

Child Guarantee National Action Plans

Targets, EU funding and governance

KEY FACTS

The European Child Guarantee, adopted on 14 June 2021, aims to ensure that every child in Europe at risk of poverty or social exclusion has access to the following key services: 1) early childhood education and care, 2) education (including school-based activities), 3) healthcare, 4) nutrition, 5) housing.

Member States were required to submit national action plans for the implementation of the Child Guarantee by 15 March 2022. By mid-October 2022, 15 plans had been submitted.

The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan set a 2030 target of reducing by 15 million the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, including at least 5 million children.

The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) includes earmarking of 5% for action to tackle child poverty for Member States with child poverty rates above the EU average.

The European Child Guarantee¹ is the first EU-level policy instrument which aims to address disadvantage and exclusion in childhood, and thus pre-empt adverse effects in adult life. The Child Guarantee (CG) puts into practice Principle 11 of the EPSR (European Pillar on Social Rights), on childcare and support for children. The CG aims to combat child poverty, foster equal opportunities and prevent and combat social exclusion by guaranteeing access for children in need to a set of key services: early childhood education and care (ECEC), education and out-of-school activities, housing, healthcare and healthy nutrition. National action plans (NAPs) set out how Member States propose to implement the plans. By mid-October 2022, 15 Member States - Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Spain and Sweden - had submitted their NAPs.

The aim of this briefing is to present some key information from a selected number of national action plans with respect to overall poverty targets, the categories of children in need identified at national level, the main targets and objectives for the key services, and how the NAPs plan to use EU funding. The briefing also gives an overview of the institutional cooperation and consultation processes at national level. Given the wide scope of the CG, this briefing cannot seek to be comprehensive. Therefore, the briefing will focus on the six Member States subject to the 5% ESF+ earmarking requirement that have submitted their plans - Croatia, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg and Spain.

It should be noted that there have been developments since March 2022 which are not always reflected in the plans, such as the approval to date of [22 Partnership Agreements \(PAs\) on EU funding](#)², the presentation of national poverty targets to contribute to the EPSR headline goal, and above all, changes in the general



political context (the war in Ukraine and the cost-of-living and energy crises). UNICEF research shows a 19% increase in child poverty in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region which includes Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania³. Despite government measures to cushion the impact⁴, a recent YouGov poll showed that 8 in 10 people are already cutting back on spending and widespread dissatisfaction with how governments in Europe are handling the crisis⁵.

EU funding for the Child Guarantee

The main funding instrument, the ESF+, will invest in three areas, one of which encompasses social inclusion, health for people in vulnerable situations, and combatting poverty, in particular child poverty, and homelessness. The ESF+ will also support Member States in achieving the 2030 EU headline targets set by the [EPSR Action Plan](#). On 16 June 2022, Member States presented their [national targets](#) on poverty⁶.

The ESF+ regulation⁷ requires Member States with child poverty rates higher than the EU average (23.4% AROPE 2017 – 2019) to allocate at least 5% of their ESF+ resources to tackle child poverty. The countries concerned, based on current data, are Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Romania, and Spain. Other Member States should allocate ‘an appropriate amount’. It should be noted that the approach to child poverty in the ESF+ is broader than the scope of the CG.

In addition to ESF+ funding, other sources of EU funding are available to meet the objectives of the CG. The [European Regional Development Fund \(ERDF\)](#) and [InvestEU](#) can fund infrastructure, such as social housing and early childhood education and care facilities. Under the [NextGenerationEU](#) instrument, REACT-EU funding can top up existing cohesion funding for youth employment measures, healthcare systems and measures to help people fleeing from Ukraine, while Pillar 6 of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) is dedicated to funding reforms, investment and policies for the next generation, children and the youth, including ECEC. The [Technical Support Instrument \(TSI\)](#) can support Member States in implementing reforms required for the CG. The [Erasmus Plus programme](#) can be used to fund training of ECEC staff. The [EU school fruit, vegetables and milk scheme](#) funded by the Common Agricultural Policy allows nutritious food to be distributed free of charge to school children. The [Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund \(AMIF\)](#) provides funding for reception facilities and integration measures as well as support and services, particularly for vulnerable groups. The [ESF+ Transnational cooperation platform](#) has produced a [mini-toolkit](#) with guidance on how to use the ESF+ to combat child poverty and social exclusion. The financial allocations of 2021-2027 cohesion programmes will be made public on the [Cohesion Data platform](#), along with [REACT-EU](#) funding. Information on RRF funding is available through the [Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard](#).

