



Plenary sitting

B9-0462/2023

16.11.2023

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

Children first – strengthening the Child Guarantee, two years on from its
adoption
(2023/2811(RSP))

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on behalf of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

B9-0462/2023

**European Parliament resolution on ‘Children first – strengthening the Child Guarantee, two years on from its adoption’
(2023/2811(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in New York on 20 November 1989,
- having regard to Commission Recommendation 2013/112/EU of 20 February 2013 entitled ‘Investing in children: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage’¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 24 November 2015 on reducing inequalities with a special focus on child poverty², which called on the Commission and the Member States to introduce a child guarantee, paying special attention to children in poverty and their access to services,
- having regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights, in particular Principles 1, 3, 11, 16 and 19 thereof,
- having regard to the Council Recommendation of 22 May 2019 on High-Quality Early Childhood Education and Care Systems³,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 24 March 2021 entitled ‘EU strategy on the rights of the child’ (COM(2021)0142),
- having regard to its resolution of 29 April 2021 on the European Child Guarantee⁴,
- having regard to Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/1004 of 14 June 2021 establishing a European Child Guarantee⁵,
- having regard to its resolution of XXX on reducing inequalities and promoting social inclusion in times of crisis for children and their families,
- having regard to the Porto Social Summit and to the social target for 2030 of reducing the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion by at least 15 million, including at least 5 million children,
- having regard to the statement by the Commission of 19 November 2021 on World Children’s Day, commemorating the adoption of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child by the UN General Assembly on 20 November 1959,

¹ OJ L 59, 2.3.2013, p. 5.

² OJ C 366, 27.10.2017, p. 19.

³ OJ C 189, 5.6.2019, p. 4.

⁴ OJ C 506, 15.12.2021, p. 94.

⁵ OJ L 223, 22.6.2021, p. 14.

- having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the socio-economic situation of children and their families in Europe has worsened as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, in terms of health and long-term social impacts on children’s well-being, leading to increased inequality and social exclusion and exacerbating existing challenges, especially for children and families in vulnerable situations; whereas, as a result of the lockdown measures taken to control the emergency, the disruption of daily life routines and social contacts, school closures, the reduced capacity of systems to ensure safeguards against domestic violence, abuse and neglect, the disruption of basic social services, the inability to access online education due to a lack of necessary equipment, internet coverage or even electricity, the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to mental health problems, educational gaps and increased school dropout rates, and increased violence and abuse against children; whereas the socio-economic situation of children and their families has further deteriorated as a result of the war caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which has had devastating effects on not only the millions of refugee children and their families fleeing the war, but on the overall population of the EU, in terms of soaring costs of living, energy prices, inflation, growing inequalities, access to basic services and affordability of healthy food and medicines, with more children and young people being pushed into poverty;
- B. whereas effective access to key and quality services for children in need and their families, including effective and free access to high-quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) and healthcare, as well as educational and school-based activities, at least one healthy meal each school day, effective access to adequate housing and healthy nutrition, plays an important role in breaking the cycle of intergenerational disadvantage and lifting children and their families out of poverty and social exclusion; whereas this is essential for tackling the complex and multidimensional nature of poverty and vulnerability;
- C. whereas investing in children’s early years is vital for tackling child poverty and social exclusion; whereas ensuring nurturing care for their healthy growth, development and well-being provides solid foundations early in life, to the benefit of individuals and societies; whereas investing in the youngest generation contributes to the prosperity of society as a whole, as it can yield a return on investment at least four times higher than the original investment⁶; whereas several Member States have allocated more than 5 % of their European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and a total of EUR 8.9 billion in ESF+ support to address child poverty has so far been programmed by 23 Member States; whereas some Member States have not allocated any ESF+ resources to the objective of tackling child poverty and others have earmarked less than 5 % of their ESF+ programmes; whereas there has been a delay in the implementation of the ESF+ plans, which, in turn, has delayed reforms in the Child Guarantee national action plans (NAPs) financed through the ESF+; whereas ESF+ resources alone are in no way sufficient for addressing the challenge of child poverty in the EU and, therefore, a significant increase in funding for the European Child Guarantee (ECG) is of utmost importance; whereas child poverty is a European problem that affects all Member States and should be tackled as such in all Member States with ambitious European and national instruments;

