

FIRST DRAFT

I. Programme Details – Fiche technique

Title of the action:	"Testing the Child Guarantee with the Aim of Ending Child Poverty and Social Exclusion for all Children in Europe"
Location(s) of the action	Proposed countries for direct implementation: Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece and Italy Proposed countries for national policy and programmatic deep dives and development of National Child Poverty and Social Exclusion Action Plans: Spain, Lithuania, Germany, Bulgaria, Croatia, Italy and Greece
Total duration of the action (<i>months</i>):	24 months
Total Budget for the Action	Euro 15 million EURO plus UNICEF co-financing
Amount (in EUR) of requested EU contribution	Euro 15 million EURO
Objectives of the action	<p>Overall objective:</p> <p>Every child in Europe at risk of poverty has access to free healthcare, free education, free childcare, decent housing and adequate nutrition. The objective is to thereby ensure progressive realisation of child's rights.</p> <p>Specific objective(s):</p> <p>EU-wide CG Programme framework developed and verified, under concrete and controlled circumstances, including its added value and costs and its potential to reduce child poverty and social exclusion at scale.</p>
Target group(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select national and local authorities will be supported to develop/build on new innovative policy and programmatic interventions to alleviate child poverty and social exclusion for four categories of vulnerable children: children residing in institutions, children with disabilities, children with a migrant background (including refugee children), and children living in precarious family situations • Select EU member states will be supported to conceptualize and plan their interventions in relation to the Child Guarantee objectives using nationally available policy and programme information. Plans will take into account key areas for targeting, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. • The EU Commission will be supported to finalize the design of the Child Guarantee programme with relevant information, evidence-based results, and a draft national child poverty reduction framework which could be a model for all EU member states to express their child poverty and social exclusion priorities.
Final beneficiaries	Children residing in institutions, children with disabilities, children with a migrant background (including refugee children), children living in precarious family situations (including children living in poor and extremely poor households) in the 4 implementation countries (Bulgaria, Croatia,

	Greece, and Italy) and in 3 policy development countries (Germany, Lithuania and Spain).
Estimated results	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National policies effective in addressing child poverty and social exclusion in relation to the most vulnerable and excluded children and their parents identified, analysed and included in the EU CG Programme proposal and the National Child Poverty Reduction Action Plans. 2. Innovative and evidence-based models of services and interventions addressing the needs of the 4 target groups in the 4 implementing countries developed, implemented, monitored, evaluated and assessed for inclusion into national Child Poverty and Social Exclusion Action Plans and the EU Child Guarantee Programme.

II. **Executive Summary** (objectives and main results) – 1 page

Brief explanation of the main challenges/necessities and the main results to tackle them

Overall objective:

Every child in Europe at risk of poverty has access to free healthcare, free education, free childcare, decent housing and adequate nutrition. The objective is to thereby ensure progressive realisation of child's rights.

The objective is to thereby ensure progressive realisation of child's rights. Such improvements will also contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy target of reducing the number of people affected by poverty by at least 20 million by 2020.

Specific objective(s):

EU-wide CG Programme framework developed and verified, under concrete and controlled circumstances, including its added value and costs and its potential to reduce child poverty and social exclusion at scale.

The models of best practices identified in the EU countries and analysed in terms of their contribution to reduce child poverty and social inclusion and will focus on the access to education, healthcare, adequate nutrition, decent housing and childcare for the most vulnerable group of children and their parents.

The Action intends to reach two main results:

- 1) National policies effective in addressing child poverty and social exclusion in relation to the most vulnerable and excluded children and their parents identified, analysed and included in the EU CG Programme proposal and the National Child Poverty and Social Exclusion Action Plans.
- 2) Innovative and evidence-based models of services and interventions addressing the needs of the 4 target groups in the 4 implementing countries developed, implemented, monitored, evaluated and assessed for inclusion into national Child Poverty and Social Exclusion Action Plans and the EU Child Guarantee Programme.

As part of its efforts to achieve the objective specified hereinabove, the European Union has mandated the United Nations Children's Fund's Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia with the verification of the feasibility of the Child Guarantee in elected EU Member States. In order to do so, UNICEF ECARO, together with its implementing partners, will carry out a number of activities including a EU-wide meta-

analysis and identification of best-practices as well as concrete, localized policy-interventions that contribute to providing children with access to healthcare, education, child care, decent housing and adequate nutrition (hereinafter: the “**Action**”).

The Action will be implemented at two levels:

EU Level – a systematic review will take place in the form of a desk review of key publicly available national policy documents and statistics. The findings of the systematic review will be collated and subjected to a meta-analysis to identify variables at the national and policy level that are correlated with success in the reduction of child poverty and social exclusion. This meta-analysis will build on the work done in Phase 1 of Child Guarantee Project and would be a direct input for consideration during the formulation of National Child Poverty and Social Exclusion Plans.

National Level – the Action will support authorities and other stakeholders in the four implementation countries and 3 policy development countries to carry out a deep dive analysis and develop a clear, concise and prioritized strategies and action plan on reducing child poverty and social exclusion. Learning across countries will be promoted to improve the planning tool, and to agree on the best model(s). The agreed model(s) will be proposed to European Commission as a framework that would help countries to express their child poverty reduction strategic priorities and could be used as the (or one of the) enabling conditions for member states to access child guarantee funding.

Local level - in the four implementation countries, UNICEF will support the design, testing, monitoring and evaluation of appropriate country-specific innovative interventions which are effective in bridging the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of children and their families to existing social policies and programmes and thus contributing to the decrease of child poverty and social exclusion.

III. Context Analysis – Situation Analysis – Needs assessment summary

Main data, analysis on the problems to be tackled by the action. Also, on the situation of the institutions that should give the services, and the limitations/problems they are facing.

3.1. Introduction

In the midst of the COVID-19 global health and economic crisis, the social and economic vulnerabilities of children and their families and the speed at which shocks can lead to deprivation and destitution have become apparent. The full impact of the pandemic is as yet unknown, but what we do know is striking: economic contraction is inevitable and recession is likely; unemployment will increase, particularly for workers in informal and service sectors; health systems will be stretched if not overwhelmed; school closures will continue and will impact learning, with knock-on effects on children’s diets through a loss of school meals; children living in substandard housing or neighborhoods with inadequate water and sanitation services will face increased risks while sheltering in place; and children living in institutional care, who are statistically more likely to have functional limitations, will be at a higher risk of health impacts. But lessons from other crises, including the 2008/09 Financial Crisis, have taught us that these impacts can be mitigated by deliberate, rapid, and informed policy measures that reinforce the social and economic safety net for those households which are most at risk. Among those most at risk are populations which were already faced with poverty and exclusion prior to the emergence of COVID-19.

3.2. Definition of poverty

The EU generally refers to two types of poverty: absolute and relative. *Absolute poverty* is when people lack basic necessities for survival while *relative poverty* is when some people’s way of life and income

is so much worse than the general standard of living in the country or region in which they live that they struggle to live a normal life and participate in ordinary economic, social and cultural activities.

In the EU, people falling below 60% of the median income after the social transfers are said to be at risk of poverty. The EU has adopted a specific indicator, called **AROPE** (*At risk of Poverty and Exclusion*), which, being harmonized at European level, allows comparison between member states. This indicator combines monetary poverty (income poverty) with low work intensity and material deprivation to present a fuller picture of risks and opportunities

According to Eurostat data for 2017, approximately 113 million people were *at risk of poverty or social exclusion*¹, that-is-to-say subject to at least one of the following three conditions: (i) at-risk-of-poverty (below the poverty threshold), (ii) exposed to severe material deprivation or (iii) living in a household with very low work intensity.

EU poverty concepts - being at Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion (AROPE):

- *At risk of income poverty* = 60 % of the national median equivalized disposable income. The median divides the observation into two groups, above and below 50 %.
- *Severe material deprivation* = the enforced inability of a household to pay for or afford at least four of nine items considered to be desirable or necessary to lead an adequate life.
- *Low work intensity* = number of persons living in a household with less than 20 % of the total labour potential at work (during the previous 12 months).

3.2. Definition of Multidimensional Child Poverty

As of 2018 (latest available data), 23.4% of children in the EU27 were at risk of poverty and social exclusion, compared with 22.1% of adults (18-64 years old) and 18.4% of the elderly (aged 65 and older).² Though the underlying causes of poverty and its manifestations are complex and multidimensional, there are several factors which are correlated with AROPE, including: households comprising single parents with dependent children, households with low or very low work intensity and which have dependent children, households with three or more dependent children, households whose head grew up in monetary poverty or had a comparatively low level of education, households with a migrant background, or individuals having a disability or living in institutional care. Even though child poverty as a whole has decreased since 2013 it is still far off from the Europe 2020 strategy target of reducing the number of people affected by poverty by at least 20 million by 2020³, and there are significant variations in the success of poverty reduction among countries. Moreover, AROPE rose in 7 member countries between 2010-2018. Each component of AROPE is likely to be negatively impacted by COVID-19, suggesting the likelihood of more extensive and deeper poverty in the coming months.

From a more conceptual point of view, in Europe, child poverty is increasingly understood as a *“complex, context-specific, multidimensional phenomenon, encompassing not only a lack of money and assets, but also other forms of deprivation connected to children’s survival, development, protection and participation in decisions that affect their lives.”*⁴ Such an understanding provides European stakeholders with a clear imperative to break the traditional cycle of disadvantage by investing in children in order to reduce the risks of poverty and social exclusion that they are particularly vulnerable to and carry with them into adulthood. The Child Guarantee, a European take on tackling child poverty and social exclusion, is the very expression of this renewed willingness to ensure access to free

¹ Eurostat: “Europe 2020 indicators – poverty and social exclusion” (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/pdfscache/29306.pdf>)

² Eurostat. “Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion” (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Children_at_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion#General_overview)

³ European Commission: “Europe 2020 – A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth” (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF>), p. 5

⁴ European Parliament Committee on Employment and Social Affairs: “Fighting Child Poverty: the Role of EU Funding”, 2018, p. 18

healthcare, free education, free childcare, decent housing and adequate nutrition to all children at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

To refer to child poverty in monetary terms alone would not reflect the way children experience poverty: to them poverty is, along with income, also about being deprived in the immediate aspects of their lives, which includes areas such as lack of a caring family, nutrition, health, water, education, protection or shelter.⁵ Child poverty is therefore multidimensional and efforts to tackle child poverty and improve child well-being need to be comprehensive and multi-dimensional.⁶ Children from high income countries are not an exception – many are exposed to *relative* poverty, where a lower standard of living in terms of education, health or nutrition in comparison to their peers might limit their future opportunities.⁷

3.3. Impact of Child Poverty

Not only are children more likely than adults to live in poverty globally, but multidimensional and income poverty affect them differently, by having especially devastating and lifelong effects on different aspects of their life. Poverty may be considered as a violation of child's rights, e.g. by depriving them of their right to an adequate standard of living and to be free from deprivations across crucial aspects of their lives, including their health, education, nutrition, care and protection. As noted above, each of these deprivations is likely to spike, even if briefly, during the COVID-19 crisis, increasing the likelihood that children will face multidimensional poverty and deprivation. This is particularly worrisome because for children poverty may last a lifetime insofar as, due to their particular life stage, it can have particularly harmful effects on a child's development, often resulting in deficits that cannot be overcome later in life.⁸ Finally, child poverty may have broader impacts on societies and economies: poverty is felt immediately by children themselves, but it also represents a loss of potential that Europe's aging societies cannot afford. People who have experienced poverty as children are at higher risk to become unemployed, poor and excluded during their adult lives. Poverty and social exclusion of children, if left unaddressed, can manifest into crucial medium and long-term societal challenges. Research indeed confirms that poverty and deprivation in childhood have both short- and long-term effects, causing an intergenerational cycle of disadvantage.⁹

In view of the above, fighting child poverty and improving child well-being is vital in order to break the inter-generational transmission of poverty and disadvantage and to ensure that all children have equal opportunities to thrive and prosper in society.

3.4. Etymology of the Child Guarantee

Fighting child poverty and investing in children's well-being has featured on the agenda of the European Union (EU) for many years: the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 and the guarantee of freedoms and rights as set out in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, social inclusion and the well-being of children, as well as the promotion of children's rights have become steadily more prominent items on the EU-agenda. The inclusion of a specific target on reducing poverty and social exclusion in the Europe 2020 Strategy in 2010 has further helped to raise more concern for those at-risk of poverty, including children.¹⁰

A further step forward was taken when, in February 2013, the European Commission published the EU-Recommendation on *Investing in children: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage* issued by the EU

⁵ UNICEF: "A World free from Child Poverty: A Guide to the Tasks to Achieve the Vision", 2017, p. 4

⁶ J. Espey et al., "Improving the prominence of child rights in poverty reduction strategy process", Overseas Development Institute, 2010, p. 3

⁷ UNICEF: "A World free from Child Poverty: A Guide to the Tasks to Achieve the Vision", 2017, p. 5

⁸ UNICEF: "A World free from Child Poverty: A Guide to the Tasks to Achieve the Vision", 2017, p. 5-6

⁹ European Parliament Committee on Employment and Social Affairs: "Fighting Child Poverty: the Role of EU Funding", 2018, p. 18

¹⁰ European Commission, "Europe 2020 – A European Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth", 2010, (<https://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLETE%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%20007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf>)

Commission (hereinafter: the “**Recommendation**”)¹¹, which was subsequently endorsed by the EU Council of Ministers (in July 2013). The Recommendation has provided the Commission and EU Member States with a clear and comprehensive policy framework for tackling child poverty and promoting child well-being, especially of those children who are in particularly vulnerable situations. More recently, the adoption of a European Pillar of Social Rights (2017) has reinforced the importance of promoting children’s rights. It is also important to note that all Member States have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which should thus guide EU- as well as national and (sub-) national policies and actions that have an impact on the rights of the child.