National Action Plans

Turning to the national plans, before looking at the national plans by key service, table 1 first presents some general information on categories of children in need, the poverty targets set in the NAPs and in relation to the EPSR headline goal, and ESF+ earmarking. The CG recommendation asks Member States to “identify children in need and take into account, wherever appropriate, specific disadvantages experienced, in particular, by (a) homeless children or children experiencing severe housing deprivation, (b) children with disabilities; (c) children with mental health issues, (d) children with a migrant background or minority ethnic origin, particularly Roma, (e) children in alternative, especially institutional, care, and (f) children in precarious family situations”. The groups identified in the table below reflect the different national situations - Croatia and Greece for example include children in rural, remote and underdeveloped areas, in Ireland the focus is on the Traveller ethnic minority, and in Luxembourg children of foreign parents (EU and non-EU) are identified as a particular concern.

Many plans (EL, ES, IT but also BE, FI and FR) flag up a lack of good data to enable an accurate assessment of target groups, particularly data for these groups broken down by key service.

Table 1: NAPs- Identifying children in need, poverty targets and ESF+ earmarking.

| MS | Categories of children in need identified | Main poverty targets | Planned ESF+ earmarking for CG ⁸ |
|----|---|--|--|
| EL | Children AROPE, especially based on family composition (single-parent and large families) / living in non-urban, remote, rural and mountain areas / Migrant children and children of minority or ethnic origin (Roma children) / Children with disabilities / Children in institutional care. | <i>Headline goal: reduce AROPE by 860,000.</i> NAP targets: Children AROPE ⁹ 32% (2021) → 24.2% (2030). Children AROP ¹⁰ 23.7% (2021 → 18.5% (2030). Median-poverty risk gap for children 27.1% (2021) → 22% (2030). SMD (Severe Material Deprivation) rate children 19% (2020) → 8.1% (2030). Children in LWI (Low Work Intensity) households 7.7% (2020) → 7.2% (2030). Roma children AROP 99% (2016) → < 80% (2030). | 8% of ESF+ allocated to tackling child poverty. |
| ES | Children AROPE/ with disabilities / with a migrant background / of Roma ethnicity / in the care system / foreign nationals without family members / living in severe housing deprivation / with parents in irregular administrative status / in conflict with the law / asylum-seekers, refugees and applicants for temporary protection (Ukraine) / victims of trafficking or sexual exploitation / in single-parent households. | <i>Headline goal: reduce AROPE by 2,815, 000.</i> NAP targets: Children in AROPE rate 30.3% (2019) - cut by 3.4 p.p. by 2025 and by 8.6 p.p. by 2030. Capacity to reduce severe child poverty after public transfers 28.8% (2020) to 60% in 2030. | 5% of ESF+ allocated to tackling child poverty. PA not yet approved. |
| HR | Roma children / beneficiaries of GMB (minimum income allowance) / in underdeveloped, esp. rural, areas / with developmental disabilities / with a migrant background (unaccompanied minors, child refugees/asylum-seekers / in alternative care / displaced children, including from Ukraine / whose parents are imprisoned. | <i>Headline goal: reduce AROPE by 298,000.</i> NAP targets: Reduce rate of children at risk of SMD from 5.7% to 4% and children AROP from 17.1% to 14.8% by 2027. | 12.2% of ESF+ allocated to tackling child poverty. |
| IE | Children in consistent poverty/ AROP / experiencing deprivation / living in households with substance abuse or mental illness / of teenage mothers / of imprisoned parents / in housing need / living in emergency accommodation / with disabilities / with mental health issues / Traveller children / with a migrant background. | <i>Headline goal: reduce AROPE by 90,000.</i> The NAP does not refer to a specific poverty reduction target for children. A new national poverty target is being developed. Ireland's Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-25- aims to reduce the percentage of the population in consistent poverty to <2%.. | 12%.of ESF+ allocated to tackling child poverty. |
| IT | Children AROPE, <u>with specific action for</u> : children displaced by the war in Ukraine / homeless or in severe housing deprivation / with disabilities / with mental health problems / with a migrant or ethnic minority background, in particular Roma / in alternative particularly institutional care / in unstable family situations. | <i>Headline goal: reduce AROPE by 3,200,000.</i> The NAP does not refer to a specific poverty reduction target for children. | 5% of ESF+ to be allocated to tackling child poverty. |
| LU | Children AROPE / in single parent families or in families with >3 kids / of non-national origin/ in low work intensity (LWI) households / in institutional care / with disabilities/ with mental health problems / in housing need. | <i>Headline goal: reduce AROPE by 4,000.</i> NAP targets: Cut AROPE from 20.1% in 2019 to 17.1% in 2030. (-4,000 people). A related target for children is to be specified. | 6% of ESF+ allocated to tackling child poverty. PA not yet approved. |

Source: Child Guarantee national action plans; Partnership agreements on EU Funds 2021-27.