⁶ University of Pennsylvania, ‘[High Return on Investment \(ROI\)](#)’.

whereas NextGenerationEU, in particular the policies for the next generation pillar of the national recovery and resilience plans adopted by the Member States under the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), offers a unique opportunity for significant investments and reforms aimed at improving ECEC, its quality and inclusiveness; whereas the Member States' implementation of these measures should be closely monitored and designed and delivered in synergy with existing national and European programmes in the field, in particular the ECG, the ESF+ and the other European structural and investment funds;

- D. whereas 758 018 children were in alternative care in 2021 in the EU; whereas children in alternative care were particularly affected during the pandemic as governments in some countries responded to the COVID-19 crisis by reducing or closing residential care services, which meant a rushed and often unprepared return to their biological families, often without the underlying conditions for their original placement in care being addressed; whereas families experiencing poverty may find themselves in a situation where the parents can no longer provide adequate care for the children, which may lead to family separation and the children's entry into alternative care; whereas the lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the many factors that lead to family separation, often resulting in poverty, abuse, neglect, illness and death; whereas the number of children without or at risk of losing parental care is likely to increase as a result of the long-term socio-economic impact of the current crises on families' ability to provide care; whereas the Child Guarantee could help to achieve the transition from institutional to family and community-based care for all children, as it tackles interrelated factors leading to child institutionalisation, and children in alternative care are prioritised as a target group;
- E. whereas child poverty and social exclusion remain a critical challenge across the EU, with almost 1 in 4 children still being at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE), ranging from over 40 % in some countries to 11 %⁷ in others or even in regions within the Member States⁸, as well as with worsening tendencies in many of them as a result of the multiple crises across the EU and globally;
- F. whereas many children find themselves in a vulnerable situation – not only those experiencing poverty and social exclusion, but also those living with disabilities, mental health issues, from a minority or ethnic background, in single-parent families, residing in institutions, without parental care, migrant and refugee children, homeless children, children experiencing severe housing deprivation, etc.; whereas mental health issues among children are increasingly becoming a significant concern, with anxiety and depression being the most common types of disorder; whereas improving children's lives in the short term and establishing successful life paths for them in the long term requires structural changes and innovative solutions on how policies are delivered, as well as an intersectoral approach at EU, national, regional and local levels;
- G. whereas the ECG is a high-quality and innovative policy instrument with the potential to deliver significant improvements to the everyday reality of millions of children in the EU in a multidimensional way; whereas more needs to be done to achieve a more comprehensive, intersectoral approach to tackling children's risk of vulnerability and to

⁷ Eurostat.

⁸ Eurostat data, 2022.

ensure genuine implementation by removing the policy, political, administrative and financial barriers;

- H. whereas the ECG is a high-quality and innovative policy instrument with the potential to deliver significant improvements to the everyday reality of millions of children in the EU in a multidimensional way; whereas its objective is to prevent and combat poverty and social exclusion by guaranteeing the effective access of children in need to a set of key services; whereas the EU and the Member States should deploy all available efforts to turn the ECG into a reality by fully implementing the Council Recommendation, the NAPs and all other European and national programmes which contribute to the delivery of its key services; whereas more needs to be done to achieve a more comprehensive and intersectoral approach to tackling children's risk of poverty and social exclusion and to ensure a genuine and efficient implementation of the Guarantee by removing all policy, political, administrative and financial barriers and by monitoring and assessing the NAPs;
- I. whereas 20 months after the original due date of March 2022, only 25 Member States have adopted their NAPs on the ECG, with a focus on the major areas identified in the associated Council Recommendation; whereas the plans submitted vary significantly on their governance methods, outreach and targeting strategies for the most disadvantaged groups, on progress monitoring systems, timelines for proposed measures and planned budgets for effectively deploying such measures; whereas several plans appear to be generic and superficial documents in which policymakers have merely listed measures already put in place or planned; whereas, in general, the NAPs lack attention and focus on particularly vulnerable families, such as single-parent families, low-income families and large families facing additional difficulties;
- J. whereas, in some countries, the NAPs have been accompanied by the revision of existing laws in several areas, such as deinstitutionalisation or access to ECEC services; whereas not all NAPs include new measures to address child poverty and social exclusion or have a clear budget, timeline or monitoring mechanism;
- K. whereas the NAPs are living documents and should be reviewed and updated regularly, while ensuring that they take an integrated, multidimensional approach and are deeply interconnected with their national, regional and local contexts;
- L. whereas child poverty has a strong territorial dimension and cooperation with regional and local authorities and with civil society organisations (CSOs) helping children and families is proving conducive to more effective and sustainable results for children and their families; whereas more attention should be given to the urban-rural divide and to gathering evidence at subnational level⁹;
- M. whereas some countries are lacking transparency and have failed to include children and families, ECEC staff and service providers, and their representative organisations, as well as CSOs, in the consultation process for drafting the NAPs; whereas countries that benefited from technical assistance and stakeholder collaboration have developed better quality NAPs and targeted measures for effective access of some of the most

