

# Staff Working Document reviewing progress made in implementation of the Council Recommendation establishing a European Child Guarantee

Commission's presentation at the 25<sup>th</sup> meeting of Child Guarantee Coordinators

Nicosia, 19 May 2026

# Double purpose

1. To fulfil the mandate given to the Commission in § 12 (e) of the ECG Recommendation, to “*review the progress made in the implementation of this Recommendation and report to the Council by five years after its adoption*”.
2. To provide evidence base for the Commission Communication on breaking the cycle of child poverty – strengthening the European Child Guarantee.



# Sources

- EU Monitoring Framework
- Other data (& own calculations)
- Policy contributions from across European Commission
- Biennial progress reports  
(all 27 from the first round and 14 from the second round, received before 17 April 2026)
- Country profiles circulated for comments/feedback on 5 December 2025
- Research papers (academia, JRC, ESPAN)
- Position papers by civil society organisations
- Results of public consultations
  - Targeted meetings with stakeholders
  - Child Participation Platform (survey, focus groups, individual interviews)
  - Call for Evidence

22 graphs

11 tables



# Structure (1/3)

## CONTEXT

- Child poverty and its societal and economic impacts
- Rights-based approach

## POLICY RESPONSES TO CHILD POVERTY

- Addressing the root causes of child poverty
  - Supporting the labour market integration of households
  - Child benefits and their efficiency
- Rolling out the European Child Guarantee
  - Child Guarantee Coordinators
  - National action plans for implementation of ECG
  - Monitoring frameworks
  - Biennial progress reports
  - Implementation of ECG in candidate countries and potential candidate
- EU funding
  - The European Social Fund+
  - The Recovery and Resilience Facility
  - The Social Climate Fund
  - The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
  - Technical Support Instrument
  - Erasmus +

Good practice boxes  
throughout the text



# Structure (2/3)

## PROGRESS WITH ECG IMPLEMENTATION

- Children in need
- Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)
- Education for successful transition to adulthood
- School-based activities
- School meals
- Healthcare
- Digital inclusion and safety
- Healthy nutrition
- Adequate housing
  - Combatting homelessness
  - Adequate accommodation
  - Alternative care of good quality
- Access to justice
- Outreach and awareness raising
- Involvement of stakeholders

Good practice boxes  
throughout the text



# Structure (3/3)

## **STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS ON THE EUROPEAN CHILD GUARANTEE AND ITS POSSIBLE STRENGTHENING**

- European Parliament
- The Council
- Committee of the Regions
- European Economic and Social Committee
- Civil society
- Children
- Results of the Call for Evidence

Good practice boxes  
throughout the text

## **ANNEXES**

- The EU and national targets for child poverty reduction
- The EU Monitoring Framework
- Country profiles on the state of play with implementation of the European Child Guarantee Recommendation (159 pages)



# Main findings

Some progress towards implementation in every Member State.

No clear indication of 'best'/'worst' policy domain.