Early childhood education and care (ECEC), Education and school -based activities

The Child Guarantee aims to ensure that every child in need has effective and free access to high quality early childhood education and care, education and school-based activities and at least one healthy meal each school day. The national plans should not only address physical infrastructure and service provision but should also tackle the hidden costs of these services to families on low incomes and the root causes of low take-up. In implementing the CG, the Member States should also take into account the recent proposal for a [Council recommendation](#) on revising the Barcelona targets on childcare - by 2030 at least 50% of children below the age of 3, and 96% of children between the age of 3 and the starting age for compulsory primary education should be in ECEC. The Commission notes in the proposal that the original Barcelona targets were reached on average at EU level, but that some Member States are significantly lagging behind, and differences persist in particular for children from lower income households¹¹.

Table 2 - NAP targets and EU funding - ECEC and Education

| MS | Main targets and objectives | EU funding |
|----|--|--|
| EL | <p>Targets 2030:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AROPE children aged < 3 in formal ECEC 31.65% in 2019 → 48%. • AROPE age 3 to compulsory school age 95.7% in 2019 → 96%. • Roma children over 3 in formal ECEC 69% in 2016 → 75%. • Disadvantaged pupils with high PISA¹² scores 19.5% (2018) → 46.6.¹³ • 15-year-olds with low performance (PISA) 19.9% (2018) → <15% • PISA score 15-year-olds with low socio-economic status - >525.62. • Roma children of compulsory education age enrolled in education, members of households, 5-17 years old, 69% (2016) → 75%. • Roma experiencing discrimination in the last 5 years, at school (as parent or pupil), respondents 16(+), 20% (2016) → 15%. • Roma children, 4 years old to compulsory primary age in ECEC, members of households, 28% (2016) → 35%. • Child refugees and migrants enrolled in formal education, 95% (2022) → 100%. | <p>ESF+ 2021-27, including ESF+ Regional programmes will be used to fund ECEC places, extracurricular activities, inclusive education for refugee, migrant, and Roma children, children with disabilities or/and special educational needs, and VET (Vocational education and training) for vulnerable social groups.</p> <p>RRF funding for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New, integrated ECEC curriculum for 3 months to 4 years; • New early care facilities in existing facilities for infants and toddlers from 2 months to 2.5 years; • Center of Creative Activities for Children focused on STEM (Science technology, engineering, maths); • Early intervention for people with disabilities and integration of people with autism spectrum disorders; and • Technical Support for "Reform of the Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) framework for children with disabilities". |
| ES | <p>Targets 2030:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolment rate at 1 year- 55 %. Enrolment rate at age 2 - 85 %. • School enrolment 0-3 years of the first income quintile: 50 %. • Effective access to early care services for all children 0 -6 years within maximum 45 days from the request, regardless of the Autonomous Community in which they are located. • Lower rate of early leavers from education and training to 9%. • 15 % reduction in share of 15-year-olds (ISEC¹⁴ first quarter) underperforming in reading, mathematics and science. • Significant reduction in the rate of exclusion at national level and by Autonomous Community; Cities of Ceuta and Melilla. • Halve the gap in internet use for schoolwork between vulnerable children and children in general. | <p>ESF+ and other EU funding will be defined in the course of 2022, as the content of the national programme and the regional programmes of each Autonomous Community and Autonomous City are negotiated with the European Commission.</p> <p>The RRF will fund modernisation and digitalisation of the education system, including early education aged 0-3, the National Digital Skills Plan and VET promotion.</p> |