⁹ Eurofound, '[Guaranteeing access to services for children in the EU](#)', 21 September 2023.

disadvantaged groups of children to basic services;

- N. whereas consistent institutional commitment, sufficient human resources and the engagement and proper coordination of different ministries, agencies and subnational authorities present challenges in a number of countries; whereas national coordinators are responsible for the implementation process and for coordinating the work of the different ministries responsible;
- O. whereas there is still insufficient comprehensive and disaggregated data collection on child poverty and social exclusion; whereas some countries struggle to develop and implement a monitoring framework for their NAPs with a set of indicators to capture the progress and results for the beneficiaries, as well as to develop and implement a budgeted plan of actions to continuously improve the availability, quality, comparability and governance of the data required to report on the progress of the implementation and on access to basic services at national and subnational level; whereas a lack of standardised guidelines for data collection hinders the effective monitoring of ECG implementation; whereas access to information for regional and local level organisations continues to pose an impediment to the harmonious implementation of the ECG;

Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the European Child Guarantee and the national action plans

1. Calls on the remaining Member States (Austria and Latvia) to urgently adopt their Child Guarantee NAPs;
2. Calls on the Member States to ensure the full implementation of their NAPs and, when reviewing them, to consider current developments and specific situations at national, regional and local level; urges the Member States to set even more ambitious objectives to tackle child poverty, with targeted measures to ensure access to key services for all children from their earliest years, especially for the children in greatest need, such as those displaced by wars, including from Ukraine, those experiencing homelessness or living in severe housing deprivation, those with disabilities or mental health problems, or from a migrant or ethnic minority background, in particular from Roma communities; highlights that the NAPs adopted vary greatly among each other, threatening the overall objective of the Child Guarantee to support upward social convergence in the EU; regrets, in particular, that several NAPs do not include measurable objectives or concrete targets, which raises serious concerns about the quality of measures effectively put in place;
3. Calls on the Member States to design a national framework for data collection, monitoring and evaluation for their NAPs, involving participatory research methods and the gathering of disaggregated data at national and subnational level, in order to design evidence-based policy, track quantitative and real qualitative progress on the ground, better identify good practices and possible weaknesses in the NAPs, better detect possible gaps between early childhood and youth policies, as well as set common quality indicators for each target group identified in the ECG, including for children under the age of three;
4. Highlights the need for comprehensive and disaggregated data on child poverty and

access to key services from the Member States; underlines that the indicators for monitoring child poverty selected by the Indicators' sub-group in the Commission's Social Protection Committee must make it possible to establish a closer link between the ECG and the Social Scoreboard; calls on the Commission to develop common guidelines together with Eurofound and relevant CSOs for the collection and reporting of data on children of all target groups across the Member States; invites the Member States to exchange best practices about techniques to collect data and monitor policies, and to create child poverty observatories to gather quality data, disaggregated by targeted groups and internationally comparable at national level, to identify policy loopholes and to better capture the multidimensional challenges of child poverty, social exclusion and intersectional discrimination; stresses the need for improved data collection on children living in institutions, accompanied by time-bound targets for bringing children out of institutions and into family and community settings;