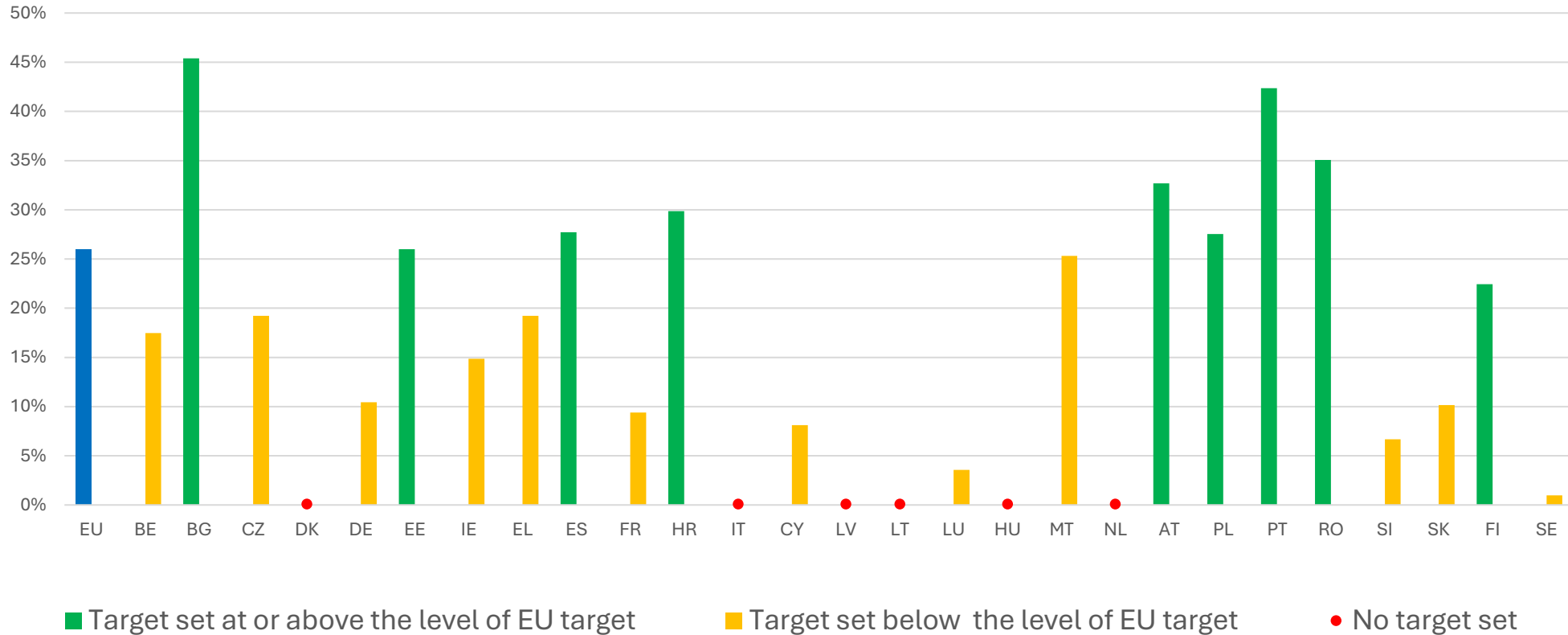
Considerable variety as regards governance and reporting standards.

Integration of services very important.

More could be done on identification of children in need and outreach towards them.