| MS | Main targets and objectives | EU funding |
|----|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools provide portable devices with connectivity to all pupils without a device and internet access at home. | |
| HR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality ECEC for all kids from age 3 by 2030. Better budgetary and legislative framework for regionally balanced approach to affordable and quality ECEC. Extra support mechanisms in education system and funding in ECEC for children at risk to address 'hidden costs'. Affordable and free primary and secondary education for children AROP. Promote inclusive educational practices. | <p>RRF funding for ECEC infrastructure investments.</p> <p>ESF+ funding for extracurricular classes and activities for children displaced from Ukraine.</p> <p>Funding for many other measures is being finalised.</p> |
| IE | <p>Main objectives in ongoing national programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Double investment in Early Learning and Care (ELC) and School Aged Care (SAC) to at least €1bn by 2028 and bring in new funding model from 2022. From September 2022, the Universal Subsidy under the National Childcare scheme- extended to age 15. Promoting inclusion of children with disabilities in ECEC. Extra €200m under the National Development Plan for digital inclusion. All primary schools to have high-speed broadband connectivity by end 2022/early 2023. Extra 10% allocation under new Digital Strategy for schools in disadvantaged communities (DEIS programme). Tackle educational disadvantage and improve school completion rates and educational attainment of Travellers and Roma. | <p>Measures will be funded mainly from national, not EU funding, though potential EU funding will be explored for future initiatives.</p> <p>No information is provided on the use of RRF funding.</p> |
| IT | <p>Targets 2030:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase supply of full-time places in childcare services to 50% coverage as a national average, and in pre-schools to 100% by 2030, by gradually reducing the financial contribution from families and extending the free-of-charge categories. Free of charge ECEC for all children within the ISEE¹⁵ band of €26,000. Southern regions, lower dropout rate from 16.5% to the national average of 13%, and reduce national average towards European average of 9%. Increase the percentage of schools accessible to students with motor disabilities (currently 34%) through priority resources for regions with lower coverage. | <p>ESF+ and ERDF: ECEC, skills measures, COVID resilience (socialisation) measures in education, tackling school drop-out; school meals, inclusion in schools.</p> <p>AMIF: inclusion of young people with a migrant background in schools.</p> <p>RRF- 2.4% of the total resources planned in NRRP. (€4.6 billion) for ECEC - creation of 228,000 new places, to more than double public coverage for 0-3 years.</p> <p>RRF also for NEETs; building new school buildings, extending full-time education and school canteen service, sports infrastructure in schools; digital transformation and wireless networks in schools, projects on educational poverty in southern Italy.</p> |
| LU | <p>The NAP provides a comprehensive description of existing measures, including a list of 11 ongoing measures relating to ECEC and education: childcare vouchers, free school books, free school meals, support for children who do not speak French and for children newly arrived in the country.</p> | <p>Two projects will be launched under the European Child Guarantee to integrate children newly arrived in the country into the school system. The type of EU funding is not specified.</p> |

Source: Child Guarantee National Action Plans.

Housing

The Child Guarantee aims to ensure effective access to adequate housing. A lack of adequate housing can affect a child's physical and mental health and lead to "accidents, low educational outcomes, and a lack of general well-being"¹⁶. The most recent Commission report on Employment and Social Developments in Europe¹⁷ highlights the inflation of house prices and related costs and increasing housing insecurity of young people as areas of concern. In 2021, the EU institutions, EU governments and civil society launched the [European platform to combat homelessness](#), and as part of the Commission's renovation wave strategy, an [Affordable Housing Initiative](#) will ensure that social housing can also benefit from the renovation wave.

Table 3 NAP targets and EU funding - Housing

| MS | Main targets and objectives | EU funding |
|----|---|---|
| EL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce rate of housing cost overburden for children AROP: 84% (2020) → <60% (2030). Cut rate of severe housing deprivation for children AROP: 18.1% (2020) → <14% (2030). Reduce percentage of Roma people living in housing deprivation - 37% (2016) → <28% (2030). Cut number of children in institutional care - 1477 (2022) → zero (2030). | <p>ESF+, including 13 Regional Programmes will fund measures for deinstitutionalisation and foster care, housing, and temporary housing facilities for vulnerable groups including Roma.</p> <p>RRF: pilot program "Establishment of a social/ affordable housing network" €1.5 million.</p> |
| ES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the percentage of children and adolescents living in severe poverty and in housing cost overburden by at least 10 pp. by 2030. Cut by half the number of households with children and adolescents unable to keep the home at an adequate temperature by 2030. Reduce substandard housing settlements by 60 % by 2030. No child below age of 10 years to live in a residential care institution by 2030. Family care to reach 70 % of children in the protection system. No centre with more than 30 places (except first reception) by 2030. | <p>ESF+ funding to be defined in the course of 2022.</p> <p>RRF: (Urban regeneration and rehabilitation plan) will fund:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rehabilitation programme for economic and social recovery in residential settings, €588 million; and Construction of social rental housing in energy efficient buildings, €172 million. |
| HR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide adequate housing for families with children AROPE, conduct analysis of social housing needs of AROPE families and children. Develop Housing Policy Strategy with evidence-based measures on social housing for AROPE families with children by 2030. Energy poverty mitigation programmes for AROP families and children. Improve living conditions and housing for Roma minority. Ensure access to adequate housing for young people leaving care. | <p>RRF funding for housing allowance for up to one year for young people leaving care.</p> <p>ESF+ funding for training of and support services for foster parents.</p> |
| IE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More funding for emergency accommodation for the homeless. Increase the number of temporary accommodation units for families. Increase the supply of housing to average of 33,000 homes per year over next decade, including delivery of 90,000 new social homes, 36,000 affordable purchase homes and 18,000 cost rental homes 2022-2030. Improve accommodation provision for Travellers. | No details provided on EU funding for housing programmes. |
| IT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reshape the rent subsidy for households benefiting from the Citizenship Income. Increasing the supply of affordable housing. | RRF, REACT-EU : Investment in urban regeneration and social housing (€9.02 billion) and to improve the supply of temporary housing (based on the Housing First approach). |

