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**PROVISIONAL VERSION**

## Ending child poverty in Europe

Report<sup>1</sup>  
Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development  
Rapporteur: Ms Sevinj FATALIYEVA, Azerbaijan, European Democrat Group

### *Summary*

Too many children in Europe live in poor families or remain at risk of poverty; a problem that has been accentuated by the enduring economic and financial crisis. In this situation, numerous children are undernourished, left behind by migrating parents, exploited by child labour or are becoming victims of violence or abuse. Through the lack of equal opportunities for poor children, including in education, child poverty becomes a vicious circle which is very difficult to escape. Strategies against child poverty have been developed at European and national levels, but are not being fully implemented in the current crisis situation. Many Council of Europe member States therefore face the challenge of preventing marginalisation of certain population groups in the long term.

The Parliamentary Assembly should call upon member States to ensure that the aim of ending child poverty is given priority in political and budgetary decisions. Recent EU standards giving guidance on helping families to access resources, reduce inequalities between children at a young age and promote children's participation in decisions concerning them, can be a starting point but should be better implemented and extended to Greater Europe. The economic situation of children should also be taken into consideration when implementing Council of Europe child rights standards.

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<sup>1</sup> Reference to Committee: Doc.13041, Reference No. 3911 of 5 October 2012.

## A. Draft resolution<sup>2</sup>

1. Child poverty is creeping back into Europe. The Parliamentary Assembly is appalled about the regular reports coming from various countries of Europe about undernourished children, children being left without parental care by parents who are obliged to find employment abroad, and the resurgence of child labour, not to mention lower participation and performance rates of many children in secondary education. It is also concerned about the extent to which children living without parental care or suffering from neglect also encounter higher risks of exploitation, violence and abuse.

2. Whilst such phenomena could unfortunately always be observed in Europe, the recent economic and financial crisis challenging Europe since 2008, which has undermined social protection systems in multiple ways, has further accentuated the vulnerable situation of many children and continues to have a considerable impact on their well-being and equal opportunities for development.

3. The most comprehensive strategies and targets aimed at eradicating child poverty have been elaborated at European and national levels. However, their implementation is currently lagging far behind expectations and the actual needs of children. One of the major challenges from now on will therefore be to fill the gap between brilliant strategies and the daily reality of European children.

4. Some of the root causes of child poverty are not easily tackled through targeted measures in favour of children but need to be addressed through general economic and social policies, linked to the economic recovery and the development of countries facing difficulties such as high rates of unemployment or low paid work.

5. With a view to implementing European and national strategies against child poverty in the most effective manner, the Parliamentary Assembly urges member states to:

5.1. ensure that the aim of ending child poverty is given sufficient political weight and priority, including in dedicating adequate budgetary resources to social protection systems to make them effective, and that clear objectives and targets are set at the national level;

5.2. as regards EU member States, implement in the most committed manner possible, the Commission Recommendation on "Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage" adopted on 20 February 2013, by rigorously following the very pragmatic guidelines it contains;

5.3. as regards all the other Council of Europe member States, take inspiration from this comprehensive EU standard and promote and apply measures against child poverty along the following lines:

5.3.1. allow families to access adequate resources by supporting parents' participation in the labour market and ensuring adequate living standards;

5.3.2. Reduce inequality at a young age by:

5.3.2.1. investing in early childhood education and care;

5.3.2.2. improving the education systems' impact on equal opportunities;

5.3.2.3. improving the responsiveness of health systems to address the needs of disadvantaged children;

5.3.2.4. providing children with safe and adequate living environments;

5.3.2.5. enhancing family support and the quality of alternative care;

5.3.3. promote children's right to participate in recreation, sport and cultural activities as well as in decision making that affects their lives;

5.4. mobilise public and private funds and knowledge at the European level in order to help all Council of Europe member States, ensure material security and equal opportunities for all children;

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<sup>2</sup> Draft resolution adopted unanimously by the Committee on 14 March 2014.

