Resolution on the European Child Guarantee

2021/2605(RSP) - 29/04/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament resolution adopted by 510 votes to 42, with 139 abstentions, a resolution on the European Child Guarantee.

All children have the right to protection from poverty, which clearly means there is a need for preventive policies. Parliament and European civil society have called for the creation of a Child Guarantee to ensure that each child living in poverty has effective and free access to quality and free healthcare, education, early childhood education and care, and effective access to decent housing and adequate nutrition.

In 2019, 22.2 % of children in the EU – almost 18 million children – were at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this situation putting millions of children and families in an even more precarious socio-economic situation.

The Child Guarantee is one of the flagship social policy initiatives listed in Commission's political guidelines and the Commission Work Programme 2021 and must be further boosted in the future by ambitious policies and targets.

Parliament welcomed the Commission proposal for a Council recommendation establishing the Child Guarantee and called on the Council to swiftly adopt the proposal. It also called on the Council and the Member States to be ambitious in the full and rapid adoption of the recommendation and in its implementation.

Member States are called on to:

- mainstream the European Child Guarantee across all policy sectors;

- allocate at least 5 % of the ESF+ resources under shared management to supporting activities under the European Child Guarantee;

- ensure a coordinated approach in the programming and implementation of EU funds, and to speed up their implementation and dedicate all possible national resources, complemented by EU funds such as the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe (React-EU), the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), InvestEU, Erasmus+, the Asylum and Migration Fund (AMF) and EU4Health;

- specifically task a public authority, for example a children's commissioner or ombudsman, with measuring the effects on children of national and regional legislation and of the national measures to implement the Child Guarantee, as well as generally promoting children's rights in public policy;

- urgently address learning disruptions and educational inequalities caused by the COVID-19 crisis, both to enable children to learn remotely as swiftly as possible and to propose long-term solutions to structural inequalities;

- safeguard children's right to adequate housing, by providing related support to parents having difficulties with maintaining or accessing housing so that they can remain with their children, with a particular focus on young adults exiting child welfare institutions;

- prioritise the provision of permanent housing to homeless children and their families, and to include housing solutions for children experiencing homelessness and severe housing exclusion in their national Child Guarantee action plans;

- strengthen efforts to prevent harm from coming to children and to protect them from all forms of violence by developing strategies to identify and prioritise children at risk for prevention and response interventions;

- work out specific strategies to protect children from online sexual abuse and exploitation, since in isolation children spend more time online which increases the risk of their exposure to online abuse, including child pornography and online bullying.

Lastly, the resolution called on the Commission to examine the possibility of establishing a European Authority for Children to support and monitor Member States' implementation of the recommendation, coordinate national work, ensure the exchange of good practices and innovative solutions, and streamline reporting and recommendations. Parliament considered that the Child Guarantee should become a permanent instrument to prevent and tackle child poverty in a structural manner in the EU.