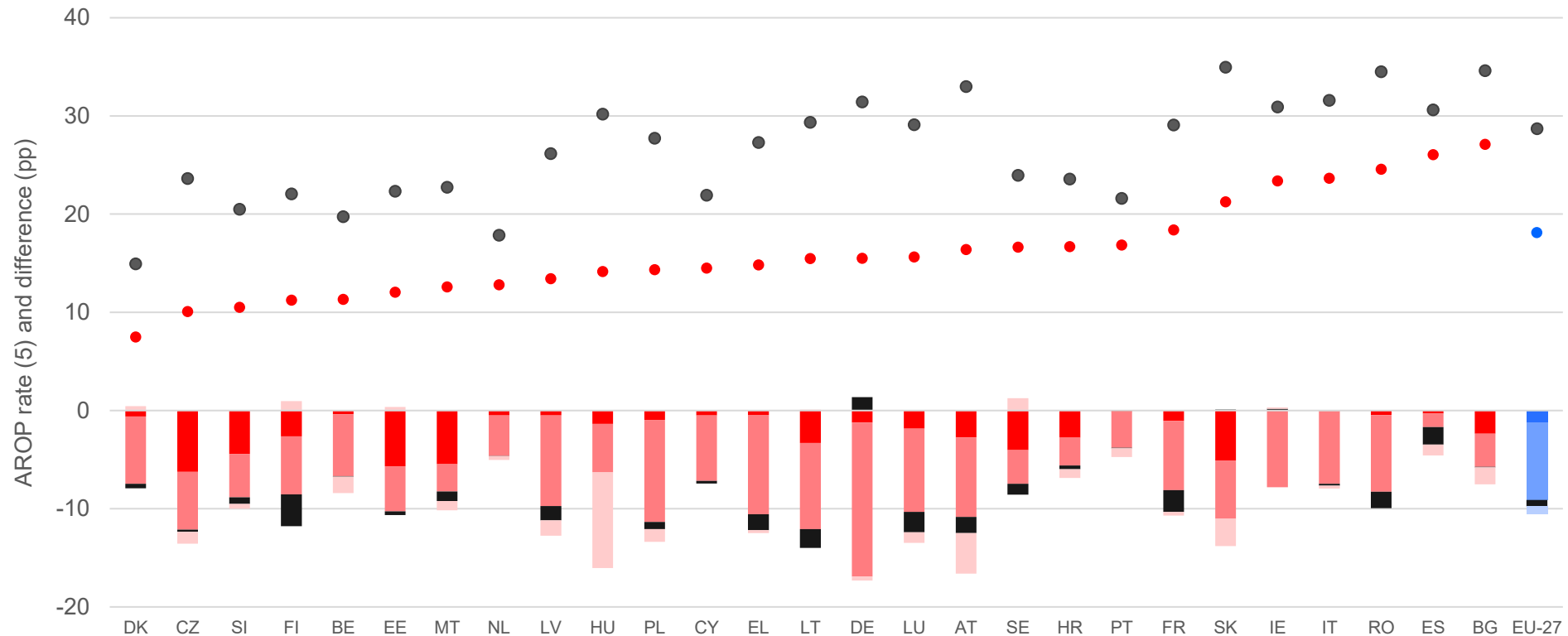


# We look at overall child poverty developments – e.g. level of ambition of national 2030 targets

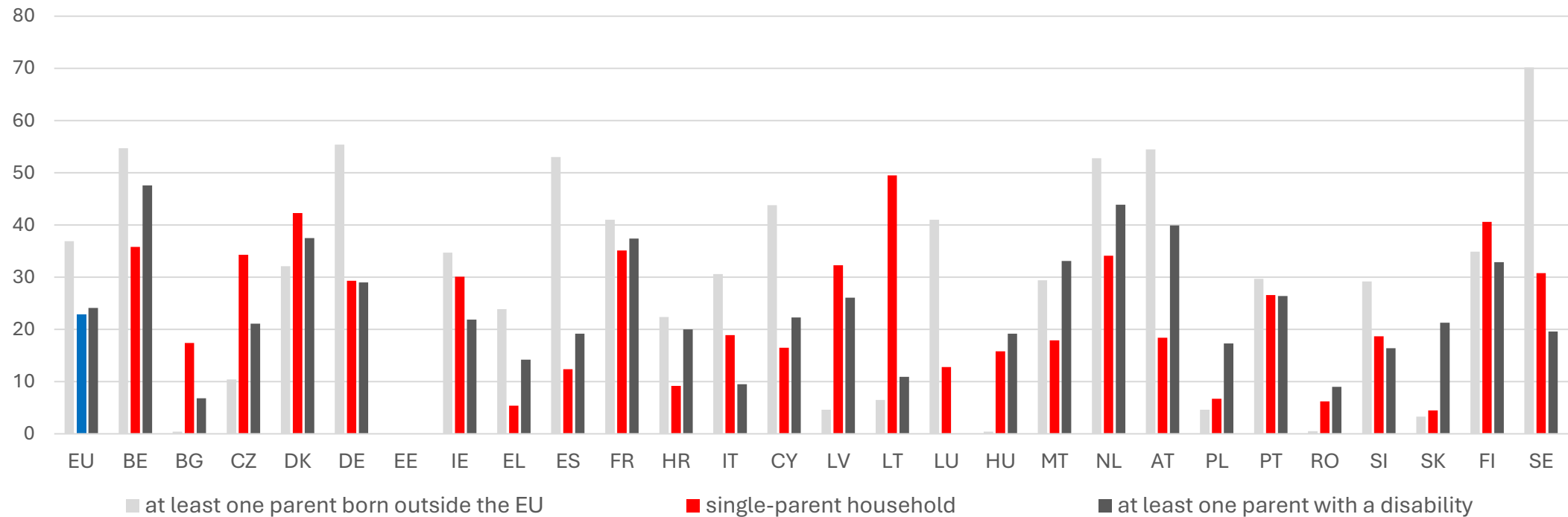


# ...or impact of in-cash benefits on child poverty rates (2022)

■ Birth benefits  
 ■ Child benefits  
 ■ Non-child benefits  
 ■ Child tax  
 ● Child AROP rate before cash support to children  
 ● Child AROP rate