5.5. implement national policies by following transversal approaches involving different national ministries and departments wherever appropriate to ensure greatest effectiveness in the implementation of policies fighting child poverty;

5.6. especially in the current times of budget austerity, closely supervise and assess any social expenditure cuts with regard to the possible impact on the well-being of children; target social benefits to those most in need;

5.7. with regard to children belonging to particularly vulnerable groups (such as migrants, children with disabilities or people living in remote rural areas), take specific measures to improve data collection and monitoring, to put an end to any discrimination and to guarantee these children the same rights and support as all children in a given country;

5.8. wherever appropriate, ensure that local authorities who are in the first line of contact with disadvantaged groups of the population and have competences in providing social services, have a sufficient level of resources dedicated to these services, and in particular to the support provided to poor families and child protection and welfare;

5.9. support further research into the reasons for and means of fighting child poverty and contribute, wherever appropriate, to the development of common pan-European indicators monitoring the outcome of public investments and services for children and their families, as well as rigorously apply such indicators to national policies;

5.10. participate, wherever possible, in international exchanges on the issue of child poverty so as to learn from good practice.

## **B. Draft recommendation<sup>3</sup>**

1. The Parliamentary Assembly, referring to its Resolution ... on Ending Child Poverty in Europe, once again welcomes the commitment of the Council of Europe to children's human rights and child protection, most recently manifested in the Council of Europe's Strategy on the rights of the child 2012-2015.

2. The Assembly notes that, in the framework of the current strategy, the issue of child poverty is covered under the third strategic objective on "guaranteeing the rights of children in vulnerable situations" as one factor rendering children even more vulnerable than they are already. The Assembly considers, however, that child poverty should be given more prominence when it comes to the implementation of the strategy.

3. Many child-oriented services offered at national level, including at the local level, are confronted with budgetary restrictions which may have a direct impact on the quality of such services and their delivery. In the future, the participation of children will have to play a greater role, in order to better target social services and increase their effectiveness by identifying which ones are truly needed by children.

4. With the purpose of reinforcing the protection of children's rights and well-being at the European level, the Assembly therefore invites the Committee of Ministers to:

4.1. give greater priority to the issue of child poverty when preparing and adopting the new Council of Europe strategy for the rights of the child beyond 2015, in particular as regards guaranteeing the rights of children in vulnerable situations and the promotion of child participation;

4.2. invite its different governmental bodies relating to children's rights to pay special attention to the current economic context and the particular situation of children living in poverty when implementing the current Strategy on the rights of the child 2012-2015;

4.3. pay the same attention to the context in the implementation of Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)2 on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18, Recommendation CM/Rec(2011)12 on children's rights and social services friendly to children and families and the Guidelines on child-friendly health care (2011) and on child-friendly justice (2010);

4.4. also invite the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities to contribute to activities in this field alongside the governmental sector and the Parliamentary Assembly, given that local and regional

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<sup>3</sup> Draft recommendation adopted unanimously by the Committee on 14 March 2014.

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authorities are important stakeholders when it comes to implementing social policies and services aimed at families and children.

### C. Explanatory memorandum by Ms Fataliyeva, rapporteur

*“Social investment (is) not an add-on in times of plenty.  
It must be an integral part of the exit strategy to the current crises”*

Eurochild, March 2013

#### 1. Introduction

1. Child poverty is a phenomenon that some may remember from 19<sup>th</sup> century novels by Charles Dickens or mostly associate with the developing world where UNICEF regularly states the highest prevalence of child poverty.<sup>4</sup> However, it also is a sad reality for numerous children in Europe, a continent which generally belongs to the wealthiest regions of the world. Especially in the recent times of economic crisis and budget austerity the most shocking living conditions of children have been reported from various European countries which show that the most extreme forms of poverty are currently creeping back into Europe.