5. Underlines the call made by Parliament's cross-political Working Group on the Child Guarantee established in April 2022 on the Commission and national authorities to monitor the implementation of the NAPs and to develop a solid overarching EU-level monitoring and evaluation framework, together with an assessment methodology, and to ensure the actual participation of all relevant stakeholders, including regional and local authorities, in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the NAPs; calls on existing platforms, such as the monitoring committees established at national level in compliance with Regulation (EU)2021/1060¹⁰ laying down common provisions, to ensure the meaningful participation of all partners, including CSOs helping vulnerable children, throughout the implementation and evaluation of the programmes;
6. Reiterates its call on the Commission to create a transparent and publicly accessible EU-wide monitoring tool; urges the Commission to cooperate with Eurofound and relevant CSOs to build on their work in the creation of such a tool that would facilitate the clear identification of the desired outcomes to increase the transparency, visibility and accountability of the Guarantee, by making it possible to see the state of play in each country and the EU as a whole;
7. Notes that further budgetary and economic aspects of each NAP must be monitored, particularly the size and impact of national and EU funding, including funding reaching the beneficiaries, as well as possible difficulties for organisations and potential beneficiaries to access such funding; highlights that the issue of the ECG's 'added value' should be given utmost importance, as resources dedicated to its measures should not simply replace already existing national or European measures, but should instead complement them; highlights that the NAPs should not constitute a re-branding or re-packaging of already existing programmes or measures, as this would raise concerns about the general principle of additionality of EU cohesion policy; calls on the Commission to use the mid-term review, due by December 2023, to support the revision of the NAPs; calls on the Member States to streamline their NAPs and to create synergies between them and national policies and strategies, notably the national

¹⁰ Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy, OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, p. 159.

recovery and resilience plans, which should be designed and delivered synergistically with dedicated ECG resources in order to ensure that the measures are consistent with each other and mutually reinforcing;

8. Highlights the importance of political support and calls on the Member States to step up their ambition in the implementation of the ECG; encourages the Council and the Member States holding the presidency of the Council to keep families and children at the heart of the EU's social agenda, while stressing the long-term positive impact of investing in the younger generations;

Quality of the national action plans

9. Notes the reduced uptake of ECEC among low-income families and children living in precarious family situations; calls on the Member States to significantly increase their focus on more quality and affordable childcare facilities, in order to improve their quality and make them more adaptable to the needs of the parents; calls on the Member States to support professional training for ECEC staff, including by increasing their number; asks the Member States to ensure that the five components of the ECEC Quality Framework in the Council Recommendation on high-quality early childhood education and care systems are implemented and met for ECEC staff, as they have an impact on the quality, accessibility and inclusivity of services¹¹; calls on the Commission and the Member States to closely cooperate with the social partners in order to ensure decent working conditions for the workers needed to create or update services to achieve the goals of the ECG; calls on the Member States to ensure inclusive education and to avoid segregation in school classrooms in order to give children an equal start in life and to break the cycle of poverty from early childhood;
10. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to allocate additional resources to support for children with disabilities, developmental delays and/or special needs; notes that these resources should further complement ECEC, as well as the streamlining of their needs across key services, the early detection of risks and access to early childhood intervention services; highlights that early school dropouts are closely linked to children with disadvantaged and deprived backgrounds; calls for clear identification based on the early detection of risk factors that would help identify them, and calls for tailor-made plans to be drawn up for the child's education, including non-formal education and extracurricular art and sports activities; recommends that teachers, educators and other responsible persons cooperate with institutions linked to educational establishments, such as care organisations for developing integrated services, in order to provide parallel support for families and children affected by out-of-school circumstances; calls on the Member States to adapt the facilities and educational materials of early childhood education, care and schools to the needs of children with disabilities, using inclusive methods;
11. Calls on the Member States to increase their efforts in ensuring that all children in need receive at least one free, healthy, hot meal a day and encourages them to provide an adequate alternative when children are not at school, while looking into existing good practices; calls on the Member States to ensure access to school canteens and affirms, as

¹¹ Eurofound, '[Early childhood care: Accessibility and quality of services](#)', Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2015.

a principle, that no child in need in the EU should ever be denied a meal at school; notes that the share of children AROPE unable to afford a nutritious meal every second day decreased from 25.82 % in 2008 to 16.04 % in 2021 and that many countries have recorded a deterioration in the provision of services during the recent years of crisis;

