



Press Release of the EU Alliance for Investing in Childrenⁱ on the occasion of the EPSCO Council 10 March 2014

NO INCLUSIVE GROWTH WITH INCREASING CHILD POVERTY Urgent call for action

There are 26,5 million children across the European Union at risk of poverty or social exclusion - half a million more than a year agoⁱⁱ - and the economic, financial and social crisis is only putting even more children at risk.

On the occasion of the EPSCO Council Meeting on 10 March, the EU Alliance for Investing in Children emphasises that tackling and preventing child poverty and social exclusion are key to achieving the Europe 2020 headline targets.

There is no inclusive growth without tackling and preventing child poverty and promoting child well-being.

Growing up in poverty can negatively affect children's opportunities for the rest of their lives, with far-reaching consequences - for instance, on their future participation in the labour market and society. Acting early on child poverty and well-being is not only a moral imperative, it is cost-effective. Poverty denies children their human rights. It does not simply mean that children's basic needs – such as food, clothes and housing – might not be met; it also means lack of equal access to affordable and quality services and care, and experiencing exclusion from activities with peers. With appropriate support, the current generation of children who are growing up in deprivation and exclusion will be enabled to reach their full potential, and contribute to a healthy society and the economy in the future.

For children, the negative effects of living in poverty or social exclusion can last for life – making it even more urgent to act now. However, **Europe is currently moving away from achieving its 2020 anti-poverty target.**

Although more attention has been given to the social consequences of the crisis in the Annual Growth Survey for 2014,ⁱⁱⁱ the reference to child poverty is still limited and framed in the context of labour market reform and Active Inclusion policies. It seems very distant from the proposals put forward by the European Commission last year, with the adoption of the Recommendation *Investing in Children – Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage*.^{iv} The Recommendation takes a much needed rights-based approach that puts the best interests of the child, equal opportunities and support for the most disadvantaged at the centre of efforts to combat child poverty and promote child well-being across Europe.

Therefore we call on Ministers to:

- Give priority and urgency to the **implementation of the EC Recommendation Investing in Children** when adopting conclusions on the European Semester 2014 and on the AGS 2014;
- Include the **indicator of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion** in the scoreboard of social and employment indicators; and urge the scoreboard to become binding in order to deepen the social dimension of the Economic and Monetary Union.

Investment in children and their families makes sense – morally, economically, socially and politically. It is the only sustainable way of overcoming social and economic inequalities in the long term, and of reaching the Europe 2020 anti-poverty headline target.

ⁱ The EU Alliance for Investing in Children is a temporary initiative developed in the framework of 'Module 1: Facilitation of joint actions' supported by the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity - PROGRESS / EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation.

Members of the EU Alliance for Investing in Children include:

- Eurochild
- Alliance for Childhood
- ATD Quart Monde
- Caritas - Europa
- COFACE – Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union
- Dynamo International – Street Workers Network
- Eurodiaconia
- EuroHealthNet
- EAPN – European Anti-Poverty Network
- EASPD – European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities
- European Child Safety Alliance
- FEANTSA – European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless
- ENSA – European Network of Social Authorities
- EPHA - European Public Health Alliance
- ESN – European Social Network
- Mental Health Europe
- PICUM – Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants
- Save the Children EU Office
- SOS Children's Villages International
- UNICEF EU Office
- ELIANT Network

This programme is implemented by the European Commission. It was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment, social affairs and equal opportunities area, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Europe 2020 Strategy goals in these fields. The seven-year Programme targets all stakeholders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-28, EFTA-EEA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.

For more information see: <http://ec.europa.eu/progress>

ⁱⁱ Statistical office of the European Union, EU-SILC 2013

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/income_social_inclusion_living_conditions/data/database

ⁱⁱⁱ Communication from the Commission Annual Growth Survey 2014, COM(2013) 800 final

^{iv} European Commission Recommendation of 20 February 2013 Investing in Children: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage (2013/112/EU) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:059:0005:0016:EN:PDF>