2. In a statement published in July 2012, the Commissioner of Human Rights of the Council of Europe, Nils Muižnieks, warned about the extent to which child poverty was on the rise in Portugal. The combination of growing unemployment and cuts in salaries, increased taxes and reduced social and unemployment benefits had resulted in reduced incomes and growing poverty among many Portuguese families. According to him, this situation of shrinking family incomes held the risk of leading to a resurgence of child labour, notably in the informal economic sector and agriculture. He therefore called upon national authorities to be particularly vigilant and ensure that programmes aiming at preventing child labour were continued.<sup>5</sup>

3. The example of Greece recently showed that an increasing number of European children were facing hunger or the risk of it. In 2012, an estimated 10% of elementary and middle school students in the country suffered from what public health professionals called “food insecurity” and experts estimated that Greece had now fallen to the level of some African countries. Illustrating these trends, international press reports quoted school principals having observed “children picking through school trash cans for food, needy kids asking playmates for leftovers and [young children] bent over with hunger pains”.<sup>6</sup>

4. However, child poverty is not only an urgent issue for countries mostly hit by the recent crises or for poorer European nations. Dramatic statistics and reports on cases of extreme poverty reach us daily from many countries, including some of the wealthier Western European nations. Recent reports from the United Kingdom, for example, have shown that child poverty in the country is expected to be further on the rise from 2.4 million to an estimated 3.4 million by 2020, despite the Child Poverty Act of 2010 holding the government accountable for reducing child poverty. Recent studies have shown that poor children in the country perform worse at every educational stage and suffer from worse health during their lifetime, including lower life expectancy.<sup>7</sup>

5. From these first examples, we can see that child poverty is not only an issue of equal opportunities for children’s development but one of sheer survival and access to the most fundamental resources, and therefore an issue to be addressed urgently. Across Europe, poverty and the extreme poverty that many children are facing should be recognised as being amongst the main causes of various violations of children’s human rights. Not only do many children suffer from severe deprivation including lack of access to adequate food, safe drinking water, decent sanitation facilities, health care, shelter and education. The precarious situation in which many families find themselves also creates an environment conducive to sexual or commercial child exploitation.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> According to UNICEF in 2005, over 1 billion children world-wide, thus almost half of all the children in the world (many of whom lived in the developing world), suffered from at least one form of severe deprivation including lack of access to adequate food, safe drinking water, decent sanitation facilities, health care, shelter, education and information; source: Unicef: Childhood under Threat – The State of the World’s Children 2005, [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org), downloaded on 6 May 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Statement of the Commissioner of Human Rights of the Council of Europe on “Portugal: Austerity measures threaten the most vulnerable”, published on 17/07/2012, <http://human-rights-convention.org/2012/07/10/portugal-austerity-measures-threaten-the-most-vulnerable-says-commissioner-for-human-rights/>.

<sup>6</sup> Liz Alderman: Hunger presses in on Greece, The International Herald Tribune, 18 April 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Picket, Kate: “Rising child poverty makes us all poorer”, The Guardian, 8 May 2013, [www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk).

<sup>8</sup> Unicef: Childhood under Threat – The State of the World’s Children 2005, [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org), downloaded on 6 May 2013.

6. Against this background, the present memorandum takes stock of the current situation of children in Europe, discusses policy responses required and puts forward a number of recommendations. In this respect, I would like to thank Professor Angela Abela, Associate Professor for Family Studies of the Faculty for Social Wellbeing of the University of Malta, who has made a major contribution to this study and the analysis it contains. With the Committee's approval and in order to obtain an overview on child poverty in member States of the Council of Europe, a short survey was sent to member States via the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD).<sup>9</sup> An overall number of 35 replies was received and taken into account for the analysis presented below. However, figures and examples given in the following memorandum are drawn from the survey, media reports relating to the issue of poverty as well as public data available in different member states.