Despite this growing political commitment to promoting children’s rights and well-being as well as a stronger legal framework and a clearer policy guidance, progress has been slow and high levels of child poverty or social exclusion persist in many EU countries, for some groups of children in particular: children in institutions, children with disabilities, refugee and migrant children and children living in precarious family conditions.

It is against this background that, by means of its Resolution of 24 November 2015, the European Parliament (hereinafter also: the “**Resolution**”)¹² called for a European Child Guarantee whose purpose is to reduce inequalities with a special focus on child poverty. The Guarantee calls for both: a better implementation of the European Commission’s Recommendation described hereinabove and for the establishment of an additional instrument. With respect to the latter, it calls on the Commission and on the Member States to ‘*introduce a child guarantee so that every child in poverty can have access to free healthcare, free education, free childcare, decent housing and adequate nutrition, as part of a European integrated plan to combat child poverty*’ and further recommends ‘*that all children have access to good quality services at this crucial stage in their development.*’ It places a specific focus on targeting the most vulnerable children, in other words, those with the most acute and urgent needs; the Resolution stresses for example “*that universal solutions should be coupled with targeted measures to support the most vulnerable and marginalized groups of children and adolescents*”.

Two years later, the Parliament officially asked the European Commission to implement a preparatory action on establishing a possible child guarantee scheme, which also included the commissioning of a study on the feasibility of a child guarantee for vulnerable children (hereinafter: the “**Feasibility Study**”), prioritizing four groups of particularly vulnerable children: children in precarious family situations (which includes children in economically fragile families, those living in precarious household situations (such as single-parent families), and children exposed to precariousness due to other risk factors (such as being of Roma background)); children residing in institutions; children of recent migrants and refugees; children with a disability and other children with special needs.

The purpose of the Feasibility Study was to explore how exactly the Child Guarantee may contribute to fighting poverty and social exclusion, in particular amongst the most disadvantaged children in the European Union and ensure the access for these children to the five areas already identified before.

Finally, by adopting a resolution on the European Social Fund Plus (hereinafter: “ESF+”) on the 4th of April 2019, the European Parliament further enhanced its commitment to the Child Guarantee, by according a special focus to the poorest children, as well as by emphasizing services.¹³

¹¹ European Commission Recommendation on “Investing in Children: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage”, 2013 (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013H0112&from=EN>)

¹² European Parliament Resolution on reducing inequalities with a special focus on child poverty, 24th of November 2015 (http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2015-0401_EN.html?redirect)

¹³ European Parliament Resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), 4th of April 2019 (http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2019-0350_EN.html?redirect)

3.5. The Child Guarantee as a Policy Framework

Child poverty is at the intersection of a panoply of policy fields. Poor children are imperfectly targeted in terms of both social benefits and services. Supporting parents and their chances of decent employment is a vital element in any anti-child poverty policy package. Early Childhood Education and Care (“*ECEC*”) services are vital elements of the child poverty package but they must be supplemented with other measures.

One of the hallmarks of the Commission’s Investing in Children Recommendation of 2013 is its comprehensive approach, as highlighted by the Recommendation’s first horizontal principle: ‘*to tackle child poverty and social exclusion through integrated strategies that go beyond ensuring children’s material security and promote equal opportunities so that all children can realize their full potential.*’ Hence, it includes both a universal and a targeted approach. Another horizontal principle is to “*support a balance between universal policies aimed at all children and targeted policies supporting poor and other disadvantaged children*”.¹⁴

Indeed, the social investment focus of the Recommendation implies a broad focus: among other things, the Child Guarantee gives priority to services, aiming to establish a decent floor of services and making them accessible for children. It places the spotlight on bridging the gap between the existence of a legal right and its fulfilment in practice. In other words, in order to comply with the Guarantee, a particular focus lies on the implementation and the provision of services or other resources.

Further research shows that policies involving well-designed cash transfers and tax benefits, employment of parents, early child education and care and family services are key to fight child poverty, where investment in children should for example address challenges such as disincentives deterring parents from working, inefficient or inadequate child and family benefits or a lack of access to quality child care services.¹⁵ In terms of a policy framework for tackling child poverty and promoting child well-being, the three-pillar approach reflects that the Recommendation favours a comprehensive package that emphasises 1) access to *adequate resources* in the framework of the European Social Fund (e.g. through employment as well as social transfers), 2) *access to a range of quality and affordable services*, 3) as well as *participation for children* in society and decision-making.

3.5. Target groups

The four target groups are: (i) children with disabilities, (ii) children in precarious family situations, (iii) children residing in institutions and (iv) children of recent migrants or refugees.

Children residing in institutions

In line with the United Nations (UN) Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, “children in institutions” are children who, for various reasons, are deprived of parental care and for whom an alternative care placement in residential care institutions has been found. The definition of the TG does not include children deprived of liberty as a result of being in conflict with the law, infant children living in prisons with their mothers, and children hospitalised for long periods of time. However, these excluded group of children must be recognised as being as vulnerable as the included groups.

The Child Guarantee Feasibility Study has identified that there is a lack of reliable national data makes it extremely difficult to estimate the number of children in alternative care, and more specifically of children in institutional care, in the EU, and therefore to fully capture and monitor their situation. The Feasibility Study has also shown that in all countries where disaggregated data are available, it becomes clear that some groups of children are still over-represented in the alternative care system, and

European Commission Recommendation on “Investing in Children: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage”, 2013 (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013H0112&from=EN>)

¹⁵ European Parliament Briefing: “*Fighting Child Poverty – The Child Guarantee*”, 2019, p. 3

especially in residential care: children with disabilities, children with minority, ethnic or recent migrant background, children from poor households, boys, and teenagers/older children.

Children with disabilities

According to the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) the definition of disability is rather broad and encompasses an open concept: “Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”. The description of persons with disabilities proposed in the UNCRPD results from a progression, over time, of the way in which disability is understood. It reflects the Social Model of disability (also known as the bio-psycho-social model), in line with the human rights-based approach, or human rights model of conceptualising disability, and is consistent with the World Health Organisation’s International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF and the ICF-Children and Youth version) that conceptualises a person’s level of functioning as a dynamic interaction between her/his health conditions, environmental factors and personal factors.

According to the findings of the Feasibility Study, at the country level, administrative data on children with disabilities are also gathered. Despite signature and/or ratification of the UNCRPD, most of the 28 EU countries still use a traditional/medical definition of disability. This information is usually captured in multiple databases (based on a specific need/purpose and housed within separate ministries) that often do not allow for triangulation of findings.

Children affected by migration

Children on the move, or otherwise affected by migration, remain one of the most vulnerable groups in Europe today. In 2018, more than 30’000 children arrived in Greece, Spain, Bulgaria and Italy, of whom 12’717 were unaccompanied or separated children.¹⁶ According to data of the European Commission, there are 5.4 million migrant children in Europe, where, in 2015, one in four asylum applicants was a child.¹⁷

Even though a strong focus may be laid on first generation migrants, that-is-to-say migrant children who have recently arrived in Europe, as part of the migratory influx since 2015, Eurostat numbers on child poverty confirm that children with a migrant background were, in 2018, at greater risk of poverty than children whose parents were native born (32.4% vs. 17%). Indeed, children aged between 0 and 17 years with at least one foreign-born parent were found to be at greater risk of poverty (17.5 percentage points higher to be exact) than children with native-born parents. The highest AROPE rates for children with at least one foreign-born parent were recorded in Spain (49.2%), France (43.6%) and Italy (40.2%).

During their journeys, migrant children are particularly vulnerable to different forms of violence, such as physical (especially sexual) abuse and all forms of exploitation and trafficking. Due to migration-related hardship, the risk of them to become separated from their families is very high, as are the risk of administrative detention and encountering obstacles with regard to family reunification. Only a minority benefits from appropriate care.^{18,19} Refugee and migrant children are not fully integrated into public schools, children at the two ends of the education spectrum being most deprived.^{20,21} The health

¹⁶ UNICEF, UNHCR and IOM: “*Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe – Overview of Trends, January – December 2018*”, p. 1

¹⁷ European Commission, “*Children in migration*” (https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/rights-child/children-migration_en)

¹⁸ Over 16,500 unaccompanied children are registered in Greece, Italy and the Balkans. Based on data compiled by UNICEF in Greece and Serbia, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Italy, UNHCR in Bosnia and Herzegovina and State Agency for Refugees in Bulgaria. Only a minority benefits from appropriate care (estimated 30% in Greece, 41% in Italy, nearly none in Bosnia, Bulgaria...). Over 2/3 of the arrivals in 2018 are boys, between the age of 15 and 17 years old (91% overall).

¹⁹ https://eea.iom.int/sites/default/files/publication/document/Refugee_Migrant_Children_Europe_Overview_Jan-Dec_2018_IOM-UNHCR-UNICEF.pdf

^{20,21} Over 16,500 unaccompanied children are registered in Greece, Italy and the Balkans. Based on data compiled by UNICEF in Greece and Serbia, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Italy, UNHCR in Bosnia and Herzegovina and State Agency for Refugees in Bulgaria. Only a minority benefits from appropriate care (estimated 30% in Greece, 41% in Italy, nearly none in Bosnia, Bulgaria...). Over 2/3 of the arrivals in 2018 are boys, between the age of 15 and 17 years old (91% overall).

²¹ Access to education for refugee and migrant children in Europe. UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF, June 2019

impact of migration on children on the move regarding maternal and child health and mental health, with higher rates of anxiety and depression, is well documented.²² Poor health systems in the country of origin and inadequate living conditions in transit create risks for acquiring infections, including vaccine-preventable diseases.²³ Recent diagnostics have, for example, pointed to the high risk of COVID-19 in refugee and migrant settlements, where social distancing opportunities are limited by overcrowded housing conditions.

In more general terms, children with a migrant background are at particularly high risk of poverty or social exclusion²⁴ and of lacking access to basic services in all of the five areas targeted by the Child Guarantee (healthcare, education, childcare, housing and nutrition).

Children living in precarious family situations

Children in precarious family situations are the most widely defined group of the Child Guarantee's four target groups, encompassing children who are exposed to different risks (sometimes to several of them at once), which may lead to the precariousness of their family and therefore to a lack of opportunities for the development of the child.

According to the Feasibility Study the sub-groups potentially at risk of living in precarious family situations include:

- Precariousness related to economic fragility: children who are child-specific deprived, live in an income-poor household, live in a low socio-economic status household, etc.
- Precariousness related to the household composition: children living in single adult households, "left-behind" children of EU-mobile citizens, teenage mothers and their children, children who are caring for sick or disabled household member(s) (young carers), children with imprisoned parents, etc.
- Precariousness related to (other) social risk factors: children living in a household where there are mental health problems, substance abuse, domestic violence; children living in urban segregated areas (areas with high level of violence and crime, low education levels, ethnic or cultural minorities, economic deprivation...); Roma children; etc.

The Feasibility Study conducted in phase 1 of the child guarantee roll out focused in on the four theme groups and the policies and programmes needed to address their situation of poverty and deprivation. This included four thematic consultations on the study itself – a consultation on each target group. All four consultations were conducted in 2019, and included governments from across the EU, civil society, international and UN organizations as well as the EC. Annexed to this document is a brief overview of the consultations, and the main findings.

The main takeaway from the consultations is that while each target group has the need for specific interventions, there are interventions that cut across all target groups which should be prioritized. There was also a consensus across the thematic consultations that while there are a number of areas of intervention required for holistically addressing child poverty and exclusion of the target groups, there are a set of 'necessary' but not 'sufficient' interventions needed to make progress. The child guarantee should be focusing on those necessary interventions as non-negotiable, prioritized interventions.

²² <http://www.euro.who.int/en/publications/abstracts/report-on-the-health-of-refugees-and-migrants-in-the-who-european-region-no-public-health-without-refugee-and-migrant-health-2018>

²³ In Germany, migrant children were three times more likely to be unvaccinated against measles than host children. This lower coverage was also seen in Italy and Spain. In Greece an assessment of secondary indicators of vaccination suggested prior basic immunization in 58% of the children.

²⁴ Eurostat: "Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion" (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Children_at_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion)

3.6. Actions to address the cross-cutting gaps and challenges identified by the Child Guarantee Feasibility Study

The Feasibility Study has identified gaps and challenges that are particular to each policy area and to each of the four target groups, as well as key recurring barriers to developing effective policies and programmes that cut across the five policy areas and can hinder the access of children from all four TGs to the five key social rights under scrutiny.

First of all, there is *lack of societal and political awareness* of the extent of child poverty and social exclusion and the extent to which children in vulnerable situations do not have access to the five policy areas, and this is often a barrier to the development of effective policies. The lack of awareness leads to a lack of political will and insufficient political priority being given to addressing the issue, which in turn is reflected in a lack of vision about what is needed. This can also be combined with a lack of public support or demand for better policies and sometimes by actual public resistance to doing more for particular TGs. A key consequence of the lack of awareness and political will is often the failure to develop a strategic approach to ensuring that all children, especially those in vulnerable situations have access to the five policy areas. This leads to inadequate and under-resourced provision and to piecemeal programmes and projects. In addition, there is a *gap between legislation and practice*, which in many cases is linked to underfinancing of core services so that their effective delivery is limited and of poor quality. It can also reflect a failure of service providers to understand the full implications of children's rights enshrined in legislation.

