding and governance

Joint efforts needed at European, national, regional and local levels to invest financial resources efficiently, design effective policies, enhance the engagement of relevant stakeholders, including private actors and children themselves



3. Reinforcing funding and governance

Adequate funding for impact

Current resources

ESF+ 2021 – 2027
€9.6B dedicated to
the Guarantee

And other funding
instruments (e.g. RRF,
ERDF, ERASMUS+, TSI)

New resources

MFF proposal 2028 -
2034
The Guarantee among
the 4 social priorities

Coalition against
Poverty (2026)

Council of Europe
Development Bank
€1B to support the
Guarantee

EIB Group 2026 – 2027
Joint work

The Commission
will present a
**compendium of
good practices** to
support national
and local
authorities in
scaling up reforms
and investments

3. Reinforcing funding and governance

Strengthened national governance frameworks

Challenges

Need to step up the ambition of national Child Guarantee plans to more comprehensively address root causes of child poverty

Need to increase involvement of local authorities and grassroots civil society organisations in the Guarantee implementation

The Child Guarantee beyond the EU

New actions

2026

ESF+ call on Guarantee national governance fwks and access to the labour market of Roma NEETs

2026

Horizon call for innovative solutions in ECEC

2027

ESF+ call on culture and sport as tools for social inclusion

2027

1st edition of EU Social Inclusion award on children from disadvantaged area



Thank you!



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