## 2. Definitions

7. A widely-used definition of child poverty is the one provided by Eurostat, i.e. the so-called "At-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion indicator" (AROPE). According to Eurostat, this indicator reflects the share of the population which is:

- (a) at risk of poverty defined as the share of people with an equivalised disposable income (after social transfer) below 60% of the national median equivalised disposable income after social transfers or
- (b) confronted with severe material deprivation defined as enforced lack of at least four out of the following nine material deprivation items in the household in which the child lives: the ability to afford unexpected expenses, to manage a one week annual holiday away from home, to pay arrears (e.g. mortgage or rent arrears), to pay utility bills or hire purchase instalments, to provide a meal with meat, chicken or fish every second day, to keep the home adequately warm, to have a washing machine, to own a colour TV, to use a telephone and to possess a personal car or
- (c) living in households with very low work intensity, i.e. equal or inferior to 20%.

8. The recent adoption of the three criteria above was considered important in the context of the European Union (EU) given that monetary relative poverty rates do not always give us a clear picture of the poverty levels in a particular country. For example, between 2009 and 2010 the child deprivation index in Ireland indicated a rise of 6.7%. However, falling salaries across the board gave the impression that relative child poverty rose by less than 1%. In this respect, the above-outlined list of deprivation indicators adopted by the Indicators' Sub-Group (ISG) of the European Commission's Social Protection Committee (SPC) allows for a more comprehensive and qualitative picture of the standard of living in different countries.

9. Quantitative national poverty thresholds may also vary widely from one country to another. The Romanian relative poverty threshold, for example, was set at \$1.71 dollars in 2010 and was more of an extreme poverty threshold given that it was below the \$4-a-day established by the World Bank for the transitional economies of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.<sup>10</sup> Certain countries like Montenegro, Serbia, Republic of Moldova or Georgia tend to use an absolute poverty line when referring to children living in poverty whereas the Russian Federation applies the "living minimum wage" concept to measure child poverty.

10. The debate around the definition of poverty has also been taken on board by Unicef. Besides relative monetary deprivation with equivalent incomes below 50% of national median for EU and OECD countries, in 2012 the Unicef Innocenti Research Centre also included the 14 child-specific deprivation indicators<sup>11</sup> which Eurostat had introduced in 2009.<sup>12</sup> In their last publication, the Innocenti Research Centre (2013) took a step further and focused on the well-being of children rather than simply focusing on poverty taking into account other criteria such as health and safety, education, behaviour and risks and housing and environment.

<sup>9</sup> The ECPRD is a parliamentary research mechanism allowing reaching out to documentary units of national parliaments in short delays to consult them on topical issues, <https://ecprd.secure.europarl.europa.eu/ecprd>.

<sup>10</sup> Bradshaw, J. and Mayhew, E. (2011): *The Measurement of Extreme Poverty in the European Union* (Brussels: Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion).

<sup>11</sup> These are: three meals a day, at least one meal a day with meat, chicken or fish (or a vegetarian equivalent), fresh fruit and vegetables every day, books suitable for the child's age and knowledge level (not including school books), outdoor leisure equipment (bicycle, roller skates, etc.), regular leisure activities (swimming, playing an instrument, participating in youth organisations, etc.), indoor games (at least one per child, including educational toys, building blocks, computer games, etc.), money to participate in school trips and events, a quiet place with enough room and light to do homework, an internet connection, some new clothes (not all second-hand), two pairs of properly fitting shoes (including one pair of all-weather shoes), the opportunity, from time to time, to invite friends home to play and eat, the opportunity to celebrate special occasions such as birthdays, name days, religious events, etc.

<sup>12</sup> UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (2012): *Measuring child poverty: new league tables of child poverty in the world's rich countries*, Innocenti Report Card 10 (Florence: Unicef Innocenti Research Centre).

### 3. The prevalence of child poverty in Europe

#### *Overall figures and determinants of poverty*

11. Child poverty is an increasing phenomenon in Europe. In 2011, 27% under the age of 18 were at risk of poverty and social exclusion in the EU 27, making children the most vulnerable group when compared to adults and the elderly.<sup>13</sup> European data moreover show that the described phenomena do not only touch a minority of children or less wealthy countries as one could think, but that child poverty generally continues to be on the rise in Europe. According to UNICEF in 2012, roughly 13 million children in the European Union (EU), plus Norway and Iceland, lacked basic items for their development, and 30 million children across 35 countries with developed economies lived in poverty.<sup>14</sup> Across the EU, 19% of children are currently estimated to be at risk of poverty compared to an average of 16% for the total population. Some 15% of children leave school without completing secondary education.

