

# European Child Guarantee



## European Child Guarantee Newsletter – No. 10

*Dear reader,*

*Welcome to the tenth edition of our newsletter on the European Child Guarantee! As 2026 marks five years since the adoption of the Recommendation establishing the European Child Guarantee, its implementation can no longer be seen as being in an early phase—it is now in full swing.*

*Over the past five years, and thanks to your contributions, substantial progress has been made in improving access to key services for children in need. Still, important, country-specific gaps remain and progress towards the 2030 poverty reduction targets of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan has been slower than hoped. This is why our commitment and joint work continue.*

*Wishing you an interesting read, European Child Guarantee Team*

## News

**[Results of the survey on European Child Guarantee among children](#)**

Between 17 October and 8 December 2025, children from across the EU took part in an online survey to express their views on the [European Child Guarantee](#). The survey received over 41 thousand replies from all Member States and was run via the [EU Children's Participation Platform](#) as part of Commission's [commitment to tackling poverty and supporting social inclusion](#) across Europe.



While many children recognise that services exist, access is not always experienced equally, and equal rights do not always translate into equal chances in everyday life.

How children describe poverty and social inclusion:

- Poverty limits children's participation in everyday activities and creates shame and exclusion, even where services exist
- Children describe discrimination linked to disability, ethnicity, migration, gender, and other differences
- Children said that passive or inconsistent adult responses undermine their safety and sense of belonging
- Trusted adults, mental health support, and environments where children are listened to were described as being central to feeling included

What children want and need:

- When receiving support, to be treated with respect, feel safe, have their privacy protected, and not be singled out
- Affordable, reduced or subsidised costs so that participation in school activities, and access to healthcare, housing and food do not only depend on family income
- Support that is practical, timely and consistent, especially for children in poverty, with disabilities, from minority backgrounds, migrant children, and young people leaving care
- To be listened to in decisions that affect their lives in schools, communities, and services – in meaningful and inclusive ways that lead to visible change.

Children also expressed their views on particular areas covered by the Child Guarantee (education, healthcare, school meals and healthy nutrition and housing).

Next steps:

- The full report from the survey will be available in the next weeks
- There will also be a child-friendly version of the results
- The input provided by children will be used to inform the European Child Guarantee and the Anti-poverty Strategy

- The findings can be also used by Child Guarantee Coordinators to improve their national action plans for ECG implementation.

More information [here](#).

### **Update of the EU framework for monitoring the implementation of the European Child Guarantee**

Through statistical indicators, the EU-level [monitoring framework](#) tracks the progress of Member States in delivering on the European Child Guarantee.

The latest update of the framework endorsed by the Indicators' Sub-Group of the Social Protection Committee was recently published on its website. It features more recent data for 15 indicators. Among others such update shows:

- That the share of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) in the EU slightly decreased from 24.8% in 2023 to 24.2% in 2024, representing 19.5 million children. This 0.6 percentage point (pp) decline reflects a slight improvement, though rates remain significantly higher than those for adults.
- Progress in lowering some barriers hindering children in need's access to some services covered by the ECG, such as extracurricular activities. As an illustration, the share of children AROPE unable to participate in school trips and school events due to financial reasons decreased from 18.2% in 2022 to 13.9% in 2024 on average in the EU.
- The share of children AROPE reporting very good health was reduced by 5 pp since 2022, reaching 57.4% in 2024, compared to 67% of children not AROPE.

To ensure that the framework's data remain up to date, the [Indicators' Sub-Group](#) will keep updating the framework in the months to come.

### **European Parliament's Working Group discussed how to make the Child Guarantee more effective**

On 27 January, the European Parliament's Working Group on the European Child Guarantee met to discuss integrated policy solutions to improve children's well-being and targeted investments aimed at reducing regional inequalities for children in need.

The Cyprus Presidency outlined its Council priorities on the Child Guarantee and children's well-being, highlighting national governance arrangements and examples of good practice that can support successful implementation.

Representatives from Early Childhood Ireland and COFACE Families Europe emphasised the importance of child-centred, integrated approaches spanning social, education, health and family policies, with a strong focus on early childhood and prevention.

Meanwhile, contributions from Caritas Europa and the European Social Network addressed how EU and national funding streams can be better aligned to strengthen

Child Guarantee services—particularly in disadvantaged, rural and remote regions. More information about the working group [here](#).