| MS | Main targets and objectives | EU funding |
|----|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create new public housing facilities in particular making use of existing heritage and unused buildings | |
| LU | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional housing units/ projects for young people in housing need. Housing pact 2.0 - build affordable housing; Mobilise vacant buildings for housing. Reform housing subsidies/allowance system, including for people with disabilities. Revise housing standards and carry out reform of rent controls. Double the 'Climate bonus' for energy efficiency and renewable energy adaptations in households. | No details provided on EU funding for housing measures. |

Source: Child Guarantee national action plans.

Healthcare

The CG aims to ensure effective and free access to quality healthcare for children in need. The Recommendation underlines the need for early detection and treatment of diseases and developmental problems, targeted services for children with disabilities, and health promotion and disease prevention programmes targeting children in need and their families, as well as professionals working with children". Nearly all Member States ensure, in principle, free access to healthcare for all children, while some offer a free core service, but access is not always effective, especially for disadvantaged children¹⁸.

Table 4 NAP targets and EU funding - Healthcare

| MS | Main targets and objectives | EU funding |
|----|--|---|
| EL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rate of children AROP with unmet dental needs, 6% (2017) → 2% (2030). Rate of children AROP with unmet medical needs 3.5% (2017) → 2% (2030). Create mobile units for provision of primary health care for unaccompanied minors and develop day centres to support refugee minors with mental health problems. | <p>ESF, including ESF+ Regional programmes will fund capacity-building in health institutions to improve affordability and accessibility for socially vulnerable groups, prevention and health promotion, including mental health, for particularly vulnerable groups, family and child care.</p> <p>RRF money is funding a tele-psychiatry network and the introduction of personal assistants for people with disabilities.</p> |
| ES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase coverage of oral, visual and other services. Inclusion of 100 % of oral health services in the National Health System. By 2030-halve the number of young people who cannot access prescribed medical and dental care for financial reasons. By 2030 -increase the number of child mental health specialists, at psychiatric, nursing and social work level. | <p>ESF+ funding to be finalised.</p> <p>RRF funding of €3.35 million for programme "Renewal and expansion of National Health System capacities" - actions to strengthen prevention and health promotion.</p> |
| HR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish early detection systems, with particular attention to isolated (Roma) and rural communities. Improve primary healthcare systems and integrate services at home and in communities, emphasis on children AROPE and those in isolated, rural and underdeveloped areas. Faster, more efficient system of compensation of medical costs for children who receive minimum income allowance. | <p>EU funding to subsidise the cost of medicines for children.</p> <p>ESF+ funding for a range of parental support programmes, including for parents of children with disabilities and Roma parents.</p> |

| MS | Main targets and objectives | EU funding |
|----|--|---|
| MS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on reproductive health, especially for children and parents of Roma minority. • Ensure support for the mental health protection of at risk children. • Provide beds in child and adolescent psychiatry in the public health service network to improve quality of treatment. | |
| IE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phased expansion of free GP care to all children up to 12 years. • Improve mental health services for young people. • Develop a dedicated child health workforce focussed initially in areas of high population density and disadvantage. • Ease the financial burden of hospital charges for children - €4.5 million in 2022 to meet the charges associated with hospital services. | EU funding not specified in the NAP. |
| IT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early intervention in the first 1000 day of life. • Youth Counselling Centres; promotion of relationship, sexuality, and gender equality education. • Set up permanent technical round table on mental health for 0-18 years; Strengthen developmental psychology and child/adolescent neuropsychiatry services. • Extension up to age 18 of the Primary Care Paediatrician. • Strengthen information and data collection on services for diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of psychological and neuropsychological disorders. • Compulsory registration with health service for all foreign minors. • Outreach and information at primary care levels regarding the health rights of children with a migration background. • Facilitate access to psychological care for adolescents with a migrant background or belonging to minorities. • Interventions and policies aimed at receiving and protecting minors from Ukraine. • Set up an interinstitutional round table on minors with disabilities. | <p>ERDF, ESF+, including ESF+ Regional Programmes and AMIF funding will be used to implement measures in the health sector.</p> <p>RRF: The NRRP devotes €15.63 billion to the “Health Mission”, including strengthening territorial healthcare, and €1.45 billion for three specific nationally directed social interventions (concerning social and health interventions, interventions in support of persons with disabilities and interventions against extreme poverty).</p> |
| LU | The NAP describes existing measures such as a newly established social paediatrics service, a health programme targeting applicants for international protection, a free mental health service for young people, the psycho-social service within the school system, psychological support services provide by the ONE (National Office for Children) and new preventive measures planned under a new law on help, support and protection for minors, young adults and families | EU funding is not specified in the NAP. |

Source: Child Guarantee national action plans.

