

**Question for written answer E-013143/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Monika Panayotova (PPE)

Subject: Equal access to quality Early Childhood Education and Care

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) is the essential foundation for successful lifelong learning, social integration, personal development and later employability (COM(2011)0066). Ensuring universal equal access to high quality ECEC would contribute to the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy, in particular in relation to the targets of reducing early school leaving to below 10 % and lifting at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and social exclusion.

Taking these facts into consideration, Member States have set a target for at least 95 % of children between age 4 and the start of compulsory education to participate in ECEC by 2020 ('ET 2020', (2009/C 119/02)). However, Member States are faced with a two-fold challenge with regard to ECEC: to provide access to ECEC for all children and to raise the quality of the ECEC provided. To assist Member States in this regard, the Commission set up a Thematic Working Group in 2012 to determine the quality framework for ECEC at EU level.

1. What progress has been made in the work of the working group to develop a quality framework for ECEC at EU level?
2. What other specific measures does the Commission envisage to assist Member States in ensuring equal access to ECEC and the high quality of provision?