12. Highlights that in 2022, 5 % of low-income households with children in the EU had unmet medical needs and that the NAPs have identified several unmet needs in the healthcare sector; calls on the Member States to establish, strengthen and adapt their healthcare systems in order to eliminate all forms of discrimination and to ensure that all children in need have equal access to early intervention and to quality healthcare services, including dental, ophthalmologist and psychological services; calls on the Member States to include access to maternal, newborn and child healthcare in their NAPs;
13. Highlights that poor housing is still one of the causes and consequences of child poverty, given that it is linked to energy poverty and precarious living conditions; stresses that 21.6 % of children in the EU were at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2022¹², including as a result of experiencing housing cost overburden; expresses concern that basic water, sanitation and hygiene facilities remain inaccessible for too many children, particularly the most vulnerable and marginalised children; calls on the Member States to ensure access to these both at home and at school; reiterates its call on the Commission and the Member States to make housing one of the cornerstones of the Action Plan of the European Pillar of Social Rights; calls on the Commission to urgently develop an integrated EU-level strategy, including public solutions for social, non-segregated and affordable housing, and to create an enabling framework for national, regional and local authorities to ensure the provision of safe, healthy, accessible and affordable quality housing for all; invites the Member States, therefore, to design, assess and revise their social housing policies and housing benefit systems in order to better cater to the needs of vulnerable families and children, including those with disabilities, while prioritising them in the provision of social housing and in energy policy planning;
14. Encourages the Member States to reduce the practical and administrative barriers to accessing key services by keeping the procedures simple and accessible both online and offline, and by accepting declarations of honour when the necessary documents cannot be procured;
15. Calls on the Member States to promote outreach activities and to proactively raise awareness of the ECG and the key services that children and families can benefit from; calls for support to local and regional authorities to establish one-stop shops within existing structures to provide children and families with targeted access to information on early detection and early childhood intervention, as well as targeted support to access social security and assistance, and guidance on accessing specific local measures for social inclusion;
16. Calls on the Member States to put in place complementary measures to ensure that public transport is accessible to all children in need, including children with disabilities,

¹² Eurofound.

children living in rural areas and children with a migrant background;

17. Highlights the pivotal importance of integrating quality services for children in need – free childcare, healthcare, education and adequate housing – in a coordinated approach to reducing child poverty; notes that integrated and comprehensive services should be inclusive and accessible for all children from early childhood, with a case management approach for tailored interventions; highlights that these are essential in meeting the individual needs of all children and their families for exiting poverty and foster their inclusion in society, including by taking account of their parents’ work-life balance, their labour market participation and parenting support;
18. Stresses the necessity for the Member States to invest in social protection systems and policies, such as adequate minimum income schemes and minimum wages, as a means of sustaining the most vulnerable households in the EU; calls on all Member States to swiftly adopt and implement the Council Recommendation of 30 January 2023 on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion¹³ and Directive (EU) 2022/2041 on adequate minimum wages to combat poverty and social exclusion in the EU¹⁴; reiterates that it is essential for income support and minimum income not to contribute to social dependence and that they must rather be combined with incentives and support tools enabling active labour market measures to (re)integrate those who can work in order to break the vicious cycle of poverty and the dependence on public support for individuals and their families; is concerned about the recent decision of the Italian Government to drastically curb its minimum income scheme, which supported around 3.6 million people, especially about its impact on children, going against the overall EU trend in the fight against poverty and social exclusion;
19. Reiterates its call for a comprehensive and integrated anti-poverty strategy with a designated poverty reduction target, including for child poverty; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure children’s right to adequate housing is delivered on, including by providing related support to parents experiencing difficulties with keeping or accessing housing, so that they can remain with their children, with particular attention on young adults exiting child welfare institutions; calls on the Member States to adopt a specific housing policy for children, based on child-specific data on homelessness and housing exclusion among children; highlights the necessity to facilitate access to social housing by streamlining and simplifying procedures at national and local level, significantly increasing public spending on housing, which remains highly fragmented across the EU, and strengthening financial contributions and subsidies to families in need to make their rents more affordable; calls on the Member States to adopt measures to protect vulnerable households with children from evictions and to strengthen the presence of social services in the areas at higher risk of social exclusion and among marginalised communities;
20. Highlights that the ECG, like the Youth Guarantee, has the potential to become a driver for positive structural change in the Member States’ ability to plan and deliver key services; calls for the Member States to ensure coherence and synergies between the

¹³ Council Recommendation of 30 January 2023 on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion, OJ C 41, 3.2.2023, p. 1.