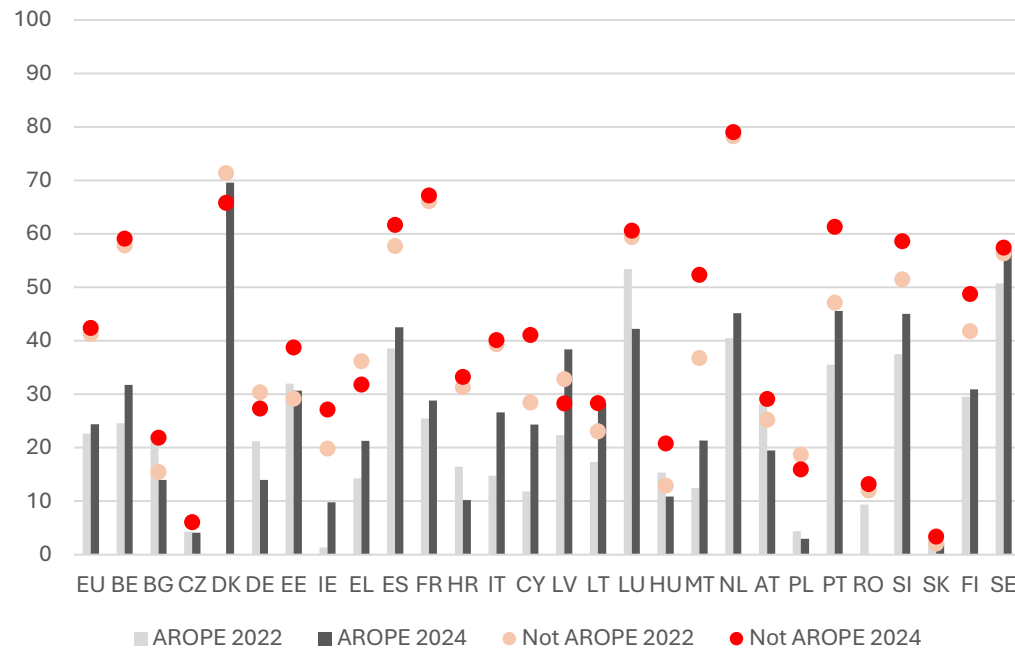


# ...and groups at a higher risk (2024)

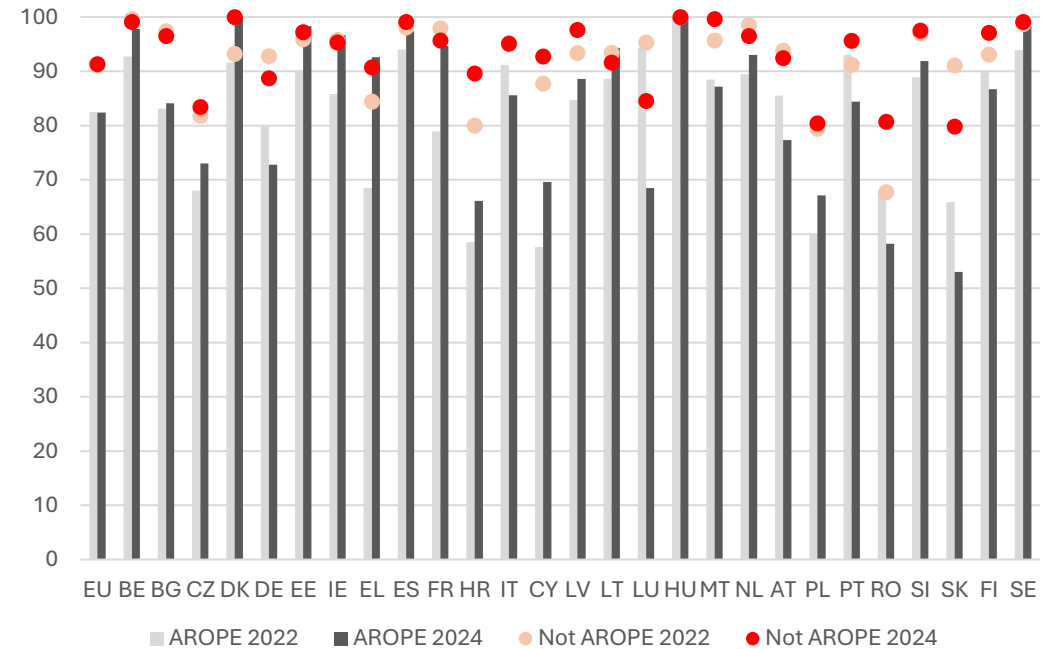


# ECEC participation rates

Under 3 years of age

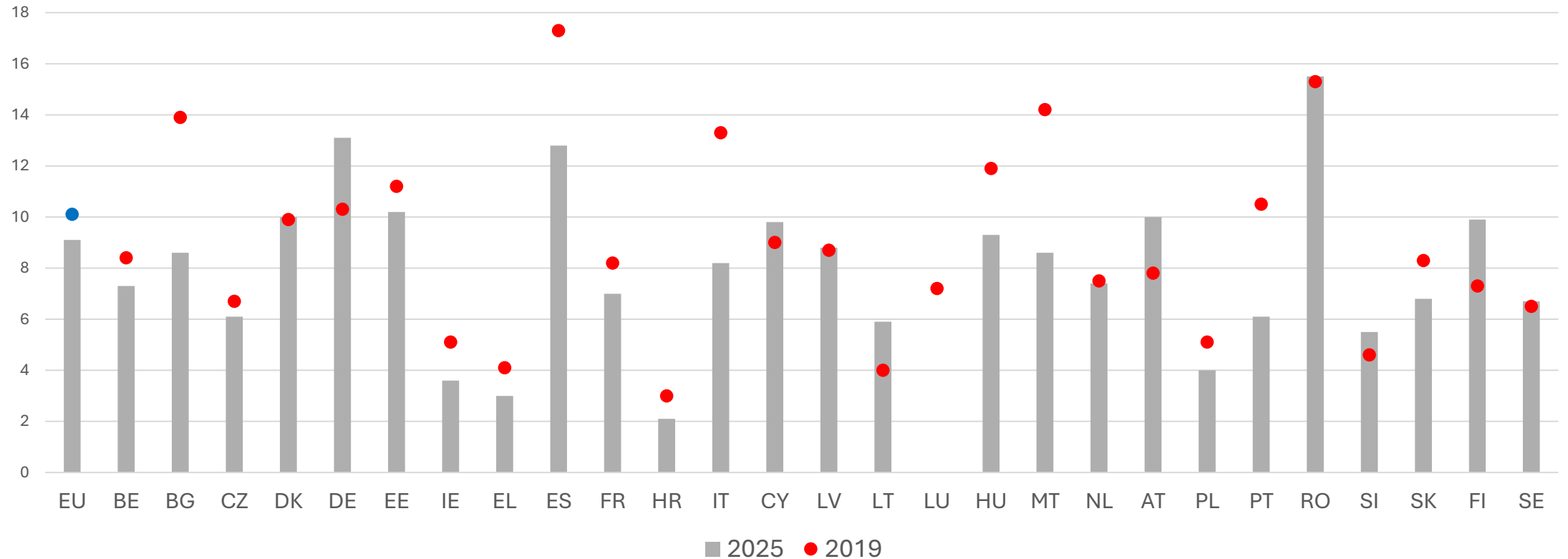


Aged 3 years to mandatory school age



	<b>Financial barriers</b> addressed (effectively free access for all children at risk of poverty or social exclusion), <b>children &lt; 3 y.o.</b>	<b>Non-financial barriers</b> addressed (no unmet demand, staff shortages nor geographical barriers), <b>children &lt; 3 y.o.</b>	Sufficient measures in place to support <b>inclusive education</b> and avoid segregated classes, <b>children &lt; 3 y.o.</b>	<b>Financial barriers</b> addressed (effectively free access for all children at risk of poverty or social exclusion), <b>children aged 3 y.o. to MSA</b>	<b>Non-financial barriers</b> addressed (no unmet demand, staff shortages nor geographical barriers), <b>children aged 3 y.o. to MSA</b>	Sufficient measures in place to support <b>inclusive education</b> and avoid segregated classes, <b>children aged 3 y.o. to MSA</b>
Austria						
Belgium						
Bulgaria						
Croatia			n/a			
Cyprus						
Czechia						
Estonia						
Denmark						
Finland						
France						
Germany						
Greece						
Hungary						
Ireland						
Italy						
Latvia						
Lithuania						
Luxembourg						
Malta						
Netherlands			n/a			
Poland						
Portugal						
Romania						
Slovakia						
Slovenia						
Spain						
Sweden						