The needs of children in vulnerable situations and their families are often complex and multiple and cut across different policy areas, and responding to this can require effective child centred cooperation across policy areas and programmes. However, too often the delivery of policies is in policy silos and there is a lack of coordination and cooperation between policy providers to ensure that their policies are mutually reinforcing and delivered in an integrated way at local level. In addition, there is a lack of understanding of what constitutes inclusive and accessible services.

Drawing on positive examples in Member States the Feasibility Study has identified fifteen actions that can help Member States to avoid or address the seven cross-cutting barriers and challenges outlined above:

- a) Invest in raising public and political awareness of the five key social rights under scrutiny.
- b) Increase the political visibility of children's rights by defining child-specific targets in each policy area and monitor their implementation as part of the strong monitoring framework, based on a set of indicators covering all dimensions (and possibly target groups).
- c) Test all policies/programmes and services for compliance with international children's rights instruments.
- d) Facilitate the use of strategic litigation to enforce children's access to their rights.
- e) End policies and programmes which segregate, separate and isolate, in particular there should be an end to institutional provision for children separated from their families.
- f) Develop integrated, comprehensive and strategic actions plans/frameworks.
- g) Combine universal and specific policies. Specific policies should be seen not as an alternative to accessing mainstream provision but as complementary and enabling.
- h) Enhance inter-agency coordination, improve synergies and integration between different policy areas and services for children, improve coordination at all levels of governance.
- i) Develop inclusive policies across the five key social rights under scrutiny and set them in a broader context of a comprehensive range of policies aimed at combating child poverty or social exclusion.
- j) Emphasise early intervention and prevention.

- k) Develop effective and well-resourced social / child protection services. Such services thus play a key role in both preventing problems arising and helping those children already in vulnerable situations to access the supports they need so that they are then able to overcome barriers to accessing the five policy areas.
- l) Put in place effective monitoring and accountability systems. In this regard it is important to put in place transparent systems for regularly inspecting services and also to develop effective complaints procedures when parents and children have problems with access or the quality of services.
- m) Listen to children and parents, ensuring that children and their parents are consulted in the development, delivery and monitoring of policies/services.
- n) Resource civil society to raise awareness of children's rights, highlight the needs of children, develop initiatives and services on the ground, contribute to monitoring the delivery of policies and highlight gaps and weaknesses in existing services.

IV. Description of the Action

a. Overall Objective – Specific Objective(s) - Results – Main Activities

Explanation on the different levels, including how the more specific ones (activities) will help to implement/achieve the broader ones (objectives). No quantitative targets (no numbers) will be included in any of the levels established here. All quantitative targets will be included only in the logframe.

Overall objective:

Every child in Europe at risk of poverty has access to free healthcare, free education, free child care, decent housing and adequate nutrition. The objective is to thereby ensure progressive realisation of child's rights.

The objective is to thereby ensure progressive realisation of child's rights. Such improvements will also contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy target of reducing the number of people affected by poverty by at least 20 million by 2020.

Specific objective(s):

EU-wide CG Programme framework developed and verified, under concrete and controlled circumstances, including its added value and costs and its potential to reduce child poverty and social exclusion at scale.

The models of best practices identified in the EU countries and analysed in terms of their contribution to reduce child poverty and social inclusion and will focus on the access to education, healthcare, adequate nutrition, decent housing and care for the most vulnerable group of children and their parents.

The Action intends to reach two main results:

- 1) National policies effective in addressing child poverty and exclusion in relation to the most vulnerable and excluded children and their parents identified, analysed and included in the EU CG Programme proposal and the National Child Poverty and Social Exclusion Action Plans.
- 2) Innovative and evidence-based models of services and interventions addressing the needs of the 4 target groups in the 4 implementing countries developed, implemented, monitored, evaluated and assessed for inclusion into national Child Poverty and Social Exclusion Action Plans and the EU Child Guarantee Programme.

4.1. The Action's approach

The multidimensional and highly inter-connected nature of poverty and social exclusion calls for the development of a wide spectrum of comprehensive policies, including measures to support income growth, to address material deprivation and to provide integrated social services that are designed to increase the access of the most vulnerable to existing support mechanisms.

On the grounds of their social exclusion and marginalization, children exposed to the risk of poverty are often kept from accessing sufficiently high-quality basic services such as healthcare or education. Such lack of access enhances in turn the risk of poverty and places a child at risk of a cycle of persistent, sometimes life-long poverty and disadvantages. For many children an improved "care" component represents therefore a pre-condition to achieve equity in accessing existing services, e.g. by means of comprehensive family support (including re-integration from institutional care) or alternative care services. Access to education, healthcare, adequate nutrition, decent housing and care, especially by children pertaining to one of the four target groups, identified as particularly vulnerable and exposed to the risks of poverty and social exclusion may be achieved through their integration into family and community-based services, whereas solutions are generally grounded in achieving sustainable shifts to supported family- and community-based care. The Action is bound to cover the four target groups and their access to 5 policy area (rights) by the selected countries.

Result 1. National policies effective in addressing child poverty and exclusion in relation to the most vulnerable and excluded children and their parents identified, analysed and included in the EU CG Programme proposal and the National Child Poverty Reduction Action Plans.

Result 1.1 Systematic review and meta-analysis of the context and policies for addressing child poverty and social exclusion, particularly for the most vulnerable and excluded children, in EU-27 countries.

UNICEF ECARO will conduct a systematic review and meta-analysis of the context and policy environment for addressing child poverty and social exclusion in all EU-27 countries. This review and analysis are informed by the findings of the Feasibility Study and build upon it, taking a deeper look at whether and how the fifteen actions identified in the Feasibility Study are reflected in national policies and analysing how national economic, social, and policy contexts influence what works in a more nuanced way - on how, when, and why governments implement specific child poverty reduction strategies, what they prioritize in their responses and how that is influenced by factors such as their social context and demographics.

Systematic review and meta-analysis builds on a multilevel approach to understanding child well-being and child outcomes, which involves three tiers of influence and potential impact: (i) at the level of the child and their immediate environment; (ii) through the networks and resources of caregivers; and (iii) through the national context and the policy environment. Each of these angles will be examined in depth as part of UNICEF's approach to testing the Child Guarantee. The systematic review and meta-analysis will focus on the third tier – national context and policy environment – and will (i) create a framework for understanding the drivers of child poverty and social exclusion in varying national contexts; (ii) preliminarily identify how context, policies, and programmes interact to address poverty reduction; and (iii) identify areas for further analysis through "deep dives". This analysis will capture both policies which impact upon child poverty (positively or negatively) as a whole and on the specific impacts for the most vulnerable and excluded child populations.

Key elements of the national context and public policy environment which influence a child's opportunity to thrive and which will be examined in this phase include:

- Child poverty and social exclusion: Current situation and trends of child poverty and exclusion focusing on a 15-year period from 2005 (designed to capture the period prior to the 2008 Financial Crisis up to today).

- Wider economic and country context: Measures of the relative health of the national economies, GDP growth or contraction, unemployment rates, and demographics.
- Child poverty strategies and spending: National or subnational child poverty reduction strategies and the extent to which they encompass the five social rights, spending on children and families, and access to core social services (including health, education, nutrition, and housing).
- Social policies: typology of the welfare system, and an overview of investment in interventions to manage economic and social risks, family policies (e.g., parental leave), and interventions focused on protection and care.

The systematic review will be taken in the form of a desk review of key publicly available national policy documents and statistics and will not provide in-depth analysis of country-level programmes focused on reducing child poverty and exclusion, which will be examined in the next phase. The review will be undertaken centrally by UNICEF ECARO, in cooperation with partners with relevant expertise and regional focus (e.g., UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti, OECD, Fundamental Rights Agency, European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research²⁵). Findings of the systematic review will be collated and subjected to a meta-analysis to identify variables at the national and policy level that are correlated with success in the reduction of child poverty and social exclusion. A verification exercise will be held prior to finalization, with a wide range of partners from government, civil society, international organizations, academia, and policy think tanks. The verification exercise will provide the opportunity to agree upon common conclusion and further refine areas of focus for the deep dives and development of action plans.

Result 1.2 “Deep dive” policy analysis in four implementation countries and three policy countries, leading to a compilation of effective policies and good practices for tackling child poverty and social exclusion, and the development of seven national action plans for addressing child poverty and social exclusion, to be used as a template for the fulfillment of the enabling thematic condition prior to accessing EU Child Guarantee funding.

“Deep dives” provide the opportunity to test the rigor of the conclusions from the Feasibility Study and the meta-analysis while incorporating the remaining two tiers of impact – a child’s immediate environment and the networks and resources of caregivers. Deep dives will be undertaken in the four implementation countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, and Italy) and three policy countries (Lithuania, Spain, and a Lander in Germany). In each of the seven countries, the initial analysis on the national context and policy environment captured under the meta-analysis will be complemented by an in-depth review of specific interventions designed to reduce child poverty and social exclusion, as follows:

- Interventions to manage economic risks: including social assistance, social insurance, and active labour market policies, on their own or in combination with one or more types of complementary support (components that are provided as integral elements of the intervention, such as through the provision of additional benefits or in-kind transfers, or psychosocial support, and components that are external to the intervention but offer explicit linkages into services provided by other sectors, such as through direct provision of access to services, or facilitating linkages to services).
- Interventions to manage social risks: with particular focus on policies which aim at strengthening families by addressing the social risks, including precariousness related to the household composition. These may include provisions of statutory family support services, psychological counselling and family therapy, positive parenting, home visitation programmes (for young children) to increase the support offered to parents to overcome the social risks.
- Interventions to protect and care for children: including child protection/child welfare services, social care, alternative care arrangements, and childcare reform policies.

²⁵ Research partners identified here and throughout are intended as examples. Further discussions and identification of partners will take place following finalization of cooperation agreements with the EU.

Given the variations in context and child outcomes that can exist *within* countries, the deep dives will examine policies and interventions both nationally and sub-nationally. Analysis in this phase will go beyond mapping interventions and will also evaluate the systems, processes, and mechanisms which can influence whether interventions and policies lead to change in child poverty and exclusion. These will include, *inter alia*:

- Alignment of national or subnational child poverty reduction strategies and programmatic and policy interventions.
- Bottlenecks to successful implementation of child poverty reduction strategies and programmes.
- Public awareness of the extent and depth of child poverty and exclusion, including for specific groups of concern.
- Levels of spending on programmes to address child poverty and social exclusion.
- Administrative structures, coordination, and responsibility for child poverty reduction.
- Options for enforcement of children's access to social rights, including through ombudsmen or judicial institutions.
- Availability and usage of disaggregated national and subnational statistics on key areas of concern for analysis of child poverty and exclusion.
- Non-state actors supporting child poverty reduction activity, including civil society and religious institutions.
- Social support structures, including self-reported data on the availability of parental support networks and analyses of trust between neighbours.

Analysis from the deep dives will be captured in country-specific case studies, which will also be analysed for cross-country comparability and lessons.

A deep understanding of context, policy, and process for child poverty reduction at the national level is essential for the deep dive approach. Therefore, strong partnerships will be an essential feature of UNICEF's approach to the deep dives. Formal partnerships will be confirmed in the coming months; however, partnerships are likely to include governmental or quasi-governmental bodies charged with poverty reduction or social policies (e.g., the Office of the High Commissioner for the Fight Against Child Poverty – Spain, Eurocities), policy think tanks (e.g., the European Family Support Network, OECD, FRA), and leading universities. A primary partner will be identified in each of the seven deep dive countries. Partners will provide research and analysis support in partnership with the UNICEF country and regional offices.

UNICEF will support the four implementation countries and three policy countries to develop national child poverty and social exclusion action plans, which will build off of the meta-analysis and deep dive analysis to present clean, actionable, nationally-appropriate strategies for addressing persistent poverty and exclusion of all children, especially the most vulnerable populations. The action plans will serve as a model for an enabling thematic condition prior to accessing EU Child Guarantee funding.

In the Common Provisions Regulation, a thematic enabling condition requires the development of national strategies and action plans on poverty reduction and social inclusion, including child poverty, prior to the investment of ESF+ and ERDF in active inclusion and social integration measures.

Child poverty and breaking the transition of disadvantage across generations requires an integrated government strategy focused on children and their families. These strategies should identify and remove structural barriers, combining prevention and support, seeking both to enhance the development and well-being of all children and to improve specifically the situation of the most vulnerable and excluded. This approach requires a range of policy instruments, such as supporting labour market participation of parents, boosting wages and providing family income assistance,

providing adequate work-life balance policies and provide access to children and family services such as childcare, education, healthcare, housing and social services, as well as opportunities to participate and use their rights.

The Action will support national and local authorities and other stakeholders in the seven countries to develop national action plans within which the country level interventions will be implemented. These frameworks will help national authorities to tackle child poverty and social exclusion in a comprehensive way, mobilising in-country resources and accessing EU Funding and helping the European Commission to think through how one enabling condition might be shaped.

The action plans will be developed through a comprehensive participation exercise designed and implemented by UNICEF. The process will include a wide spectrum of stakeholders, such as national and local authorities, civil society organisations, practitioners and service providers, children, parents and carers. Mechanisms will be designed locally to ensure that all these stakeholders participate meaningfully in the process which result in a nationally agreed strategy and action plan.

All action plans will be accompanied by a clear monitoring and evaluation plan to support and assess implementation and progress towards child poverty reduction and social inclusion. This M&E strategy will be tied to nationally agreed and cross-national indicators on child poverty and social exclusion. Strengthened national systems for monitoring and evaluating child poverty and social exclusion will act as a basis for sound governance arrangements and performance, necessary for the achievement of evidence-based policy-making, budget decisions, programming, management, and accountability in these areas.