¹⁴ Directive (EU) 2022/2041 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on adequate minimum wages in the European Union, OJ L 275, 25.10.2022, p. 33.

ECG as an anti-poverty strategy and the reinforced Youth Guarantee as an active labour market policy in order to cover the entire age span from birth to adulthood, particularly for the role of labour market integration measures and identifying the target groups, available services and skills needs; highlights that, in the years to come, data should be gathered and analysed to evaluate how the Child Guarantee and the reinforced Youth Guarantee have worked together or if improvements to both programmes are needed; calls on the Member States to mobilise partnerships among institutional actors at the different levels and with CSOs and the social partners;

21. Calls on the Member States to harness the potential of the ECG to ensure family and community-based environments for all children in the EU by implementing the reform of child care and protection systems and strengthening national social protection systems;

Financing of the European Child Guarantee

22. Reiterates its call for an urgent increase in funding for the ECG, with a dedicated budget of EUR 20 billion for 2021-2027 that must be made part of the revised multiannual financial framework and reinforced ESF+; deeply regrets the fact that the Commission's proposal on the mid-term revision of the multiannual financial framework does not reflect Parliament's long-standing demand for an urgent increase in funding for the ECG; highlights that child poverty is a European problem affecting all countries in the EU; calls on all Member States, not only those with an AROPE rate above the EU average, to increase their financial efforts above the thematic concentration of 5 % indicated in the ESF+ and to be more ambitious in investing more in children, as this is a valuable social investment, by considering re-programming their ESF+ national operational programmes and dedicating adequate resources to them; highlights the necessity of introducing a binding thematic concentration for all Member States in the next ESF+ revision; calls on the Commission to include an assessment of Member States' commitments and structural reforms in the key areas targeted by the Child Guarantee in the European Semester exercise and to include a clear link to the resources committed to these objectives under the ESF+ and other financial instruments;
23. Calls on the Commission to assess the quality of spending on children, and in particular to evaluate the effective and consistent use of the EUR 8.9 billion dedicated to the ECG under the ESF +; asks the Commission, as part of the mid-term review of the Child Guarantee, to propose options for synergies and combining different sources of funding, such as the European Regional Development Fund, InvestEU, NextGenerationEU and the RRF, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and ReactEU, and EU4Health and Erasmus+; urges the Commission and the Member States to consider the impact of the increasing cost of living on the implementation of the Child Guarantee, so that inflation does not diminish the programme's ability to meet its objective of eradicating child poverty; stresses the necessity of closely monitoring the implementation of the investments and reforms under the policies for the next generation pillar of the national recovery and resilience plans adopted by the Member States with a view to carefully evaluating the achievement of the milestones and targets of the measures aimed at improving the affordability, quality and inclusiveness of ECEC services; highlights that in general terms RRF reporting obligations have resulted in the availability of more detailed and measurable objectives and data on expenditure in this policy area; regrets,

however, that in some cases the Member States' authorities have failed to produce sufficiently clear figures on the planned objectives and measures effectively delivered, for example on the number of new places in nurseries and on the increased coverage of early childhood education services; points out the necessity of financially and structurally guaranteeing the maintenance of the expanded capacity and coverage of ECEC services, once the extraordinary investments under the national recovery and resilience plans are exhausted; stresses the necessity of coordinating the national recovery and resilience plans in this field with the Child Guarantee objectives and the resources already allocated under the ESF+ and the other European structural funds, to foster synergies, avoid funding overlaps and ensure the long-term sustainability of the proposed measures;

24. Calls on the Member States to ensure that the best use is made of available EU and national funds and invites them to explore innovative funding schemes, including public-private partnerships; encourages the Member States to work with the European Investment Bank and invest in social infrastructure dedicated to children and families; invites the Member States to provide additional national funds to complement actions set out in Child Guarantee NAPs;
25. Calls on the Commission to further work with the Member States by providing tailor-made technical expertise through the Technical Support Instrument to boost the technical capacity for implementing the ECG, implementing reforms pertaining to child policies and developing reforms to enhance the inclusion and quality of services for children in vulnerable situations; notes that the support should focus on the development of national programmes and sub-granting schemes in order to reach identified target groups of children, build national monitoring frameworks in line with European standards and develop guidelines to help improve the quality of national indicators, monitoring and evaluation;
26. Calls on the Commission to lift administrative burdens to ensure direct, adequate and easily accessible funding at regional and local level in order to boost investment in social infrastructure and increase the capacity of regional and local services to pilot new models and innovative solutions for reducing child poverty; highlights the necessity of providing local and regional authorities and municipalities with adequate support to implement the measures included in the plans, especially in the most rural areas; calls on the Commission to ensure the calls for proposals and funding opportunities reach all stakeholders, including CSOs tackling child poverty; welcomes the Flexible Assistance to Territories (FAST-CARE) model that provides funding to regional and local authorities and CSOs;
27. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to continue investing in family and community-based care to ensure the effective transition from institutional care;