# Shares of early leavers from education and training (2025 vs 2019)



# Education and school-based activities

	Sufficient measures to prevent and reduce <b>early school leaving</b>	Sufficient measures to support <b>inclusive education</b> and avoid segregated classes	<b>Free school materials</b> provided for children in need	<b>Free transport to schools</b> provided for children in need	<b>Inclusive access to school-based activities</b> ensured for children in need, including participation in school trips and sport, leisure and culture	<b>Framework for cooperation</b> to provide after school care and opportunities to participate in sport, leisure and culture
Austria						
Belgium						
Bulgaria						
Croatia						
Cyprus						
Czechia				n/a		
Estonia						
Denmark						
Finland						
France						
Germany						
Greece						
Hungary						
Ireland						
Italy						
Latvia						n/a
Lithuania						
Luxembourg						
Malta						
Netherlands						
Poland						n/a
Portugal						
Romania						
Slovakia						
Slovenia						
Spain						
Sweden						

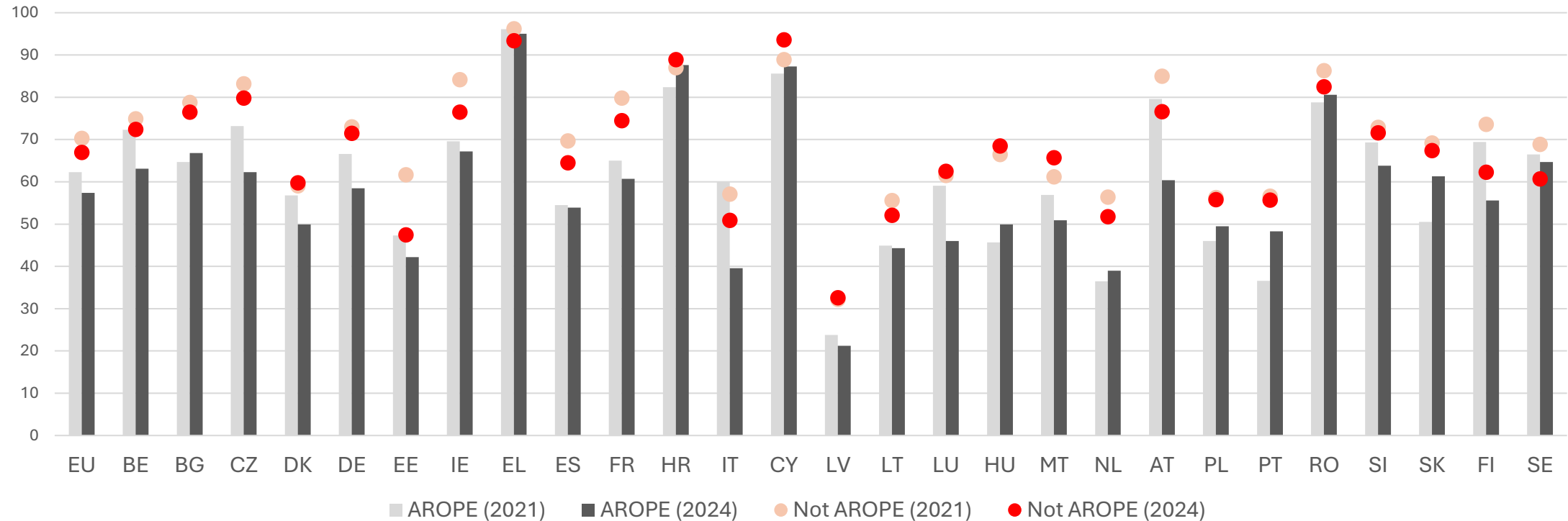


# Free school meals and healthy nutrition

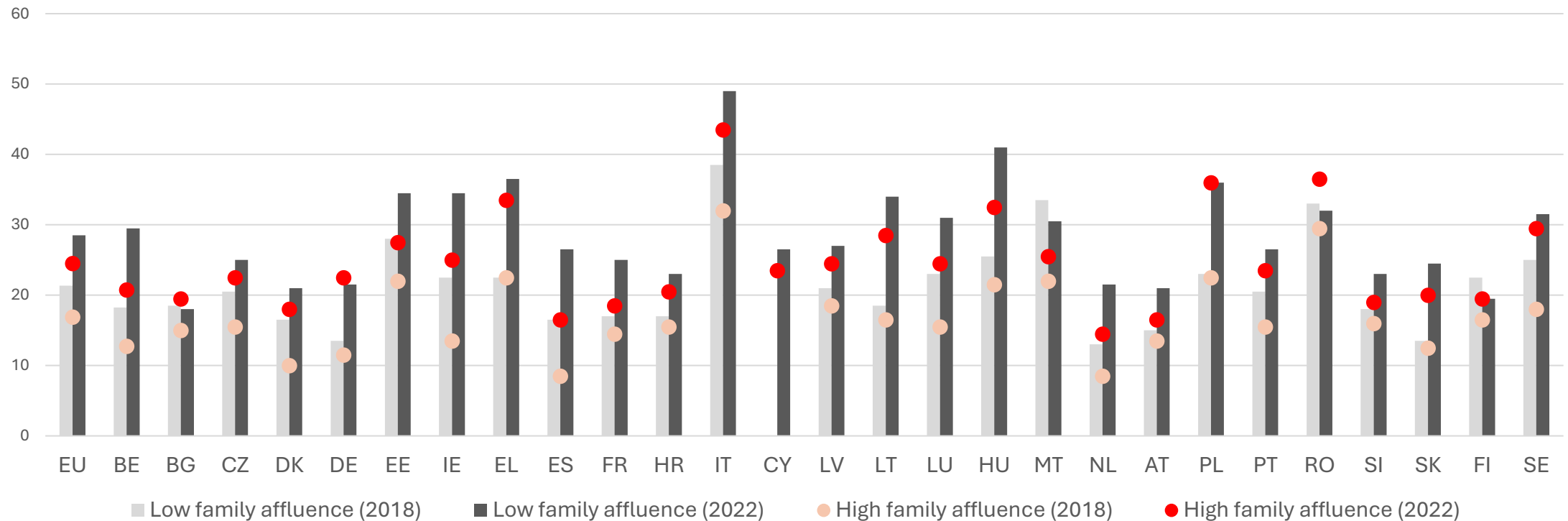
	Healthy meal provided for free to children in need each school day			Access to healthy nutrition outside of school supported for children in need	Limited advertisement and availability of unhealthy food
	Pre-school	Primary schools	Secondary schools		
Austria	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange
Belgium	Orange	Orange	Red	Yellow	Yellow
Bulgaria	Green	Orange	Red	Yellow	Yellow
Croatia	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Orange
Cyprus	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Green
Czechia	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
Estonia	Light Green	Green	Green	Light Green	Green
Denmark	Light Green	Yellow	Orange	Light Green	Yellow
Finland	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Light Green
France	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Light Green
Germany	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Greece	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Hungary	Green	Light Green	Orange	Light Green	Light Green
Ireland	Yellow	Green	Orange	Yellow	Light Green
Italy	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Orange
Latvia	Yellow	Light Green	Orange	Yellow	Green
Lithuania	Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Green
Luxembourg	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Green	Yellow
Malta	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Netherlands	Yellow	Light Green	Light Green	Orange	Yellow
Poland	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Portugal	Green	Light Green	Light Green	Yellow	Light Green
Romania	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Light Green