For the countries that have worked on the development of the action plans, a number of workshops will be organised with the aim to share experience and recommend a framework that may be considered by the European Commission as part of the fulfilment of the enabling condition to access the Child Guarantee funding. The framework will be designed in such a way that it sets a threshold low enough for countries to be encouraged to comply with it, and, as the same time high enough to be able to address the child poverty and exclusion in a comprehensive and effective manner.

According to the Child Guarantee Feasibility Study, a major barrier to improving the situation in many Member States is that statistics are very poorly provided on provision of services, or in estimates of need or of risk. At the same time, many sources of data are potentially available in current national statistical systems and could be re-analysed for the purpose. While surveys are better suited to cover only the easily accessible populations, the target groups belong to hard to sample, hard to find, hard to identify, persuade or interview categories of respondents, which make surveys complicated and costly²⁶. In order to address the data barrier UNICEF will implement a broad data component which will consist of two main elements:

1. development of a common indicator framework for the Member States, as part of the EU CG Programme Framework; and
2. preparation of a set of recommendations for a harmonized and rationalized improvement of the availability, quality and comparability of data, statistics and analysis needed on the target groups, to produce information for the common indicator framework.

Consequently, the meta-analysis and the deep dive analysis will include an assessment of the available data for the target groups and the corresponding data systems (their strengths, weaknesses and opportunities), and the data component will be embedded the process of the development of the National Child Poverty Action Plans and inform the framework for the Member States to express their child poverty reduction priorities, which will be developed and proposed to the European Commission.

²⁶ Guide on Poverty Measurement, UNECE, 2017

The common indicator framework will be developed with a view to complement the AROPE indicators – such as children in institutional care, or (from a positive perspective) children in early learning (including children with disabilities). As part of the preparation of a set of recommendations UNICEF will support assessing the feasibility and capacity to collect and aggregate quality statistics and produce analysis for the target groups' access to the basic social rights services. This implies exploring the role and capacities of the National Statistics Offices (NSOs) as key national stewards for quality relevant data, but also from other public institutions and academia and civil society actors. It is important to know whether NSOs have the capacity to coordinate the present complex data environments, to rationalize data production and processing, including integration, and the existence of innovative strategies for sampling, identifying, locating, contacting and interviewing, use of administrative registers or linking of them.

Result 2. Innovative practices and interventions reaching the most disadvantaged children designed to contribute to a reduction of child poverty and social exclusion, implemented, monitored and evaluated for processes and selected outcomes.

UNICEF will support implementation of concrete programmes in the four implementation countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece and Italy). UNICEF has a strong presence, strong partnerships and trust among government structures and systems, all of which provides an enabling environment for the child guarantee project to have a quick start and produce some outcomes at the end of the 2-year period.

Each of the countries will focus on a number of specific areas in relation to child poverty and social exclusion, making links with all five policy areas of the Child Guarantee (childcare, health, nutrition, education and housing). The aim of this work is to build on identified promising government's initiatives that are positioned to innovate within existing national systems and to go to scale. In doing so, UNICEF country teams will be applying the long-term approach of systems strengthening, working with national, regional and local authorities and other national stakeholders to design, implement, monitor and evaluate programmes that produce positive outcomes for the most disadvantaged groups of children and their families in the medium to longer term. These practices are designed and implemented in a way that promote social innovation, ownership and sustainability. The implementation of these programmes will be supported by a rigorous monitoring and evaluation framework, bringing in robust evidence based on comparison and identifying evidence and lessons learned from the implementation that can be applied to other regions and countries.

12 models of services and approaches will be implemented at the local level in the 4 implementing countries (*see Table 1*). At the level of each country these models are incorporated into an integrated programmatic intervention/programme aiming to intervene in a holistic and coordinated way in order to alleviate child poverty and social exclusion for at least two groups of vulnerable children from the 4 groups identified by the Child Guarantee Feasibility Study in the medium to longer term. The models described below have been designed based on a strong evidence to have the potential to influence the outcomes for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of children, by providing an improved access to free health and adequate nutrition, free education and childcare, decent housing and social protection benefits, as well as to have the potential to go to scale and be replicated in other member states.

Table 1. Models of services and approaches which will be implemented in the 4 implementation countries.

No	Programmes	Implementation countries				Target groups			
		Bulgaria	Croatia	Greece	Italy	Children with disabilities	Children in institutions	Children with migrant background	Children living in precarious family conditions
1.	Integrated child protection and family support practices	X	X						X
2.	Home visitation	X				X			X
3.	Early childhood interventions	X	X			X			X
4.	Inclusive and quality education (pre-school and school)	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
5.	Deinstitutionalisation of children			X			X		
6.	Supported independent living			X			X	X	
7.	Foster care			X	X				
8.	Co-housing care				X		X	X	
9.	Guardianship care				X			X	
10.	Enhancing life skills, job readiness, and transitioning to adulthood			X				X	X
11.	Inter-sectorial collaboration for child wellbeing	X				X	X	X	X
12.	Living care youth participation				X			X	

In Bulgaria the integrated programme aims to improve the living conditions and increase access and use of integrated services for children with disabilities and children in precarious family situations

through the development, implementation and evaluation of innovative models in three districts of the country.

The programme will work: to strengthen policies and programmes in support of children with disabilities and children in precarious family situations and their families through data collection and evidence generation and through the establishment of cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms; to ensure access to home visiting and early childhood intervention services for parents/caregivers of young children in precarious family situations and young children with disabilities and developmental difficulties in two districts (Sliven and Stara Zagora); to ensure access to quality inclusive pre-school education services for children with disabilities and learning difficulties in three districts (Burgas, Sliven and Stara Zagora); and to ensure that children in precarious family situations and their families have access to integrated child and family-centred support services that address their specific vulnerabilities and prevent child-family separation

The project will support the development and implementation of innovative approaches and services for the inclusion of children with disabilities and development difficulties and children in precarious family situations (including children living in poor households and Roma children) starting from birth through transition to school. It will apply an integrated strategy, which aims to improve community outreach, family engagement, quality and inclusiveness of mainstream services and strengthening of targeted services that address the specific needs of children with disabilities and development difficulties, children in precarious family situations and their families. The preventive approach will be strengthened through proactive reach of vulnerable children and families and identification of potential issues and early detection of risks that may increase their vulnerability and provision of direct support or linking the vulnerable children and families to other services and using case management as a tool to coordinate preventive efforts. A special emphasis will be placed on ensuring that service provision is flexible, coordinated and, as necessary integrated to enhance access and tailor service delivery to the emerging needs of vulnerable children and families.

In Croatia the overall objective of the programme is to ensure that children from Medjimurje County have access to and benefit from integrated, multidisciplinary, adequately resourced community and family-based support services, pre-primary-education and early childhood intervention.

The integrated programme will work: to ensure that the most vulnerable children and their parents and caregivers (including Roma) have access to integrated child protection and family support services that enable prevention, early identification, referral and provision of services in accordance with the child's best interest; to enable access to quality pre-primary education for all vulnerable children (including Roma, children with disabilities and children living in precarious family situations) to prevent social exclusion and early school-drop out; and to improve access of young children with developmental delay, disability or at risk of developmental delay, and their families to integrated and coordinated early childhood interventions services that timely and adequately address their developmental needs.

Focus will be given to ensuring delivery of integrated and coordinated child protection, pre-primary and early childhood intervention services through supporting mobile teams, establishing community-based resource centres, strengthening capacities of various professionals (social workers/case managers, psycho-social professionals supporting families at risk, educators, ECI specialist), ensuring enabling home-environment, raising awareness among parents and professionals, ensuring data gathering and evidence-based planning and delivering services, thus increasing investments in the most vulnerable children in the Medjimurje County and guaranteeing fulfilment of their rights and basic needs. In addition, the Action will assist the Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy to evaluate an initiative implemented in 16 Medjimurje kindergartens through funds from the European Social Fund to extend the working hours of kindergartens so better fit around the childcare needs of working parents. The evaluation will authorities to learn how extended working hours of kindergartens can benefit parents in supporting their children's development.

In Greece the integrated programme aims to ensure that children and young people in Greece, including children and young people in migration, children with disabilities and children in institutional care have improved access to family and community-based care, support services, and inclusive education, thus reducing their risk of poverty and social exclusion. In doing so, the Action will ensure children in migration have improved access to alternative care, protection and education services, and enhanced opportunities for social and economic inclusion. In addition, the Action will ensure children with disabilities and children with complex needs in families or institutional care have improved access to family and community-based care and inclusive education.

The programme will support national authorities have a clear strategy for de-institutionalization and local authorities in a select region to facilitate deinstitutionalisation and prevent new placements of vulnerable children in long-term residential care. The programme will also develop an operational framework for a national foster care system and will support the introduction of an innovative foster programme in two municipalities with a view to national scale up. In addition, the programme will support authorities to integrate Supervised Independent Living (SIL) as a standard alternative care modality of the national child protection system. The programme will also work to ensure that adolescents from marginalized communities have access to opportunities for enhancing life skills, job readiness, and transitioning to adulthood and that schools become more inclusive, ensuring quality education for all children, including those with disabilities.

In Italy the overall objective of the programme is to support children and young people in Italy, including children and young people in migration, have improved access to family and community-based care and support services, thus reducing their risk of poverty and social exclusion. In doing so, the Action will ensure children in migration have access to improved care, protection and housing with a focus on scaling-up and developing innovative models of family and community-based care (foster care, independent living arrangements). In addition, the Action will ensure children in migration have access to improved healthcare and education through the development and use of an integrated innovative skills development package.

The Programme will work: to ensure that alternative care for UASC and young migrants and refugees is mainstreamed within the national strategies and guideline; to scale-up, diversify and specialise foster care services; to test, document and evaluate community-based living arrangements for vulnerable youth (supervised independent living co-housing); to make available and document the outcomes of an integrated innovative skills development package on the transition of vulnerable youth to responsible adulthood; to strengthen skills of frontline workers to provide improved alternative care and support services; and to enhance the participation and voice of young leaving care youth.

The models have been designed to:

- be grounded in the rights and the real needs of the most vulnerable children and their parents/carers and provide outreach to the most disadvantaged groups in order to increase access, minimise non-take-up and to guarantee effective equal opportunities;
- be in line with national priorities and provide a long-term vision, ensuring impact in the longer term and sustainability and avoiding interruption after EU support ends;
- involve key government stakeholders, ensuring coordination between the different ministries and agencies in charge of children's policies and programmes from the beginning (i.e. from the planning process) so as to avoid working in silos and facilitate alignment between the policies and the funds;
- be implemented in a coordinated/integrated way;
- guarantee effectiveness, increase flexibility, improve knowledge, transferring experiences, exchanging good practices and facilitating know-how;
- provide value for money and resource activation, investing in working with CSOs;

- ensure the flexibility to better support children in vulnerable situations;
- invest in local-level programmes planned through community-based, local development methods; and
- be supported by robust monitoring and evaluation framework, focused on evaluating the processes and selected outcomes of the interventions from the perspective of increasing access of children in vulnerable situations to the 5 social rights/policies; and
- contribute to the improvement of mainstream data collection systems, processes and capacities.

At the outset of the project, monitoring and evaluation frameworks will be developed for each of the models which will incorporate a number of quantitative and qualitative indicators to measure the programme's processes and selected outcomes, which will be developed, agreed upon with national and local authorities and integrated into mainstream data collection systems (*see Annex IV. Potential service level indicators*). The project will enhance local monitoring and evaluation capacities from the start of the Action, thus ensuring that M&E processes are conducted effectively and lead to producing reliable input, output and outcome data.

b. Programme strategies & cross cutting issues

The long-term vision of the Action requires a variety of approaches and strategic interventions at a number of different points and levels in the child welfare system, all the way from the child and family to the policy level, and including not only the development of a continuum of family - and community-based and child-focused health, education and social protection services and professional capacity, but also a policy framework, dedicated resources, coordinated partnerships, public and civil society working together, a shifting public attitude, and the opportunity for children and families to have a voice. The Actions' methods of implementation are carefully selected based on UNICEF and its partners experiences and lessons learned through work on similar successful projects in the UNICEF's EU Countries, described earlier in the concept note.

The Action was developed on the basis of an initial informal consultation with governmental and non-governmental partners in Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Lithuania and Spain and will be implemented in partnership between UNICEF (regional and country offices, country implementation teams), national and local authorities and civil society organisations in these countries.

The Action takes stocks of the current situation of the 4 groups of the most vulnerable children and their families in the project countries, as described in the Feasibility Study for the Child Guarantee, progress achieved so far in these policy areas and political opportunities to scale-up the reform efforts and ensure that no child is left behind. The action will support national and local authorities in the 4 countries to fight child poverty and exclusion and ensure quality care, health and education for all children with particular focus on the 4 groups of children.

The Action is designed to produce and capture expected outcomes on the lives of children and their families at the national level, by applying a systems-approach to addressing child poverty and social inclusion.

The Action will build the capacity of the governmental stakeholders and civil society organization to promote integrated policies, legislation and practices which ensure the right to live free of poverty in families and communities for all children (and leaving no one behind) and to effectively contribute to the transition from institutional to family and community-based system and increasing public and professional support for inclusive and accessible mainstream services, including early childhood.

The Action places great emphasis on building up local partnerships between national and local authorities with civil society organisations, communities, children and families which are important to

in meeting the real needs of the most vulnerable and excluded children and their families, keep authorities accountable and develop sustainable services.

The Action will put in place a strong capacity building component. The project will focus on promoting fundamental changes in the way children and families are supported by professionals, decision and policy-makers. The goal of transformation requires an approach to analysing and building public sector capacity in which organisational, administrative and public management approaches are combined with an understanding of the political dynamics and the institutional rules of the game within which public organisations operate.

