

EN
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Answer given by Mr Mimica
on behalf of the European Commission
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The Commission shares the Honourable Member's concerns about the situation of children living in institutions in Member States and outside the EU.

The 2017 European Forum on the Rights of the child was dedicated, among others, to children living in institutions. The outcome of the Forum suggested that, although in some Member States progress has been achieved, in others the challenges remain considerable. The Commission provides financial support for the transition from institutional care to community and family based services via the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund programmes.

Beyond the programmes, the Commission assists Member States by providing guidance, organising seminars and conferences also in Member States¹, and it supports non-governmental organisations and projects to promote de-institutionalisation.

Through its external action, the EU also prioritises the transition from institutional to community-based care for children. The EU launched a call for proposals in 2018 (budget EUR 13 million) on "Quality alternative care for children and de-institutionalisation". It aimed at enabling governments to take control of quality alternative care provision on their territory, engaging for a proper regulation, inspection and supervision of alternative care provisions, notably of informal and unregistered care systems. It also aimed at raising awareness at various levels (citizens, authorities, civil society organisations, faith-based organisations, fundraisers) on harmful and unsuitable forms of alternative care for children and associated practices.

The 2017 EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child² underline the importance of developing alternative care for children and providing them with appropriate support to participate in community life and to access mainstream services. In its proposal for a regulation establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument³, the Commission emphasised as a priority the promotion of initiatives to build stronger child protection systems in third countries, including by promoting the transition from institutional to community-based care for children.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/themes/social-inclusion/desinsti/

² https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu_guidelines_rights_of_child_0.pdf

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1540392552799&uri=CELEX%3A52018PC0460>