Slovakia	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Orange	Yellow
Slovenia	Green	Green	Light Green	Light Green	Green
Spain	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Sweden	Light Green	Green	Light Green	Yellow	Yellow



# Shares (%) of children (<16) with “very good” health (2024 vs 2021, AROPE vs not-AROPE)



# Shares (%) of children aged 13 who felt low more than once a week (2022 vs 2018, low vs high family affluence)



# Healthcare

	Sufficient measures to facilitate <b>early detection and treatment</b> of diseases and developmental problems	Ensuring that all children in need receive the set of <b>childhood vaccines recommended by the WHO</b>	Sufficient measures to facilitate early detection and treatment of <b>mental health</b> problems	Prescription <b>medicines</b> available at no cost for children in need	<b>Children with disabilities</b> provided with targeted rehabilitation and habilitation services	Adequate <b>health promotion</b> and disease prevention programmes <b>targeting children in need</b>
Austria	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow
Belgium	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Yellow
Bulgaria	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Yellow
Croatia	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Orange	Green
Cyprus	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green
Czechia	Green	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Green
Estonia	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow
Denmark	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Finland	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
France	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow
Germany	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow
Greece	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow
Hungary	Yellow	Green	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Orange
Ireland	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Italy	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange
Latvia	Yellow	Green	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Orange
Lithuania	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow
Luxembourg	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow
Malta	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green
Netherlands	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green
Poland	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Orange
Portugal	Green	Green	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Yellow
Romania	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Green
Slovakia	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Green
Slovenia	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Spain	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow
Sweden	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green