The Action will devise country specific approaches to manage change. Capacity building is not just about skills and knowledge. It requires quite fundamental shifts in professional values, in individual behaviour, in the relationship of parts to the whole, and a culture change in which the goals and values in supporting the most vulnerable children become internalised in the routines and attitudes of practitioners and public officials at all levels.

The Action will promote community engagement, as inclusive local communities with strong social networks bring rewards for the whole community, all children and families. For example, a fully inclusive school offers improved opportunities for all students because of improved infrastructure, making sure that everyone understands the rights and needs of the most vulnerable groups of children, including community leaders, religious authorities, as well as voluntary groups, NGOs and local authorities, makes change for the better more likely to happen and more likely to be sustained.

The protection of children from different forms of abuse and neglect will be mainstreamed into all Action's activities. Child protection mechanisms will be strengthened and introduced in practice to ensure that children are protected from abuse and neglect and are cared for in safe and secure families.

All Action's activities will be designed with a philosophy of cooperation and consultation. This cooperation and consultation will operate at several levels: between project team and project beneficiaries, partners and other stakeholders, between the various administrative levels of the national and EU authorities. At the basic level, we envisage that the project will create impacts at each of the three levels of government. The project will aim to create a "ripple effect" that will encompass all of these levels. By producing highly practical and demonstrable outcomes locally, the Action aims to influence policy and practice at higher administrative levels, including wider EU level.

The Action intends to combat stigma and discrimination against the most vulnerable and excluded groups of children and their families, as this is directly impact on these groups' lack of access to the existing mainstream services. The Action intends to identify and develop approaches to combat attitudes and beliefs that lead people to reject, avoid or fear those they perceive as being different, as well as discrimination, when individuals or institutions unjustly deprive others of their rights and life opportunities. Attitudes and beliefs can be shaped by context, culture and religion and often can interfere with the rights of children, especially children with disabilities, children from minority groups.

The Action will employ active communication strategies. The success in aligning agencies and individuals with the childcare reform and in building the capacity and culture to support this alignment will require a high quality and coherent approach to communication. Good communication is particularly important partly because of the range of stakeholders, citizens, CSOs, Government organisations and donors involved, and partly because changes in the system will create winners and losers and will have political consequences.

The Action will develop local level evidence-based practice to drive national and EU policies. The Action will promote the development and extensive use of real experience to guide policy and will ensure that new models of practice have taken full account of the reality and the experience of the organisations implementing them on the ground. The relationships and connections between local level implementing teams and groups in the project sites with the national policy groups will therefore be crucial. The project will develop a strategy for analysing and promoting lessons learnt from the service

models developed locally contributing to improving governments' and EU policies on the most vulnerable children and their families.

The Action will incorporate child participation in all its activities. Children and their parents/carers will be empowered to influence strategic decisions of state and non-state actors in the process of developing models of support, care and protection, through their meaningful participation in decision-making and policy dialogue. The project will ensure that service users are empowered to influence the decisions that have an impact on their life by meaningful participation in decision-making. The Action will create a safe and supportive environment for children to actively participate. The Action will involve children in service design, implementation and evaluation of new care models. The project will seek children's consent regarding the assistance to be delivered to them.

The Action will mainstream gender issues in all activities. The Action will ensure that beneficiaries and partners have equal opportunities to participate in and benefit from the intervention. The Action will ensure that girls at risk or outside family care are given priority for assistance and that fathers are encouraged to get involved in family strengthening activities.

The Action will put in place rigorous monitoring and evaluation plans and processes. Particular attention will be paid to evaluating the country project's processes and outcomes, measured against positive changes expected by the target groups. Data generated by the monitoring and evaluation systems will be analysed, reflected upon and used to identify good practices and lessons learned throughout the Action's life to continually improve its quality, and feed into policy development processes at the national and EU levels to facilitate opportunities for replications and expansions and ensure optimal use of results and resources.

c. Implementation period/duration and geographical scope

The project duration is 24 months. The project will have activities which will be implemented at the EU level (i.e. analysis of social protection policies in EU addressing child poverty and social exclusion) and in Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece and Italy there will be the development of National Child Poverty and Social Exclusion Plans on child poverty and the testing of models which will help bridging the most vulnerable and excluded children to existing national universal policies). UNICEF has Country offices, established country programmes and sustainable partnerships with government, civil society organisations and other stakeholders. The Action can have a quick and effective start in these four countries.

d. Final Beneficiaries/Target groups

Target groups include children and their families, national and local authorities, services providers, CSOs, citizens and civil society organizations, as well as media representatives.

The Action will target over:

Target groups	Bulgaria	Croatia	Greece	Italy	Total
Children, direct beneficiaries	4840	800	450	2720	8,810
Adults (caregivers), direct	6900	600	150	1,000	8,650
Children indirect beneficiaries	2470	1,200	10,000	800	14,470
Adults (caregivers), indirect	1900	700	6,000	5,000	13,600
Professionals	600	280	300	400	1580

Final beneficiaries of the action are all children and their families from the 4 target groups in the 4 EU countries. The project will ensure that beneficiaries and partners have equal opportunities to participate in and benefit from the intervention. Project stakeholders will actively participate in the ongoing project implementation, monitoring, review and evaluation. Participation of children and their families in defining impact will be critical to our evaluation of impact.

V. Institutional set up and implementing partners / Programme management (especially in multi-agency programmes)

The Action will be managed by the UNICEF ECARO. The Action will be led by the Child Protection and Social Policy sections, in strong coordination with health, education, early childhood development and youth empowerment sections.

At the level of 4 implementation countries UNICEF has offices and implantation teams, and the Action will be led directly by the head of the country office or programme.

VI. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan for the Action builds on the results of the Child Guarantee Feasibility Study, the available context analysis and the anticipated results chain for the Action including the identified risks, risk mitigation strategies and assumptions (for details see the Log Frame below). The Plan sets out how the overall performance and progress of the Action will be measured, and how its results, that means the processes and agreed outputs and outcomes, will be analysed and assessed to inform the EU CG Programme framework for the 27 EU member states, which will be developed under the Action.

The Plan will be reviewed on a regular basis and updated, as needed, to ensure it accommodates any new developments at EU level, or in the seven countries. To operationalize the Plan and assure the quality and high performance of the Action, a rigorous M&E frame, system and standard processes will be put in place by UNICEF.

As data for the M&E of the overall Action will be obtained from different countries and data sources over the course of the Action, a range of M&E methodologies and tools will be applied by UNICEF to ensure tangible results. Such tools will include, for instance, tools that enable standard collection and comparative analysis of data and information from equivalent data frames (for instance, a set of standard indicators for the four implementing countries), the secondary analysis of national and subnational data and statistics, and the triangulation of data from different data sources.

Particular attention will be paid in the implementation of the M&E activities of the Action on generating, gathering and analyzing data and information, which will guide the most efficient use of available resources, identify good, bad and promising practices, detect situations which use opportunities and avert risks, point out implementation challenges, and can be used for policy development, programming and M&E processes at the national and EU levels.

Monitoring and evaluation indicators and targets to measure the progress and selected outcomes of the policy and programmatic interventions are outlined in the Action's Log Frame and will be further defined in the planning process following the approval of this proposal – this includes the indicators and targets for the country-specific interventions. The agreed indicators and targets will be used to make cost and performance comparisons, and to identify the reasons for this performance including trends, patterns and progress towards achieving the set goals and objectives of the Action.

The country-specific log frames and M&E plans have been aligned with the Action's log frame and M&E plan. As most of the countries under this Action do not currently collect any or reliable and disaggregated data on the agreed target groups, and some also lack sound national and subnational data systems, particular efforts will be made by UNICEF within this Action to support the countries in

assessing the strengths and weaknesses of their child protection data and data systems, identify data gaps with regard to the target groups, and develop concrete recommendations on how to progressively strengthen the data systems, fill in the gaps and contextualize quantitative data like national statistics and administrative data with data from other data sources, including surveys, programmatic reviews and evaluations and qualitative research, among others.

A key component of this Action is developing wider state-of-the-art systems of participatory M&E of child welfare policies and services in the EU member states. Participatory methodologies will thus be integral to the design and M&E of the interventions in the seven countries, including the development of national child poverty reduction action plans. Stakeholders will actively participate in the planning and ongoing monitoring, review and evaluation of the country-level interventions. Participation of children and their parents and caregivers in defining the outcome frameworks for the planned interventions is, for example, critical to ensure tangible results.

Result Level	Result statement (short)	Indicators*	MoV	Methodology / tools	Estimated Budget (in Euros)	Time/ Frequency
Overall Objective	Every child in Europe at risk of poverty has access to free healthcare, free education, free childcare, decent housing and adequate nutrition. The objective is to thereby ensure progressive realisation of child's rights.	EU CG Programme framework incorporating evidence-based policies, programmes, services and mechanisms that address the 4 target groups and ensure their access to 5 social rights, thus contributing to the reduction of child poverty and social exclusion, agreed/approved by the EC	Agreed/approved EU CG Programme framework document and published EU CG Programme regulations and mechanisms for funding, implementation and M&E of the Programme	Validation of the framework with EU member states by the EC Development of EU CG Programme regulations and mechanisms for funding, implementation and M&E of the Programme by the EC	TA, P4 salary	Q4 & Q8
SO 1	EU-wide CG Programme framework developed and verified, under concrete and controlled circumstances, including its added value and costs and its potential to reduce child poverty and social exclusion at scale.	The existence of an evidence-informed EU-wide CG Programme framework and proposal by the end of the Action, including an agreed common child-specific social policy and child protection indicator framework	EU-wide CG framework and proposal to the EC for EU member states to develop/strengthen, implement, monitor and evaluate national policies, strategies and action plans on child poverty reduction and social inclusion	Review of the draft and final EU-wide CG Programme framework/proposal document by UNICEF and the EC	TA, P4 salary	Q7,8
R 1	National policies effective in addressing child poverty and social exclusion in relation to the most	The existence of evidence-based National Child Poverty and Social Exclusion Action Plans in up to 4 of the implementation countries and 3 policy development	Up to 7 evidence-based National Child Poverty and Social Exclusion Action Plans, including sound	<i>Review and assessment of the draft and final Meta-analysis report and the Deep dive reports in 4 implementation and 3 policy development countries along with the</i>	TA, P4 salary	Q3 Q4

	<p>vulnerable and excluded children and their parents identified, analysed and included in the EU CG Programme proposal and the National Child Poverty and Social Exclusion Action Plans.</p>	<p>countries by the end of the Action</p> <p>Availability of a common child-specific social policy and child protection indicator framework for the EU member states that is inclusive of the target groups²⁷ and based on existing indicators²⁸ developed, validated and agreed with the EC by the end of the Action</p> <p>A set of recommendations developed and validated for a harmonized and rationalized improvement of the availability, quality and comparability of national statistics and analysis on the target groups of the Action, to produce information for the common indicator framework</p>	<p>research and M&E frameworks and plans</p> <p>Documents setting out the agreed common indicator framework and the recommendations</p>	<p>results of the EU CG Feasibility Study and other available data and information by UNICEF and the EC. The results of the review and assessment will be used to inform the development of the EU CG Programme framework and proposal to the EC.</p> <p><i>Review and assessment of the National Action Plans for poverty reduction including research and M&E plans in up to 4 implementation countries and 3 policy development countries by UNICEF based on an agreed assessment framework and tool, and a model Action Plan. Feedback will be given to countries and support provided in adjusting the plans, as needed.</i></p> <p><i>Development and validation of a common indicator framework for the EU member states and of a set of recommendations jointly with key stakeholders and based on the analysis of the results of the Meta-analysis and Deep dives, the EU CG Feasibility Study; on the intermediate/final results of other ongoing/planned activities by organisations in Europe to develop indicators and collect/analyse and fill the gaps in child-specific and disaggregated data that capture the target groups of the Action²⁹ and corresponding data systems; and on existing</i></p>	<p>Q7</p>
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²⁷ That means inclusive of the target groups of the Action. For more details see the CG Feasibility Study target group discussion papers: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1428&langId=en>.

²⁸ See: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/employment-and-social-inclusion-indicators/social-protection-and-inclusion/investing-children>.

²⁹ In particular, the joint UNICEF-Eurochild study on child protection data and data systems; UNICEF's ongoing work with national statistical offices (NSOs) and line ministries in Europe and Central Asia on child protection indicators and data systems strengthening (TransMonEE - www.transmonee.org), the work of the new Task Force on Statistics on Children, Adolescents and Youth 2020-2022 of the Conference of European Statisticians, among others.

				indicator frameworks and sets ³⁰		
R 2	Innovative and evidence-based models of services and interventions addressing the needs of the 4 target groups in the 4 implementing countries developed, implemented, monitored, evaluated and assessed for inclusion into national Child Poverty and Social Exclusion Action Plans and the EU CG Programme framework	No. of innovative approaches and service models developed, costed, implemented, monitored, evaluated and assessed for inclusion into national child poverty reduction action plans and the EU CG Programme framework	Detailed description and results of the assessment of the implementation and M&E of 8-10 innovative and evidence-based approaches / service models (at least 2 models addressing at least 2 target groups in each implementation country) EU CG Programme framework document including the approaches /service models that were assessed to be cost-efficient, replicable and sustainable	Review and assessment of the intervention designs by UNICEF and country-level steering committees (national, subnational) and support to the countries to adjust their designs, as needed, including their M&E frameworks and plans Review of and feedback to countries on their progress reports by UNICEF Review and assessment of the evaluation reports for the approaches /service models by UNICEF and the country-level steering committees with a view to decide which of the approaches / models are replicable, cost-efficient, sustainable and scalable The results of the country projects and the review and assessment of the approaches / models will be used to inform the EU CG Programme framework and proposal	<i>TA, P4 salary</i>	Q2 By-annual Q8

*Baselines and targets of indicators are listed in the Log-frame.