### **Meeting of Child Guarantee Coordinators on strengthening of the European Child Guarantee, 10 February**

The 24th meeting of the Child Guarantee Coordinators, held on 10 February, discussed options to strengthen the implementation of the European Child Guarantee ahead of the Commission's planned initiative in 2026. It was noted that, while substantial progress has been made in improving access to key services for children in need, no Member State is yet fully compliant across all areas and progress towards the 2030 child poverty reduction targets needs to be strengthened. Coordinators emphasised the importance of reinforcing governance, improving data collection and ensuring better coordination across national, regional and local levels to address persistent gaps in services provision.

The meeting also presented the results of an EU-wide online consultation with children, highlighting priorities such as safer school environments, access to free educational resources, improved mental health support and better availability of healthy meals and adequate housing.

Member States shared views on future priorities, calling for stronger peer learning, clearer guidance on the use of EU funds, and enhanced alignment with broader anti-poverty strategies.

[Read more](#)

### **Eurochild 2025 flagship report on children in need across Europe**

The *Unequal Childhoods: Rights on paper should be rights in practice*, is Eurochild's flagship report assessing children's rights and child poverty across Europe, highlighting that while laws exist, implementation fails many, especially concerning poverty, mental health, digital safety, and child protection. It emphasizes the gap between policy and reality, showing persistent risk of poverty among children (affecting nearly 1 child in 4), inadequate mental health services, and challenges in accessing education, particularly for vulnerable groups. All this demands stronger enforcement of the European Child Guarantee. Among Eurochild's policy recommendations is to: Uphold the rights of all children and counter anti-rights movements; Ensure integrated child protection systems and strengthen families; Uphold children's rights in the digital environment; Eradicate child poverty and social exclusion; Strengthen the European Child Guarantee; Ensure adequate housing for all children; Anchor child-related priorities in the European Semester to invest in children post-2027; Support children's rights in the Enlargement Countries.

## Increasing participation in early childhood education and care in Europe

European countries have made significant commitments to expand early childhood education and care (ECEC) as a foundation for lifelong learning and social inclusion. However, gaps persist in the participation of children from vulnerable groups. These include those in poverty, Roma and migrant children, children with disabilities, and others at risk of social exclusion, who are less likely to attend ECEC and thus miss out on its benefits. The present report examines effective measures to increase the participation of vulnerable children in ECEC and includes a specific focus on children under 3 years of age. [Read more here.](#)

## Foundational challenges: The housing struggles of Europe's youth

Eurofound published a [research report](#), which examines the housing situation in the European Union with a particular focus on young people, set against a context of an ongoing affordability crisis that affects all age groups but is especially acute for younger cohorts. The study finds that young adults (typically aged 18-39) face greater housing insecurity, higher cost burdens, and poorer housing quality than older age groups, largely due to lower incomes, insecure employment, and strong demand in urban areas where housing is least affordable.

Some of the key messages:

- “Young adults aged 18–39 are disproportionately affected by Europe’s current unaffordable housing crisis, as their lower incomes or insecure employment mean they are less able to absorb rising costs. They also tend to seek accommodation in urban areas, where the gap between demand and supply is most acute.”
- “Young people are more likely than older cohorts to experience housing insecurity, be overburdened with housing costs and live in poorer quality dwellings.”
- “While a wide range of policies are being implemented across the EU to address the crisis of housing affordability, the most promising solutions in tight housing markets focus on increasing the supply of affordable housing.”

Read the report [here](#).

## 2025 Social Protection Committee annual report published



The [2025 Annual Report of the Social Protection Committee](#) reports a general improvement in 2024 in the social situation in the EU, with a reduction of just over 1 million in the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion and of 0.5 million for children. Nevertheless, progress towards the 2030

poverty reduction target remains limited.

The report indicates that economic growth in the EU picked up in 2024, with continued expansion in employment and stable low unemployment, while inflation was generally more subdued than in previous years. Disposable household income grew relatively strongly, with household purchasing power showing further signs of recovery and a decline in the share of people in the EU reporting financial distress, though the latter remains high in historical terms.

### **From Crisis to Action – A call for an integrated EU Anti-Poverty Strategy led by cities**



Rising living costs are deepening inequalities in cities across Europe, particularly among single parents, children, migrants, people with disabilities, and ethnic minorities.

[Eurocities' new paper, "From crisis to action: A call for an integrated EU Anti-Poverty Strategy led by cities"](#), presents 22 concrete recommendations for a people-centred, intersectional EU approach:

- Prevent poverty by addressing its root causes, including discrimination, child poverty, housing, and income security
- Support pathways out of poverty through access to work, skills, housing, and mobility
- Address the long-term impacts of poverty on health, civic involvement, and culture.

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