# Combatting homelessness and provision of adequate accommodation

	Prompt provision of adequate temporary accommodation and transfer to permanent housing for homeless families with children	Measures in place to prevent the risk of homelessness among families with children	Energy poverty of families with children addressed	Sufficient supply of public/social housing and priority of access given to families with children in need
Austria	Green	Green	Green	Green
Belgium	Orange	Yellow	Green	Yellow
Bulgaria	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Orange
Croatia	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Orange
Cyprus	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Czechia	Green	Orange	Green	Yellow
Estonia	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow
Denmark	Green	Green	Green	Green
Finland	Green	Green	Green	Green
France	Orange	Green	Yellow	Green
Germany	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Greece	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Orange
Hungary	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Orange
Ireland	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Orange
Italy	Orange	Green	Orange	Orange
Latvia	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Orange
Lithuania	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow
Luxembourg	Green	Green	Green	Yellow
Malta	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow
Netherlands	Green	Green	Orange	Green
Poland	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow
Portugal	Green	Orange	Orange	Yellow
Romania	Orange	Orange	Green	Orange
Slovakia	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Orange
Slovenia	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Spain	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Orange
Sweden	Green	Green	Green	Green



# Alternative care of good quality

	The best interests of the child as well as their overall situation and individual needs considered when placing them in alternative care	Measures to ensure the transition of children from institutional care to quality family-based care	Sufficient measures to support independent living and social integration of children leaving alternative care
Austria	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Belgium	Yellow	Orange	Orange
Bulgaria	Green	Yellow	Green
Croatia	Yellow	Orange	Orange
Cyprus	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Czechia	Yellow	Green	Green
Estonia	Green	Yellow	Green
Denmark	Green	Yellow	Yellow
Finland	Green	Orange	Yellow
France	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Germany	Green	Orange	Orange
Greece	Yellow	Orange	Yellow
Hungary	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Ireland	Green	Green	Yellow
Italy	Green	Orange	Yellow
Latvia	Green	Green	Green
Lithuania	Green	Green	Green
Luxembourg	Yellow	Orange	Green
Malta	Yellow	Green	Green
Netherlands	White	Orange	White
Poland	Yellow	Green	Orange
Portugal	Green	Yellow	Yellow
Romania	Yellow	Green	Green
Slovakia	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Slovenia	Green	Yellow	Yellow
Spain	Yellow	Orange	Yellow
Sweden	Green	Green	Green



# Identification of children in need, outreach, and involvement of stakeholders

	Identification of children in need	Adequate information and outreach measures implemented to ensure that all children in need benefit	Involvement of stakeholders throughout the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the action plan
Austria	Yellow	Yellow	Light Green
Belgium	Yellow	Orange	Yellow
Bulgaria	Light Green	Yellow	Dark Green
Croatia	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Cyprus	Yellow	Yellow	Light Green
Czechia	Light Green	Yellow	Yellow
Estonia	Dark Green	Light Green	Dark Green
Denmark	Light Green	Dark Green	Yellow
Finland	Yellow	Light Green	Light Green
France	Light Green	Yellow	Light Green
Germany	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green
Greece	Light Green	Light Green	Dark Green
Hungary	Light Green	Yellow	Yellow
Ireland	Light Green	Yellow	Light Green
Italy	Light Green	Light Green	Dark Green
Latvia	Yellow	Orange	Yellow
Lithuania	Light Green	Yellow	Dark Green
Luxembourg	Dark Green	Light Green	Light Green
Malta	Yellow	Light Green	Dark Green
Netherlands	Light Green	n/a	Light Green
Poland	Yellow	Orange	Orange
Portugal	Light Green	Yellow	Light Green
Romania	Light Green	Light Green	Yellow
Slovakia	Yellow	Light Green	Dark Green
Slovenia	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green
Spain	Yellow	Yellow	Light Green
Sweden	Light Green	Yellow	Dark Green



# Public consultations

## Children Participation Platform

- Schools seen as central not only for learning
- High health consciousness
- Mental health a growing concern
- Issue of quality of school meals
- Timeliness of access stressed (applies esp. to healthcare)
- Stronger action against bullying requested
- More participation expected

## Call for Evidence

- No calls for adding anything to the ECG Recommendation – strengthening through better implementation
- Content: more to be done on extracurricular activities, also during holidays
- Governance: better coordination between ministries, greater stakeholder involvement, link child poverty targets to the European Semester
- The Portuguese decentralised governance of ECG well visible in the responses pool



# Thank you



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