Annexes :

Annex I. Project logframe

Annex II. Project timetable of activities

Annex III. Project budget

Annex IV. List of standard indicators for the country level implementation programmes

Annex V. The CG Target Groups and main policy interventions

³⁰ Eurostat, OECD, World Bank, UNICEF, the SDG indicators, among others.

Annex I. Logframe

	Intervention logic	Objectively verifiable indicators of achievement			Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
			Baseline	Target		
Overall objective	Every child in Europe at risk of poverty has access to free healthcare, free education, free child care, decent housing and adequate nutrition. The objective is to thereby ensure progressive realisation of child's rights.	EU CG Programme framework incorporating evidence-based policies, programmes, services and mechanisms that address the 4 target groups and ensure their access to 5 social rights, thus contributing to the reduction of child poverty and social exclusion, agreed/approved by the EC	No EU CG Programme framework in place	EU CG Programme framework and proposal to the EC developed and agreed/approved by the EC by the end of the Action	Agreed/approved EU CG Programme framework document and published EU CG Programme regulations and mechanisms for funding, implementation and M&E of the Programme	
Specific objective	Every child in Europe at risk of poverty has access to free healthcare, free education, free child care, decent housing and adequate nutrition. The objective is to thereby ensure progressive realisation of child's rights.	The existence of an evidence-informed EU-wide CG Programme framework and proposal by the end of the Action, including an agreed common child-specific social policy and child protection indicator framework	EU CG Feasibility Study including all related documents	An EU-wide CG Programme framework for EU member states to develop/strengthen, implement, monitor and evaluate national policies, strategies and action plans on child poverty reduction and social inclusion developed, validated and proposed to the EC by the end of the Action	EU-wide CG framework and proposal to the EC for EU member states to develop/strengthen, implement, monitor and evaluate national policies, strategies and action plans on child poverty reduction and social inclusion	The evidence generated by the Action in the seven countries combined with the available baseline information and data and information from other programmes and activities in this area will create the necessary basis for developing and validating a solid EU-wide CG Programme proposal The EC will create an enabling environment for the implementation of the EU-wide CG Programme proposal by developing strong mechanisms for funding, implementation and M&E of the Programme The EU CG Programme framework will allow for the flexibility required to accommodate new developments at national, regional and/or global level (e.g. socio-economic

						impact of the COVID-19 pandemic)
Result 1	National policies effective in addressing child poverty and social exclusion in relation to the most vulnerable and excluded children and their parents identified, analysed and included in the EU CG Programme proposal and the National Child Poverty and Social Exclusion Action Plans.	<p>The existence of evidence-based National Child Poverty Reduction Action Plans in up to 4 of the implementation countries and 3 policy development countries by the end of the Action</p> <p>Availability of a common child-specific social policy and child protection indicator framework for the EU member states that is inclusive of the target groups³¹ and based on existing indicators³² developed, validated and agreed with the EC by the end of the Action</p> <p>A set of recommendations developed and validated for a harmonized and rationalized improvement of the availability, quality and comparability of national statistics and analysis on the target groups of the Action, to produce information for the common indicator framework</p>	Policy interventions and best intervention practices recommended by the EU CG Feasibility Study and other relevant research	Up to 7 evidence-based National Child Poverty Reduction Action Plans by the end of the Action, including sound research and M&E frameworks and plans.	<p>Up to 7 evidence-based National Child Poverty Reduction Action Plans, including sound research and M&E frameworks and plans</p> <p>Documents setting out the agreed common indicator framework and the recommendations</p>	<p>National policies and administrative and survey-based data are accessible for rapid and in-depth analysis</p> <p>Implementation and policy development countries committed to the deep dive research and the development of Child Poverty Reduction Action Plans</p> <p>The countries have put mechanisms in place to engage with key stakeholders during the process of developing and validating their Child Poverty Reduction Action Plans, including the analysis phase informing the Action Plans</p> <p>The proposed format and enabling conditions for the EU-wide CG Programme are conducive for the Member States to commit and apply for CG funding to address child poverty and exclusion</p>
Result 2	Innovative and evidence-based models of services and interventions addressing the needs of the 4 target groups in the	No. of innovative approaches and service models developed, costed, implemented, monitored, evaluated and assessed for inclusion into	Implementation countries have some models in place that have been evaluated positively, which will be reviewed, adapted as	8-10 innovative and evidence-based approaches / service models developed, tested, monitored, evaluated in 4 implementation	Detailed description and results of the assessment of the implementation and M&E of 8-10 innovative and evidence-based approaches /	The approaches and service models designed, tested/implemented, monitored and evaluated in the implementing countries meet the assessed real needs of the 4 target groups

³¹ That means inclusive of the target groups of the Action. For more details see the CG Feasibility Study target group discussion papers: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1428&langId=en>.

³² See: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/employment-and-social-inclusion-indicators/social-protection-and-inclusion/investing-children>.

	4 implementing countries developed, implemented, monitored, evaluated and assessed for inclusion into national Child Poverty and Social Exclusion Action Plans and the EU CG Programme framework	national child poverty reduction action plans and the EU CG Programme framework	needed, and scaled up eventually	n countries (at least 2 models addressing at least 2 target groups in each implementation country), and the results assessed for inclusion into national action plans and the EU CG Programme framework	service models (at least 2 models addressing at least 2 target groups in each implementation country) EU CG Programme framework document including the approaches /service models that were assessed to be cost-efficient, replicable and sustainable	(including their various sub-groups) and focus on the following areas of action: childcare, education, health and nutrition. They demonstrate ways to reach and engage the target groups and their communities; how to link them to services that are non-stigmatizing and capacitated to serve them; how to motivate them and build their trust to use the services; and how these services can best be integrated over time. Full support of national authorities for testing of service models, as models are in line with the government' expressed priorities, development needs. A rigorous M&E framework is in place to monitor progress and evaluate selected outcomes of the approaches, service models, and the national/local authorities will accelerate or even stop an intervention, depending on the results of the evaluations.
Activities		Means to achieve activities			Pre-conditions required	
R1 Activity 1	Metanalysis	Desk research of existing research			Good collaboration with Government and non-government organisations at country level and accessibility of national statistics, administrative data and other data sources (e.g. surveys).	
R1 Activity 2	Deep dive analysis	Country consultation workshops			Strategic partnerships at national level and commitment of partners. Engagement of key stakeholders including representatives of the target groups and communities.	
R1 Activity 3	Develop National Child Poverty and Social	Country consultation workshops			Identify the opinion leaders and experts for each of the area. Engagement of key stakeholders including representatives of the target groups and communities.	

	Exclusion Action Plan		
R1 Activity 4	A framework for member states to express their child poverty reduction priorities developed and proposed to the EC	Analysis of the National Child Poverty and Social Exclusion Plans Consultation with EC and MS	EC and MS agree on enabling conditions for CG.
R2 Activity 5	Design and testing of evidence-based and innovative service models	Establish strategic partnerships at country-level Establish implementing teams on the ground and project management systems	Institutional commitment and engagement Sound project management systems linked up with existing systems of service providers and authorities
R2 Activity 6	Devise and implement an M&E framework for each model and build the capacities for M&E work	M&E frameworks devised in collaboration with service providers and other stakeholders (including children, families) Service providers and other stakeholders trained and supported to use the M&E framework and the data that it will generate Data systems strengthened, as needed	Strengthened M&E capacities and systems at country level M&E frameworks for the service models are in line with national M&E policies, standards, regulations and frameworks
R2 Activity 7	Process and outcome evaluation of service models	Develop the ToR for the process and outcome evaluation Contract a company or institution to design and undertake the evaluation ensuring the participation of children, young people, parents and carers in the evaluation in line with UNICEF standards for ethical research with children Ensure quality control of the evaluation and any other research conducted	Support to the Action's Team on behalf of Regional M&E team, including an external quality and ethical review of any research carried out with the target groups (vulnerable children and families) within the framework of the country-specific projects
R2 Activity 8	Ensure institutional and financial sustainability of the developed approaches, mechanisms and services	Agreements with national and local authorities on clear sustainability plans Necessary legal, normative, financial and system changes identified to ensure mainstreaming of approaches, mechanisms and services developed as part of the testing phase that have proven effective	Developed models are operational, cost-efficient, effective and well-integrated into mainstream service provision and systems (governance system, data system etc.)

Annex II. Programme timetable

Activities	Schedule						Responsible body	Collaboration
	Year 1				Year 2	Year 3		
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
Activity 0-Essential preparatory works								
Recruitment of project staff	X						UNICEF RO	UNICEF COs
Official Project Launch	X						UNICEF RO, UNICEF COs,	Implementing partners
Result 1, 2, 3:								
Metanalysis		X					RO	National and local authorities, CSOs
Deep dive analysis		X	X				RO, UNICEF COs, national coordinators policy implementation countries	National and local authorities, CSOs
Develop National Child Poverty Action Plan			X	X			RO, UNICEF COs, national coordinators	National and local authorities, CSOs
A framework for member states to express their child poverty reduction priorities developed and proposed to the EC	X	X					UNICEF COs	National and local authorities, CSOs
Design and testing of evidence-based and innovative service models	X	X					RO, UNICEF COs,	National and local authorities, CSOs
Devise and implement an M&E framework for each model and build the capacities for M&E work		X	X				UNICEF COs, UNICEF RO,	National and local authorities, CSOs
Process and outcome evaluation of service models				X	X		Research company	UNICEF RO, UNICEF COs, National and local authorities, CSOs
Ensure institutional and financial sustainability of the developed approaches, mechanisms and services					X		UNICEF COs, national and local authorities	CSOs and other implementing partners

Annex III. Project budget

Expenses	ALL YEARS		YEAR 1	
	Costs (in USD)	Cost (in EUR)	Cost (in USD)	Costs (in EUR)
1. Staff & Personnel Cost	2,260,000	2,101,800	1,080,000	1,004,400
Child Protection Specialist, TA, P4	510,000	474,300	255,000	237,150
Social Policy Specialist, TA, P4	510,000	474,300	255,000	237,150
M&E Specialist, TA, P4	510,000	474,300	255,000	237,150
P3 TA, support/coordinate 7 country level activities	430,000	399,900	215,000	199,950
Child Protection Specialist, FT, P3 - reporting and coordination	200,000	186,000	100,000	93,000
JPO, assistant - general assistance	100,000	93,000		
3. Contractual Services	1,370,000	1,361,261	685,000	445,700
Meta-analysis, 27 countries	290,000	269,700	145,000	72,500
Deep dive analysis and Action Plan development, 4 countries	600,000	645,161	300,000	150,000
Deep dive analysis and Action Plan development, 3 countries	480,000	446,400	240,000	223,200
5. Travel	70,000	65,100	35,000	32,550
6. Transfers country teams	11,000,000	10,230,000	5,500,000	5,115,000
Bulgaria implementation programme	3,000,000	2,790,000	1,500,000	1,395,000
Croatia implementation programme	3,000,000	2,790,000	1,500,000	1,395,000
Greece implementation programme	3,000,000	2,790,000	1,500,000	1,395,000
Italy implementation programme	2,000,000	1,860,000	1,000,000	930,000
8. General operating and Other direct costs	45,000	41,850	22,500	20,925
7. Visibility	139,500	150,000	69,750	75,000
9. Total direct eligible costs of the Action (1-7)	14,884,500	13,950,011	7,392,250	6,693,575
11. Administrative costs (maximum 7% of EU funds)	1,041,915	976,501	517,458	468,550
12. Sub-total eligible costs of the Action (8+9)	15,926,415	14,926,512	7,909,708	7,162,125
13. Contingency Reserve (maximum 5% of EU direct eligible funds)				
14. Total eligible costs of the Action (10+11)	15,926,415	14,926,512	7,909,708	7,162,125

Annex IV. List of standard indicators for the country level implementation programmes

The following list of standard indicators for the country level implementation programmes includes indicators relevant for all and indicators relevant for some of the countries (depending on the target groups and intervention packages). The indicators contained in this list will be discussed with the countries during the planning phase of the Action and the agreed list of indicators will be embedded into the country's monitoring and evaluation system to the extent possible. As data for many of these indicators have only been gathered at national level so far in the countries, these indicators will need to be tested to see whether it is feasible and what is required to produce quality data for these indicators at subnational level.

The country level programmes will need to ensure:

- Detailed descriptions of the packages of services for each of the target groups (including expected outputs and outcomes) and a context analysis for each intervention site
- Costs of service package (costing analysis) and reference budgets (where feasible)
- Barriers to and facilitators of service access for each target group (including all sub-groups)
- Estimated size of the target groups in the intervention sites.

All child-specific indicators must be disaggregated for the target groups (including sub-groups) of the project using the definitions provided in *the Feasibility Study Child Guarantee Target Group* papers.

Other socio-demographic disaggregation variables that need to be considered for the list of indicators that follows include: age, sex, geography, household type and composition, parents' employment situation and educational level, household income, migrant background, disability status, ethnicity (where legislation permits the collection of data on a child's ethnicity), among others.

