



The EU Added Value of Investing in Children and Youth in Vulnerable Situations

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EU Alliance for investing in children

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RECOMMENDATIONS

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

of 20 February 2013

Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage

(2013/112/EU)

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 292 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Respect for human dignity is a founding value of the European Union, whose aims include promoting the well-being of its people; the Union must protect the rights of the child, combat social exclusion and discrimination, promote social justice and protection;
- (2) Children (*) are more at risk of poverty or social exclusion than the overall population in a large majority of EU countries; children growing up in poverty or social exclusion are less likely than their better-off peers to do well in school, enjoy good health and realise their full potential later in life;
- (3) Preventing the transmission of disadvantage across generations is a crucial investment in Europe's future, as well as a direct contribution to the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, with long-term benefits for children, the economy and society as a whole;
- (4) Early intervention and prevention are essential for developing more effective and efficient policies, as public expenditure addressing the consequences of child poverty and social exclusion tends to be greater than that needed for intervening at an early age;
- (5) Tackling disadvantage in early years is an important means of stepping up efforts to address poverty and social exclusion in general. Prevention is most effectively achieved through integrated strategies that combine support to parents to access the labour market with adequate income support and access to services that are essential to children's outcomes, such as quality (pre-school) education, health, housing and social

(*) In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, children are understood in this context as persons under the age of 18.

services, as well as opportunities to participate and use their rights, which help children live up to their full potential and contribute to their resilience.

- (6) The most successful strategies in addressing child poverty have proved to be those underpinned by policies improving the well-being of all children, while giving careful consideration to children in particularly vulnerable situations;
- (7) The promotion of gender equality, gender mainstreaming and equal opportunities, as well as the fight against discrimination faced by children and their families on all grounds (particularly those related to sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation) should underpin any efforts to address child poverty and social exclusion;
- (8) The current financial and economic crisis is having a serious impact on children and families, with a rise in the proportion of those living in poverty and social exclusion in a number of countries;
- (9) Budget consolidation efforts due to growing fiscal constraints in a number of countries present significant challenges to ensure that social policies remain adequate and effective in the short as well as the long run;
- (10) More than a decade of cooperation at EU level has led to a common understanding of the determinants of child poverty through substantial work on developing appropriate monitoring indicators, identifying common challenges and successful policy approaches, which has given political momentum to the issue; subsequently, the Commission has announced the adoption of a Recommendation on Child Poverty in the Communication on the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion (*);
- (11) The Europe 2020 Strategy has given new impetus to efforts to address poverty and social exclusion in the EU, by setting a common European target to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion by at least 20 million by 2020, as well as

(*) COM(2010) 758 final.

Pillar 1: Access to resources

Pillar 2: Access to affordable quality services

Pillar 3: Children's right to participate

Table discussions:

1. What are the lessons learned of an empowering environment, its impact on children's development and on their contribution to society? How can we better embed such a rights-based approach in our policy making at different levels?
2. Which strategies should be put in place at different levels to promote social inclusion of all children, yielding the best possible outcomes for children, and children in vulnerable situations in particular, through the implementation of the EPSR and as foreseen in the SDGs?
3. How can the next MFF include resources to reach these children and youth?