Healthy nutrition

The CG aims to ensure effective access to healthy nutrition. The Recommendation underlines the need to support access to healthy meals also outside of school days (especially important during COVID-19 school closures), ensure that nutrition standards in ECEC and schools address specific dietary needs; limit advertisement and availability of ‘junk’ foods and disseminate information on healthy nutrition to children and families. Studies on nutrition¹⁹ show that most children and adolescents (especially those from families with lower socio-economic status) eat too few fruits, vegetables and plant-based foods.

Table 5 NAP targets and EU funding - Healthy nutrition

| MS | Main targets and objectives | EU funding |
|----|---|---|
| EL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce percentage of obese children: 25% (2017) → <10% (2030). Reduce percentage of overweight or obese children (2 to 14 years old): 37.5% (2019) → <24.5% (2030). Increase percentage of young mothers who breastfeed for 6 months or more: 36.6% (2019) → >50% (2030). | <p>EU School Program- fruit, vegetables and milk. EU funding: €14.3 million.</p> <p>AMIF - distribution of meals in centres for third country nationals and applicants for international protection.</p> |
| ES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halve by 2030 the numbers of children and adolescents from low-income households who cannot afford to eat fresh fruit and vegetables at least once a day. Reduce by 50 % by 2030 the numbers of children and adolescents who do not adhere to the Mediterranean diet. | <p>ESF +: 'Programme to combat material deprivation' (all the Autonomous Communities will participate) will include measures to provide food and basic material assistance to help children in vulnerable situations.</p> <p>EU School Fruit, Vegetables and Milk Scheme.</p> |
| HR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of breastfeeding. Free and balanced school meals for most vulnerable groups of primary and secondary school children - meals provided in primary schools to AROPE children, including displaced children from Ukraine, food packages provided by charities at weekends and during holidays. Develop educational materials on healthy eating for children and raise awareness of future parents. | <p>ESF+ and FEAD will fund provision of meals in primary schools.</p> |
| IE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding through the School Meals Programme for the provision of food to 1,500 schools and organisations. Priority access for disadvantaged (DEIS° schools (currently ca. 230,000 children) to the school meals programme | <p>EU funding not specified in NAP.</p> |
| IT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progressive extension of the school meal service in nurseries and primary schools, to reach universal access - starting from the territories with higher educational poverty up to 100% coverage. Cut costs to families of the canteen service in primary schools, starting in 2022-23 with free access for poorest families and moving to free-of-charge system for all children by 2030. Provide a canteen service in lower secondary school. | <p>ESF+ to be used to reduce the cost of school meals, easing the burden on families in need, and to integrate public (school canteens) and third sector (food parcels) efforts in the fight against food poverty.</p> <p>RRF: School canteens: infrastructure covered by the NRRP - €400 million allocated to canteens for infrastructure works, especially in the South of Italy.</p> |
| LU | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From 2022 on, free school meals for all children for the 36 weeks of the school year. New programme « food4future » on sustainable and healthy meals using local and organic produce in school and university canteens. | <p>EU funding not specified in the NAP.</p> |

Source: Child Guarantee National Action Plans.

Governance and consultation processes

The Child Guarantee covers a wide range of complex policy areas and it is thus of utmost importance that in addition to the appointment of a Coordinator for the Child Guarantee, there is seamless coordination and cooperation between the ministries responsible for implementation and that children themselves and

relevant stakeholders at national, regional and local level are consulted and involved in planning, implementation and monitoring.

The table below reflects varying considerations (e.g. specific mention of coordination with ESF authorities) and/or needs in the Member States, for example countries with more decentralised structures have paid greater attention to involving the authorities at regional levels.