Indicators
I. Vulnerabilities and service accessibility
Poverty, social exclusion and housing
No./% ³³ of children who experience child-specific deprivation or live in an income-poor household
No./% of children living in severely deprived households (overcrowded household plus housing deprivation)
No./% of children living in households with housing cost overburden
No./% of families receiving social benefits, by type of benefit
No./% of families of EU-mobile citizens receiving regularly remittances
Health
No./% of children and their families/caregivers with access to free healthcare services
No./% of children registered with a family doctor
No./% of children unvaccinated
No./% of children with chronic illness
No./% of children living in a household with members suffering from chronic illness
No./% of children with mental health problems

³³ Percentages can be calculated, if micro-data is available on the entire population in question, for instance data from a census among the target population, a mapping or a population size estimate.

Rate of children hospitalization
No./% of children living in households with unmet medical needs
No. of underage mothers or pregnant underage girls
Nutrition
No./% of stunted children under 5
No./% of overweight children under 5
No./% of children with micronutrient deficiencies / excess
Childcare
No./% of children enrolled in childcare
No./% of children with access to free childcare
Education
No./% of children not enrolled in pre-school education, by reason
No./% of children of school age not enrolled in school, by reason
No./% of children at risk of dropping out of school
No./% of children who have dropped out of school
No./% of children with proficiency in reading, maths and science
No./% of early child leavers from education and training
Separation from family
No./% of children at risk of being separated from their families
Alternative care
Rate of children in formal residential care at the end of the year
Rate of children who entered formal residential care during the year
No. of children who entered formal residential care during the year, by reason(s) for placement
No. of children who left formal residential care during the year, by destination upon leaving care/death of child
Rate of children in formal family-based care at the end of the year
Rate of children who entered formal family-based care during the year
No. of children who entered formal family-based care during the year, by reason(s) for placement
No. of children who left formal family-based care during the year, by destination upon leaving care/death of child
Other vulnerabilities
No./% of children under 5 who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being
No./% of child victims/witnesses of violence identified and linked up with services
No./% parents/caregivers reporting using physical punishment to discipline their children at least sometimes if not more often

No./% of children without an identity document or birth registration
II. Service coverage and quality
No./% of children at risk and their families/caregivers identified
No./% of children/parents/caregivers reached with outreach services
No./% of children/parents/caregivers reached with outreach services and linked up to community services, by type of service
No./% of children/parents/caregivers who received services (including referrals), by type of service, duration, frequency and intensity of services provided
No./% of children/parents/caregivers who have a written care plan
No./% of children/parents/caregivers with an allocated case worker
No./% of staff using a joint working methodology (case management)
No./% of staff able to trace children through the system
Capacity of services (qualified human resources, technical resources, financial resources)
Level of compliance of the services with agreed standards, standard procedures and protocols
Level of integration of the services
Existence of complaints mechanisms for service users
No./% of child and family support networks operational, by number and type of organisations/agencies involved
No./% of cross-sector coordination mechanisms operational, by number and type of organisations/agencies and sectors involved
No./% of children/parents/caregivers satisfied with the services received
No./% of service providers satisfied with the services provided (including referral points)
Subjective multidimensional well-being of children/parents/caregivers

Annex V. The CG Target Groups and main policy interventions

Children residing in institutions

The Europe and Central Asia region has the highest rate of children separated from their families and placed in institutions worldwide³⁴. Isolated from mainstream society, they are highly vulnerable to violence, neglect and abuse and often end up in adult institutions³⁵. Institutional care is strongly associated with stunting, and poor health and educational outcomes. These adverse effects increase with the duration of time spent in institutions³⁶. Leaving institutions for family-care is strongly associated with substantial levels of recovery for growth and cognition, weight and height, educational and health outcomes. Conversely, children raised in supported family-based care demonstrate significantly higher outcomes across all domains.

Over the past decade, many countries in the region have made progress on phasing out institutional care for children or are starting to do so³⁷, particularly for children under the age of three³⁸. A UNICEF independent evaluation on the progress of reforms³⁹ from 2005 to 2012 found a noticeable decline in the rate of children being cared for in large facilities. It also concluded, however, that deinstitutionalisation efforts in many countries have not prioritized the most vulnerable children of all – those under the age of three, the Roma, and those with disabilities – and that reforms require continued investment and momentum to ensure that no child is left behind in institutional care⁴⁰.

The Child Guarantee intends to support member states to end over-reliance on institutional or residential care. In this process, the countries should be realistic and pragmatic and start the reform process by concentrating on the most necessary (but still not sufficient) reforms. Countries should be supported in recognizing that investing necessary resources in policies aiming to serve children with greatest needs will also serve all other children. No child should be left behind in institutional care. The reforms should address the main barriers and weaknesses such as a lack of political priority and will, a lack of strategies and vision, underfinancing, public and professional resistance, a lack of quality in terms of management, the fragmentation of systems, a lack of child participation, a lack or underdevelopment of social and/or community services or also a lack of monitoring and accountability.

Main policy interventions:

1. Unlock political will and ensure public support to policy reform. Governments should say “No” to any institutional care and rather invest in services (social/health/education).
2. Plan and finalise the transition from institutional to family and community-based care systems, ensuring that no child is left behind in institutional care
3. Set policies for ending children residing in institutions in broader context of policies that ensure access of all vulnerable children (and all children) to 5 policy areas of the Child Guarantee. Deinstitutionalisation of the child care system is a key step to ensuring access of children residing in institutions to 5 the policy areas. Access to the 5 policy areas is also a key to prevention.
4. Put in place effective gate-keeping mechanisms to prevent unnecessary separation of children from their families and new entries in the residential care system.

³⁴ UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office, Regional Analysis Report for Europe and Central Asia, 2016.

³⁵ E.g. Dozier et al., ‘Consensus Statement on Group Care for Children and Adolescents: A Statement of Policy of the American Orthopsychiatric Association’, 2014; Berens and Nelson, ‘The science of early adversity: is there a role for large institutions in the care of vulnerable children?’, 2015; Annie E. Casey Foundation, Reconnecting child development and child welfare: evolving perspectives on residential placement, (2013); Mansell et al., Deinstitutionalization and community living – outcomes and costs: Report of a European Study Vol. 2: Main Report (2007), <<https://core.ac.uk/display/199795>>; Browne, The Risk of Harm to Young Children in Institutional Care, 2009; Berens et al., ‘Biological embedding of childhood adversity: from physiological mechanisms to clinical implications’, 2017; Ryan et al., ‘Juvenile Delinquency in Child Welfare: Investigating Group Home Effects’, 2008

³⁶ Sonuga-Barke, Edmund, The impact of institutionalisation and deinstitutionalisation on children’s development – A systematic and integrative review of evidence from across the globe, Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Institute of Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience, King’s College, London – upcoming.

³⁷ Cantwell et al., Moving Forward: Implementing the ‘Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children’, 2010, <www.alternativecareguidelines.org/Portals/46/Moving-forward/Moving-Forward-implementing-the-guidelines-for-web1.pdf>

³⁸ UNICEF, Children under the age of three in Formal Care in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 2013.

³⁹ Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine.

⁴⁰ Independent Multi-Country Evaluation of Results Area 1: Children’s Right to a Supportive and Caring Family Environment, Final Report, May 2015.

5. Put in place a range of qualitative family-based alternative care services for separated children and ensure long-term care planning for each child (foster and kinship care, support transition to independent living), ensure quality, monitoring and sufficient funding.
6. Place more focus on early intervention and prevention of separation, as well as change mentality and social norms among policy-makers, decision-makers and service providers – “spend money today to save money tomorrow”.
7. Put in place effective monitoring/inspection/complaints systems.
8. Invest in human capacity: training, funding, salaries, realistic workload
9. Implement cross sectoral interventions - Coordination& harmonisation of systems.

Children with disabilities

In Europe a group of children who are particularly vulnerable to the risk of poverty and social exclusion are children with disabilities, that-is-to-say children who are born with a disabling health condition or impairment or children who may experience disability as a result of illness, injury or poor nutrition. Children with disabilities include those with health conditions such as cerebral palsy, spina bifida, muscular dystrophy, traumatic spinal cord injury, Down syndrome, and children with hearing, visual, physical, communication and intellectual impairments.⁴¹

Unfortunately, more than often responses to the situation of children with disabilities are largely limited to institutionalization, abandonment or neglect. These responses, which are rooted in negative or paternalistic assumptions of incapacity, dependency and difference that are perpetuated by ignorance, turn out to be problematic.⁴² As a result thereof, children with disabilities are more likely to face discrimination, structural inequalities and suffer from a particularly high risk of growing up in poverty.

Due to environmental, attitudinal and institutional barriers, children with disabilities face obstacles including stigma, abuse, discrimination and services which are not adequately designed to address their needs. High levels of discrimination and stigma have often contributed to mass institutionalization and exclusion within their own homes. Conditions associated with monetary and multidimensional poverty, such as limited access to healthcare, malnutrition and inadequate water and sanitation, increase the risk of disability.⁴³ Families with children with disabilities are more vulnerable to monetary poverty due to disability associated costs and the lost earning opportunities and lower productivity from having to care for their children⁴⁴. Children with disabilities are: more likely to be among the poorest members of the population⁴⁵, more likely to live in an institution compared to their peers⁴⁶, three to four times more likely to be victims of violence⁴⁷, less likely to go to school⁴⁸, less likely to have access to health and rehabilitation services⁴⁹, receive proper nutrition⁵⁰ or have their voices heard in society⁵¹.

The Child Guarantee will help member states to remove barriers to inclusion, such as insufficient focus on early intervention, and wrap around services to support families starting as of the birth of a child with disabilities. The implementation of the Guarantee is bound to close the gap between policy and practice and to address the lack of political will and vision (which leads to weak overall policy frameworks and allocated funding), the lack of understanding regarding inclusive policies, programmes and services, the need to work for attitudinal change, the vested interests in institutional/segregated

⁴¹ WHO: “*Early Childhood Development and Disability: Discussion Paper*”, 2012, p. 5

⁴² UNICEF: “*The State of the World’s Children 2013, Executive Summary – Children with Disabilities*”, 2013, p. 1

⁴³ Banks LM, Kuper H, Polack S. 2017. Poverty and disability in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review. *PLoS ONE* 12(12): e0189996. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0189996>.

⁴⁴ UNICEF. 2012. Integrated Social Protection Systems: Enhancing Equity for Children. UNICEF Social Protection Strategic Framework.

⁴⁵ Banks, L. M., Kuper, H., & Polack, S. (2017). Poverty and disability in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review. *PLoS ONE*, 12(12), e0189996. <http://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0189996>

⁴⁶ UNICEF (2012) Children under the age of three in formal care in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, p.45. Available at: http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/UNICEF_Report_Children_Under_3_FINAL.pdf.

⁴⁷ UNICEF ECARO. 2018. Regional Disability-Inclusive Strategy 2018-2021. Page 3.

⁴⁸ Jones L., et al (2012) Prevalence and risk of violence against children with disabilities: a systemic review and meta-analysis of observational studies, *The Lancet* Vol.380, pp.899-907

⁴⁹ Mizunoya, M. and Yamasaki, I (2016). Towards Inclusive Education: The impact of disability on school attendance in developing countries. UNICEF

⁵⁰ Mizunoya S., Mitra S, Yamasaki I. (2018) Disability and school attendance in 15 low- and middle-income countries, *World Development* p. 389.

⁵¹ Groce, N and Montero, F. Habilitation, rehabilitation and general health care: facing challenges ahead to realize the goals of the CRPD. One in Ten. 2008

⁵⁰ Kerac M. et al (2012) Impact of disability on survival from severe acute malnutrition in a developing country setting – a longitudinal cohort study. *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, Vol 97

⁵¹ World Health Organization and the World Bank, *World Report on Disability*, 2011, p 206

provision, the inadequacy/lack of community-based services or the lack of coordination between different policies, the so-called “*policy silos*”.

Main policy interventions:

1. Work on cross-cutting themes by combining inclusive and universal policies (disability mainstreaming) and disability-specific policies, including:
 - tailored and coordinated support focusing on the best interest of the child and bridging policy silos,
 - the development of instruments to evaluate the child’s best interests, or
 - the provision of resources and support to civil society to act as watchdogs and advocates for children with disabilities.

Against this background, a child poverty/children’s rights focus needs to encompass disability: such a disability focus needs in turn to cover children (e.g. within the framework of the European Disability Strategy, the European Accessibility Act or a greater interaction between NGOs). The work on cross-cutting themes also needs to take into account the need to change societal perceptions regarding disability and to increase political will and commitment. Overall, greater accountability and stricter monitoring are essential to improving inclusive policies.

2. Support governments in an effort to move away from the medical model of disability, which focuses on the question of ‘what is wrong’ with the child and on curing or managing the disability, and to introduce a social model, which looks at how society is organized and focuses on making changes in order to increase opportunities and choices for children with disabilities and their families.
3. Develop clear child-centred national policy frameworks to ensure that all children with disabilities (together with all children at risk of poverty and social exclusion) have access to free healthcare, free education, free childcare, decent housing and adequate nutrition, recognising that the deinstitutionalisation of children with disabilities is a prerequisite for ensuring the five aforementioned accesses.
4. Set support policies in the broader context of policies aiming to ensure adequate income in order to avoid poverty and meet basic needs and connect these policies with the Child Guarantee to address questions of minimum wage, work-life balance and guaranteed minimum income.
5. Prioritize early intervention with and outreach to parents. Such interventions are ought to follow the child and her/his family through its life course and to develop individualised, tailor-made, holistic and multi-dimensional support packages for children with disabilities and their families.
6. Prioritize the improvement of care and protection provided to children with disabilities, in particular through family re-integration, specialized family-based alternative care for children with disabilities, increased support to families to prevent child separation from their families, facilitated re-integration of children from alternative care into families, early identification and early intervention, independent living and inclusion into a community.
7. Make inclusive education a priority as a key element for creating inclusive societies and platforms for special education.
8. Invest in awareness-raising and training of staff regarding rights and needs of children with disabilities.
9. Invest in the development and improvement of social services and child protection systems and services.
10. Foster cross-sector collaboration.
11. Ensuring child participation, e.g. by taking into account the voices of children with disabilities and those of their families.
12. Provide quality-information to children with disabilities and their families regarding the available support systems and services.

