

## **Overview of the 2016 country-specific recommendations in the area of families and children**

The table below gives an overview by topic of the country-specific-recommendations (CSRs) that were proposed by the Commission and adopted by the Council in 2014, 2015 and 2016 as part of the European Semester to the various Member States in the area of child poverty and well-being as covered by the Investing in Children Recommendation. Compared to outcome of the last two years, there has this year been a further reduction in the number of CSRs. At the same the recitals have become much more substantial in terms of policy criticism. The reason for the reduction in the number of CSRs is that the Commission wanted to focus on the top priority areas for action in each Member State. In this way it hopes to promote better implementation and to increase ownership at national level and with social partners and other stakeholders. The complete set of 2016 CSRs and recitals can be found at

[http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm) .

<b>Policy Topic</b>	<b>Countries receiving a child CSR in 2014</b>	<b>Countries receiving a child CSR in 2015</b>	<b>Countries receiving a child CSR in 2016<sup>1</sup></b>
<b>Child poverty</b>			IE, IT (N.B. 'National Anti-Poverty Strategy')
<b>Income support</b>	IE, IT, UK, ES, HU, BG, RO, PT, LV	BG, CZ, HU, IT, LV, LT, PT, RO, SL, ES	BG, ES, FR, HU, HR, IE, IT, LT, LV
<b>Efficiency/effectiveness of social protection support</b>	FI, RO, EE, HR, LV, ES, BG	HR, IE, IT, FI	HR, ES, IT
<b>ECEC/childcare (access, affordability, quality)</b>	IE, IT, SK, RO, PL, DE, EE, CZ, AT, UK	AT, CZ, EE, IE, RO, SK, UK	ES, IE, IT, SK, UK
<b>Inclusive education/ Early school leaving</b>	SE, ES, SK, RO, PT, MT, IT, DK, DE, FR, CZ, BE, AT, PL, HU, HR, EE, BG	AT, BG, CZ, EE, HU, IT, LV, LT, MT, PT, RO, SK, UK	BG, CZ, HU, RO, SK [AT, BE – migrant populations]
<b>Affordable housing</b>	UK, SE, NL	NL, SE, UK	IE, NL, SE, UK, LU
<b>Financial disincentives to the labour market</b>	NL, LU, DE, BE, IT, AT, FR, EE, IE, LU	HR, CZ, DE, EE, IE, LV, LT, PT, RO, SK	DE, IE, FR, FI
<b>Reconciliation</b>	MT, PL, LU	IT	
<b>Youth activation</b>	LU, LT, LV, UK, SE, FI, SK, SL, PT, HU, IT, HR, FR, ES, IE, DK, BG, BE	IT, RO, SK, ES, FI	BG, RO
<b>Access to health</b>	BG, RO, LV, ES	BG, LV, LT, RO	BG, CY, LV, PT, RO, SI
<b>Roma-related</b>	BG, HU, CZ, RO, SK	BG, CZ, HU, RO, SK	BG, CZ, HU, RO, SK

<sup>1</sup> In order to avoid duplication Cyprus and Greece did not receive any CSRs in 2014 and 2015 as they were still subject to macroeconomic adjustment programmes. However, Cyprus received CSRs in 2016.

**The number of recommendations issued in 2016 to improve childcare have decreased** – with 5 Member States (ES, UK, IT, IE, SK) receiving a recommendation this year as compared to 7 Member States receiving recommendations in 2015 (AT, CZ, EE, IE, RO, SK, UK). This reduction is partly due to the fact that some progress had been observed in these Member States to improve childcare facilities, and due to an enhanced focus to other potential policy measure besides childcare that can influence women's labour market participation (*e.g.* leaves, tax-benefit disincentives). In the case of IE, a targeted CSR on **child poverty** was retained from last year.

**2016 brought also an increased focus on the issue of gender equality and work-life balance** as compared to 2015. 10 CSRs (EE, IT, AT, RO, SK, DE, CZ, ES, UK, IE) were issued this year in this field, as opposed to 8 Member States (AT, CZ, EE, IE, IT, RO, SK, UK) in 2015. The CSRs this year covered the following issues:

- **EE:** narrow gender pay gap
- **IT:** facilitate take-up of work for second earners
- **AT:** improve LM participation of women (but CSR on pensionable age between women and men dropped)
- **RO:** equalise the pensionable age between women and men
- **SK:** facilitate employment of women, in particular by extending affordable quality childcare
- **DE:** reduce disincentives for second earners CZ and improve the labour market participation by under-represented groups, particularly women
- **ES:** improve family support schemes including access to childcare and long-term care
- **UK:** improve the availability of affordable, quality full-time childcare
- **IE:** improve the availability of quality, affordable full-time childcare

Moreover, **work-life balance** issues continue to have **featured very prominently in the 2016 Country Reports**, with a vast majority of the Country Reports covering the gender employment gap and the employment impact of parenthood, and also systematic reporting on the progress towards the Barcelona Targets. Maternity/parental leave arrangements have received some coverage in the country reports this year for a few countries, notably EE, RO and the UK.