Table 6 NAPs - Governance and consultation processes

| MS | Institutional set-up and stakeholder consultation | Consultation of young people |
|----|--|--|
| EL | Coordinator: National Center for Social Solidarity (E.K.K.A.) | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Inter-ministerial Working Group was set up with 12 Ministries to develop the planning framework and priorities of the NAP. At the initiative of the National Child Guarantee Coordinator, a national network was established at central, regional and local level to prepare, implement and monitor the NAP, composed of: 12 Ministries, 13 Regions, 11 Regional Social Welfare Centres, 332 Municipalities (Social Services and Community Centres), 30 Civil Society Organisations. TSI support will be availed of. | Children were involved in the preparation of the National Action Plan, (a) via a web-based survey, (b) via focus groups with children aged 12-17 years from vulnerable groups, including Roma children, children with disabilities, unaccompanied minors, LGBTQ children, children living in institutions, and children from low-income families. |
| ES | Coordinator: Lucia LOSOVIZ , Director General for Children Rights, Ministry for Social Rights and Agenda 2030, in cooperation with the High Commissioner against Child Poverty (ACPI), attached to the Prime Minister. | |
| | <p>3 levels of governance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Political</u> - interministerial and sectoral conferences, including the administrative unit responsible for the Structural Funds; <u>Operational</u> - between the General State Administration, the Autonomous Communities and municipalities with coordinators appointed at territorial level; and <u>Advisory</u> - mechanisms for the participation of civil society, children and adolescents. Various stakeholders have been involved in the preparation of the GG NAP and will be involved in its implementation, including Ministries, the Autonomous Communities and Ceuta and Melilla, third sector organisations, universities and children and teenagers. | The involvement of young people is ensured through the Children's Observatory attached to the Ministry of Social Rights and Agenda 2030, the State Council for the Participation of Children and Adolescents (permanent body of children and adolescents aged 8-17, attached to the Ministry of Social Rights and Agenda 2030), and local child participation bodies supported by UNICEF. |
| HR | Coordinator: Tatjana Katkic Stanic , Director-General of the Institute for Social Work at the Ministry of Labour | |
| | <p>The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Policy drafted the national plan through a participatory process led by the CG Coordinator in which a 'wide range of relevant and interested stakeholders were involved'.</p> <p>An NAP implementation monitoring committee is tasked with the development and implementation of activities. It will submit reports to the Croatian parliament (annually), the European Commission and European Council and also report to the National Council for the development of social policies and the National Council for Children. The committee members are the Ministries of Labour, Science & Education, Health, Physical planning, Justice & Administration (responsible also for implementation of the national recovery and resilience plan - NRRP). Other experts, partners and interest groups, local self-government and representatives of children and youth will be involved as appropriate.</p> | Children were consulted at several times during the process of drafting the plan, including through an online survey and through consultations carried out by the Ombudsperson for children and young people . Consultation of children will continue on a bi-annual basis. The National Council for Children and representatives of children are also members of the NAP implementation monitoring committee. |
| IE | Coordinator: Head of the EU & International Unit , Dept. of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth | |

| MS | Institutional set-up and stakeholder consultation | Consultation of young people |
|----|--|--|
| | <p>The EU and International Unit will lead on the coordination across government of the CG.</p> <p>Prior to submission, all relevant government departments made input. An online survey received 21 submissions- a list of the 21 stakeholders is provided. Consultative fora are already in place to listen to the views of stakeholders on topics such as social inclusion, disability, ECEC, early learning, food and nutrition, physical activity in childhood, and mental health.</p> | <p>Structures already in place for consulting children e.g. on the UN Convention on the rights of the child will be used for the CG.</p> |
| IT | <p>Coordinator: Dr Anna Maria SERAFINI, Chairperson of the working group on policies in support of children, Ministry of Labour and Social Policies.</p> | |
| | <p>Integrated governance model between Ministries, Regions and Municipalities. The national CG coordinator will lead a steering group, composed of representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and the Department for the Family, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, and the relevant Management Authorities for EU funds, the National Regional Conference and ANCI (National Association of Italian Municipalities).</p> <p>The national coordinator will be supported by a technical-scientific support structure: Istituto degli Innocenti (Children's right organisation) and ISTAT (Italian statistical office). Participation of the social partners and the third sector in developing, implementing and monitoring the CG is ensured through the National Observatory for Childhood and Adolescence and the Network for Social Protection and Social Inclusion (link to national social and inclusion planning). The national coordinator will liaise with the ESF+ department.</p> | <p>There was active participation of girls and boys in the development of the plan through the YAB (Youth Advisory Board) composed of 23 boys and girls aged 14 -21, from all over Italy, + 900 contributions to an online survey). The recommendations of the YAB for the National Plan are listed in the plan.</p> <p>Children and other stakeholders will continue to be involved at the Implementation and monitoring stage.</p> |
| LU | <p>Coordinator: Marguerite Krier, Head of children's rights service in the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth.</p> | |
| | <p>A CG steering committee has been set up by the Coordinator made up of the National Children's Office (ONE) and the Centre for psychosocial support in schools, (CePAS) from the Ministry for Education, children and youth, the Ministry for family affairs, integration and cross-border cooperation, the Ministries of Health, Housing, Employment, jobs, and the social economy. TSI support will be availed of.</p> <p>There will be cooperation with National observatory for children, youth and educational quality.</p> | <p>A process of consulting children and young people in partnership with UNICEF Luxembourg was ongoing at the time the plan was submitted. A consultation of a specific target group per year will be carried out on an annual basis.</p> |

Source: Child Guarantee national action plans.