Children with a migrant background

Children on the move, or otherwise affected by migration, remain one of the most vulnerable groups in Europe today. In 2018, more than 30'000 children arrived in Greece, Spain, Bulgaria and Italy, of whom 12'717 were unaccompanied or separated children.⁵² According to data of the European Commission, there are 5.4 million migrant children in Europe, where, in 2015, one in four asylum applicants was a child.⁵³

Even though a strong focus may be laid on first generation migrants, that-is-to-say migrant children who have recently arrived in Europe, as part of the migratory influx since 2015, Eurostat numbers on child poverty confirm that children with a migrant background were, in 2017, at greater risk of poverty than children whose parents were native born (34.5% vs. 16.9%). Indeed, children aged between 0 and 17 years with at least one foreign-born parent were found to be at greater risk of poverty (17.6% higher to be exact) than children with native-born parents. The highest AROPE rates for children with at least one foreign-born parent were recorded in Spain (49.6%), Greece (41.4%) and France (41.3%).

During their journeys, migrant children are particularly vulnerable to different forms of violence, such as physical (especially sexual) abuse and all forms of exploitation and trafficking. Due to migration-related hardship, the risk of them to become separated from their families is very high, as are the risk of administrative detention and encountering obstacles with regard to family reunification. Only a minority benefits from appropriate care.^{54, 55} Refugee and migrant children are not fully integrated into public schools, children at the two ends of the education spectrum being most deprived.^{56, 57} The health impact of migration on children on the move regarding maternal and child health, mental health, with higher rates of anxiety and depression is well documented.⁵⁸ Poor health systems in the country of origin and inadequate living conditions in transit create risks for acquiring infections, including vaccine-preventable diseases.⁵⁹

In more general terms, children with a migrant background are at particularly high risk of poverty or social exclusion⁶⁰ and of lacking access to basic services in all of the five areas targeted by the Child Guarantee (healthcare, education, childcare, housing and nutrition).

The Child Guarantee encourages the member states to provide migrant children with better access to free healthcare, free education, free childcare, decent housing and adequate nutrition.

Main policy interventions:

1. Implementation of cross-cutting measures and cross-sectoral collaboration ensuring that basic social rights are accessible to all, regardless of migratory status as per the EC Communication on the Protection of Children in Migration⁶¹;
2. Provision of better information on rights to services through staff cultural sensitization, training of interpreters, of parents and children, engagement of schools on child rights;

⁵² UNICEF, UNHCR and IOM: "Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe – Overview of Trends, January – December 2018", p. 1

⁵³ European Commission, "Children in migration" (https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/rights-child/children-migration_en)

⁵⁴ Over 16,500 unaccompanied children are registered in Greece, Italy and the Balkans. Based on data compiled by UNICEF in Greece and Serbia, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Italy, UNHCR in Bosnia and Herzegovina and State Agency for Refugees in Bulgaria. Only a minority benefits from appropriate care (estimated 30% in Greece, 41% in Italy, nearly none in Bosnia, Bulgaria...). Over 2/3 of the arrivals in 2018 are boys, between the age of 15 and 17 years old (91% overall).

⁵⁵ https://eea.iom.int/sites/default/files/publication/document/Refugee_Migrant_Children_Europe_Overview_Jan-Dec_2018_IOM-UNHCR-UNICEF.pdf

^{56, 57} Over 16,500 unaccompanied children are registered in Greece, Italy and the Balkans. Based on data compiled by UNICEF in Greece and Serbia, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Italy, UNHCR in Bosnia and Herzegovina and State Agency for Refugees in Bulgaria. Only a minority benefits from appropriate care (estimated 30% in Greece, 41% in Italy, nearly none in Bosnia, Bulgaria...). Over 2/3 of the arrivals in 2018 are boys, between the age of 15 and 17 years old (91% overall).

⁵⁷ Access to education for refugee and migrant children in Europe. UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF, June 2019

⁵⁸ <http://www.euro.who.int/en/publications/abstracts/report-on-the-health-of-refugees-and-migrants-in-the-who-european-region-no-public-health-without-refugee-and-migrant-health-2018>

⁵⁹ In Germany, migrant children were three times more likely to be unvaccinated against measles than host children. This lower coverage was also seen in Italy and Spain. In Greece an assessment of secondary indicators of vaccination suggested prior basic immunization in 58% of the children.

⁶⁰ Eurostat : "Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion" (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Children_at_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion)

⁶¹ https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/20170412_communication_on_the_protection_of_children_in_migration_en.pdf

3. Fostering of participation by ensuring better use of existing tools and platforms (e.g.: U-report on the move)
4. Tackle issues of transition into adulthood and impact on access to social services and secure unaccompanied children immediate access to trained, empowered and supported legal guardians
5. Access to healthcare: by addressing issues of definition, range/limitation of care considered, eligibility criteria, tackling differentiation depending on the migratory status (in legislation and in its application), securing access to specialized care (e.g. dental health care, mental health care for the most vulnerable ones (such as unaccompanied adolescents)); generalizing and professionalizing the interpretation and cultural mediation where needed, to overcome cultural and language barriers at all levels of the health system (mother and child health, reproductive health, mental health), investing in health literacy to foster healthy practices and demand; strengthening health workforce's understanding of cultural sensitivities and health issues affecting refugee and migrant children; considering preventive healthcare measures applied to housing, to education, to asylum processes, as a strategic investment into health, early interventions as a cost saving and public health measure
6. Education and Early Childhood Education and Care : ensuring access by broadening provision to reception facilities and for certain age groups (pre-primary and adolescents), enforcing legislation on compulsory education, monitoring registration and attendance, making provisions for associated costs (transport, food...), including opportunity costs (lengthy asylum procedures), addressing issues of integration during the school-year, such as linguistic and cultural barriers, place of residence vs. school (ensuring no-segregation), adopting inter-cultural approaches that embrace language diversity (including mother tongue, English) and culture sensitive learning in all topics, investing in the quality of teachers, developing pre-, in-service training and retention strategies, including language courses and full-year preparatory programs, offering professional interpretation and cultural mediation, supporting hiring of assistant teachers, fostering home-school partnership, engagement with parents to create demand, providing non-formal education in reception facilities towards school integration, providing access to primary health care (immunization), to mental health and psychosocial support to facilitate access to education, mobilizing governments/municipalities to regulate and supplement private sector for ECE service provision, promoting legal reform to include ECEC under the right to free education, encouraging outreach activities, parenting support, additional specialized staff and/or in-service training of the regular staff so as to boost their social and intercultural skills and/or reviewing conditionalities around social benefits where relevant
7. Housing: render adequate housing available by promoting and enforcing funding, the roll-out of and monitoring of the implementation of EU reception standards, including those for unaccompanied children, turning access to decent housing into an enforceable right that one can claim through legal aid and access to legal advice, ensuring the accessibility of basic services, family considerations, special needs, infrastructure, sanitation, security, information, counseling, communication; beyond addressing basic deprivation measures, protect from threats and harassment experienced in reception facilities; foster community-based alternatives, when/where relevant (unaccompanied children) e.g. foster families, supported independent living; support transition into medium-, long-term solutions (apartment schemes); review, adapt to needs over time as unaccompanied children are turning 18.
8. Nutrition: in order to ensure adequate nutrition for migrant children, there is a need to improve the quality of food offered to migrant families and children in camps, reception centers and in the asylum system, to promote community kitchens to ensure that income transfers cover all basic needs including nutrition, to monitor child health and nutritional status in reception facilities, to support meals in childcare centers, non-formal education or schools as well as food distribution (e.g. through social restaurants or food banks), to raise awareness on breastfeeding, feeding habits

and healthy diets, to train professionals and inspect catering services and to adapt food provision in reception/care facilities, schools and other public services to the needs and preferences of this group of children (religious prescriptions).

Children living in precarious family situations

Children in precarious family situations are probably the most widely defined group of the Child Guarantee's four target groups, encompassing children who are exposed to different risks (sometimes to several of them at once), which may lead to the precariousness of their family and therefore to a lack of opportunities for the development of the child. These risks are determined by factors as broad as:

- economic fragility (e.g. families disposing of insufficient resources to protect the child against poverty or hardship), which may be measured by indicators of income poverty or material deprivation
- household composition (e.g.: single-adult households or households with young parents or many children), or
- social risks linked to individual/group characteristics, such as violence, exclusion due to discrimination (e.g. the children of Roma origin) or urban segregation, which may lead children and their households into precarious situations.

The present target group therefore includes economically deprived children, children who were left behind (e.g. children of EU-mobile citizens), children in single-parent households or children of minorities, such as Roma children.

Then again, one risk factor alone may not necessarily lead to a precarious family situation: often it takes two or all three factors, that-is-to-say multiple disadvantages to lead a child into child poverty or social exclusion and often these problems are interlinked: unemployment, educational gaps, low incomes, poor housing, bad health and family breakdown go frequently hand in hand, thereby enhancing the social exclusion of the child.

As already highlighted hereinabove, growing up in poverty puts children in other words at-risk for poor health, impaired learning, and stunted physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional development which can in turn negatively affect their long-term opportunities and well-being.⁶² Indeed, further to several studies, poverty may be traumatic to a child and therefore constitute an adverse childhood experience, determining the child's future with long-term impacts on areas such as health and well-being.⁶³

The Child Guarantee will support member states in removing barriers and the main weaknesses in terms of service provision, such as the lack of or uneven provision of services, poor quality of services or a lack of outreach to those most at risk. As a matter of fact, financial poverty and inadequate income represent a major barrier to accessing the five identified policy areas, where (indirect) costs may deter access or enhance the proliferation of non-inclusive services (e.g. due to a lack of adaptability to cultural specificities, a lack of understanding or of staff training regarding the needs of children in vulnerable situations or a lack of a child-centred approach). Discrimination, especially of children and families from Roma ethnic minorities, special segregation, the lack of priority given to children in vulnerable situations, the lack of support for the most vulnerable families, the fragmentation or lack of coordination of services, the lack of information about rights and availability of services and excessive conditionality are furthermore all factors which may contribute to precarious family situations and are therefore to be tackled by policies developed within the framework of the Child Guarantee.

⁶² UNICEF (2016) "Poverty and Children's Cognitive Trajectories: Evidence from the United Kingdom Millennium Cohort Study" Innocenti Working Paper No.2016-14; Florence: UNICEF Office of Research; UNICEF (2016) "Why Income Inequalities Matter for Young People's Health: A look at the evidence" Innocenti Working Paper 2016-06; Florence: UNICEF Office of Research; UNICEF (2016) "Early-life Exposure to Income Inequality and Adolescent Health and Well-being: Evidence from the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Study" Innocenti Working Paper No.2016-07. Florence: UNICEF Office of Research

⁶³ John Tomer, "Adverse Childhood Experiences, Poverty and Inequality: Toward an Understanding of the Connections and the Cures", in World Economic Review, 2014

The Child Guarantee will also support member states with the development of mechanisms to identify children living in precarious family conditions and of devise-effective approaches to provide timely and comprehensive family support services, aiming to address the needs and rights of children in qualitative family care, social protection, education, health, nutrition and housing services.

Main policy interventions:

1. Implement cross-cutting measures:
 - Combat income poverty by promoting adequate minimum income schemes which are linked to other supports and enhancing access to employment;
 - Ensure comprehensive delivery of services tailored to individual needs; e.g. housing in connection with support; nutrition in connection with health and sport; housing in combination with facilities and indebtedness;
 - Invest in the development and/or improvement of social services, social workers and family support services;
 - Foster inclusive services (regarding e.g.: staff support, training, addressing of staff shortages, development of cultural awareness, measures tackling discrimination or the abolition of segregated services);
 - Develop comprehensive, localized interventions by enhancing positive discrimination in favour of children of the target groups (to enable them to access services), improving information regarding rights and availability of services, developing outreach to parents and children, enforcing rigorous monitoring (in view of European Semester, better indicators concerning children & housing in social scoreboard) and supporting transnational exchange and learning in order to stimulate creativity.
2. Nutrition: in terms of nutrition, policy-interventions may range from the promotion of breast feeding and a focus on mother/child-health to the provision of free school/ECEC/summer meals, investments in the promotion of healthy eating and health in general and the application of common minimum standards, by however ensuring diversity in implementation.
3. Health: policies in the area of health should acknowledge the need for positive interventions during the first 1000 days in the life of a child and invest in family doctors and mental health services. They should furthermore develop geographical hotspots and recognize the long-term impact of early investments into health.
4. Housing: housing policies should involve a political commitment: *'no child should be homeless'*. They should also promote housing allowances and social housing by taking children at risk into account and prevent eviction of families with children. Finally, in the European Semester, there should be a better monitoring of housing linked to housing policies, including policies to improve neighborhoods (counter ghettos).
5. Education: education should be policy-wise a fund level playing field by supporting extended schools to address multi-dimensional deprivation and enhancing the importance of intercultural education.
6. ECEC: Early Childhood Education and Care policies should ensure universal entitlement, combine universal, targeted & proportionate universality and render family support vital.
7. The Child Guarantee also aims at the strengthening and enforcement of legal obligations and the strengthening of the availability and usage of data.