Stakeholder involvement at all levels

28. Calls on the Member States to involve all relevant stakeholders at all levels in the revision and implementation of their NAPs in order to build solid partnerships that can strengthen and expand ownership and commitment; highlights the importance of involving civil society, ECEC staff and service providers and vulnerable groups, and of

facilitating the meaningful, inclusive and safe participation of children and their families and CSOs representing children and their carers, in developing and implementing the monitoring and evaluation framework; stresses, in this respect, the important role of the European Platform on Combating Homelessness in sharing experience and policy recommendations in the fight against homelessness;

29. Calls for the Member States to support local partnerships for children between municipality-led services and other service providers, local communities, parents and children, schools, charities, social partners, CSOs and private-sector actors in order to maximise resources and their efficient use in the implementation of the ECG; notes that local partnerships should ensure a participatory approach to developing, implementing and monitoring the local Child Guarantee and should guarantee that responsibility for this is shared; suggests the creation of a technical assistance facility for local and regional authorities and municipalities to increase their capacity to plan and deliver Child Guarantee-related services and to maximise the potential of EU funds in this field;

Governance of the European Child Guarantee

30. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to draw up a solid governance framework at EU and national level, with clear political responsibility and leadership, ensuring a successful and integrated interplay between the Child Guarantee, national frameworks and strategies and the EU social and equity agenda – including the European Semester; highlights the need for multilevel governance, with joint responsibility and coordinated strategies between local, regional, national and EU levels, including the revision of existing relevant strategies to prevent and mitigate child poverty;
31. Highlights the fact that national coordinators need adequate leverage and financial and human resources and require a strong mandate to effectively and efficiently coordinate the implementation of the NAPs; highlights that Member States have appointed very different profiles as their national coordinators; underlines that such heterogeneity should not result in uneven results in the delivery of the ECG; stresses the crucial role of national coordinators within the governance of the ECG, notably in their function and responsibility of coordinating strategies between local, regional, national and EU levels; calls for coordinators to duly report every two years on the progress made on all aspects of the Child Guarantee and to regularly exchange best practices with their national counterparts; calls on the Commission to ensure reinforced institutional coordination;
32. Reiterates its call made in its resolution of 29 April 2021 on the European Child Guarantee to examine the possibility of establishing a European authority for children; urges the Commission to carry out an impact assessment on the establishment of the European authority for children, with a mandate for a permanent system of monitoring, support and cooperation between the Commission, the Member States, national coordinators and relevant stakeholders, including children's ombudspersons or other national authorities dedicated to children's rights, EU agencies, institutions and CSOs; notes that, among other things, the impact assessment should explore how this body would:

- monitor the development of the Child Guarantee NAPs and the relevant trends at EU level;
- work with Eurostat and the European Statistical System, including the national statistical offices, towards a harmonised development and collection of quantitative and qualitative data in all areas relevant to the implementation of the objectives of the ECG and other related policies on children;
- promote the exchange of practices among Member States and other relevant stakeholders, including by engaging in joint initiatives promoting partnerships between Member States and other relevant stakeholders;
- support Member States in their follow-up on relevant country-specific recommendations made as part of the European Semester;
- reflect on updates to the guidelines laid down in the Council Recommendation on the European Child Guarantee in order to ensure its full and effective implementation;
- work in close cooperation with relevant stakeholders, scientific experts and practitioners and regularly consult with children’s forums;
- promote awareness-raising and similar campaigns;
- support the expansion of the ECG to the accession countries and encourage them to implement it;
- raise awareness about the technical support instrument and combining ESF+ and other EU funds to deliver on the Child Guarantee;

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33. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.