Concluding remarks

The Child Guarantee national action plans vary in their starting points, level of detail and stage of development. The Danish plan concludes that Denmark meets the objectives and recommendations of the CG Recommendation already. The Swedish plan says that Sweden already provides for effective access to the basic social services referred to in the CG with most of the services are free of charge, but recognises that some groups of children may experience barriers to access. The plan from the Netherlands clearly states that it is a starting point and provides a 'preview of implementation'. The Luxembourgish and Belgian plans are devoted mainly to describing measures already in place that are relevant to the CG. The French plan describes itself as a "plan glissant" (rolling plan). Other plans, particularly some that were the subject of a deep dive report under the third phase of implementation of the pilot project²⁰, go further in identifying additional measures that can be implemented under the CG. It will be up to the Member States working together with the European Commission to continue to flesh out and update the plans and further develop the funding plans (including more details on cohesion funding and linking it to RRF funding), making sure

to respect the minimum 5% ESF+ allocation where that applies. In doing so, they will need to take into account also the new challenges of children and their families fleeing Ukraine and the cost of living and energy crises. The Commission will also play an important role by proposing a monitoring and evaluation framework and a common set of indicators to be used to evaluate progress made in the plans.

¹ [Council Recommendation \(EU\) 2021/1004 of 14 June 2021 establishing a European Child Guarantee](#), 14 June 2021.

² European Commission website- [Partnership Agreements on EU funds 2021-2027](#).

³ UNICEF, [The impact of the war in Ukraine and subsequent economic downturn on child poverty in eastern Europe and Central Asia](#), October 2022.

⁴ World Economic Forum (WEF), [What are European countries doing to reduce the impact of rising energy prices on homes and businesses?](#), 29 September 2022; Bruegel, [National policies to shield consumers from rising energy prices](#), 21 September 2022, Eurofound PolicyWatch, [First responses to cushion the impact of inflation on citizens](#), 5 July 2022.

⁵ YouGov, [New cost of living tracker reveals extent of crisis in Western Europe](#), 13 October 2022.

⁶ European Commission press release- [Commission welcomes Member States' targets for a more social Europe by 2030](#), 16 June 2022.

⁷ Art 7(3), [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/1057 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 establishing the European Social Fund Plus \(ESF+\)](#).

⁸ These are the indicative amounts based on the information submitted to the European Commission by Member States in their Partnership Agreements (section 6.2 (ESF+ Thematic concentration)). The final amounts allocated under ESF+ to targeted actions and structural reforms to tackle child poverty will be known when all of the 2021-2027 programmes are adopted.

⁹ AROPE rate: The At risk of poverty and social exclusion rate is made up of three components -AROP, SMD (Severe material deprivation) and LWI (Low Work Intensity). It is the main indicator used to monitor the EU 2030 target on poverty and social exclusion.

¹⁰ AROP -The At risk of poverty rate is a measure of relative monetary poverty. It is the share of people with an equivalised disposable income (after social transfers) below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold, which is set at 60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income after social transfers.

¹¹ [Proposal for a Council Recommendation on Revision of the Barcelona Targets on early childhood education and care](#).

¹² PISA is the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment. PISA measures 15-year-olds' ability to use their reading, mathematics and science knowledge and skills to meet real-life challenges.

¹³ Percentage of pupils in the lowest quartile of the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS) in Greece who perform in the first quartile among pupils from all countries.

¹⁴ ISEC International Socio-Economic Classes is a categorisation of occupational information.

¹⁵ ISEE Equivalent Economic Status Index.

¹⁶ European Commission, Staff working document (SWD) <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1428&langId=en>.

¹⁷ European Commission, [Employment and social developments in Europe](#), July 2022.

¹⁸ European Commission, Staff working document (SWD) <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1428&langId=en>, March 2021.

¹⁹ [EsKiMo II – the Eating study as a KiGGS Module in KiGGS Wave 2](#), Robert Koch Institute, 2017; [KiGGS - Study on the health of children and young people in Germany](#), Robert Koch Institute, 2003-2017; UNICEF, [A review of school-aged children and adolescent nutrition in Europe and Central Asia Region](#), 2020.

²⁰ UNICEF, [Deep dive reports into the Child Guarantee](#).

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