12. In 2013, Eurostat published National Prevalence rates of Children at risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion for EU28 countries (without Croatia because based on 2011 estimations).<sup>15</sup> Attention may be drawn to the EU statistics in addition to the figures obtained through the survey carried out in the run-up to the current report, because the official statistics correspond to the latest EU definition of poverty and are therefore more easily comparable (see tables in the Appendix).

13. Children who were more likely to be living in poverty in 2011 were living in single parent families and large households with dependent children. Almost half of the households (45%) of the low and very low work intensity with dependent children were at risk of poverty. Those children whose mother did not attain upper secondary education as well as those with a migrant background were also at risk of poverty.<sup>16</sup>

14. Already in 2007, thus before the outbreak of the current economic crisis, Unicef drew attention to the fact that Romani children, in particular in South-Eastern Europe, were amongst the groups that are the most vulnerable to poverty, deprivation, and lack of access to healthcare and education. Even in countries where national action plans in favour of Roma had been developed, focussing on housing, employment, health and education, the specific needs of children had often been neglected, and targeted support to them was judged essential.<sup>17</sup>

15. Eurochild, a network of European child's rights activists supported by the European Commission, confirms that the main groups of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion are: children in single-parent families, those in large families, those with unemployed or underemployed parents, children in immigrant and ethnic minorities' families, and children with disabilities.<sup>18</sup> However, the above quoted example concerning the United Kingdom shows that poor children are not only found in "broken families", that the majority of poor children were living in working households, and that some counties were doing better than others when it came to supporting single parenthood.<sup>19</sup> Stereotypes and generalisations should therefore be avoided in this field, even though unemployment and the number and level of family incomes are certainly determining factors when it comes to fulfilling children's needs.

#### *Reports and figures from individual countries*

16. The matter of child poverty has been examined in-depth in various European countries and reports on children living in vulnerable and disadvantaged situations are regularly received from numerous countries. As the present report does not allow for an exhaustive overview of country situations, a few examples may serve to illustrate how dramatic the situation is for certain children in Europe:

17. In some European countries, families are confronted with difficulties of sheer survival, such as in Greece already mentioned in the introduction.<sup>20</sup> Similar examples and alarming figures are also reported from other European countries: In Spain, the regional government of *Andalucía* opened schools in the

<sup>13</sup> Lopez Vilaplana, C. (2013): Children were the age group at the highest risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2011, Statistics in Focus 4/2013 (Luxembourg: Eurostat)

<sup>14</sup> UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre: Measuring child poverty, new league tables of child poverty in the world's rich countries, Report Card 10, Florence 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Lopez Vilaplana, C. (2013): Children were the age group at the highest risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2011.

<sup>16</sup> Lopez Vilaplana C. (2013): *ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Unicef Regional Office for CEE/CIS: Romani Children in South East Europe – The challenge of overcoming centuries of distrust and discrimination, Social and Economy Policy for Children, Discussion Paper Issue 7 (March 2007).

<sup>18</sup> Eurochild: Child poverty in the EU, [www.eurochild.org](http://www.eurochild.org), downloaded on 6 May 2013.

<sup>19</sup> Pickett, Kate, see footnote 4.

<sup>20</sup> Liz Alderman: Hunger presses in on Greece, The International Herald Tribune, 18 April 2013.

summer of 2013 mainly to offer support to children who were living in hardship because of the prolonged economic crisis. Similar programmes were conducted on a smaller scale in *Extremadura* and the Canary Islands. Last year, teachers noticed that children were falling asleep from fatigue and the lack of a proper diet. At the summer school, children were provided with breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack which included fresh fruit, fish, meat and vegetables.

18. In 2013, Unicef found that 20% of Spanish children from 0 to 7 were living in households whose equivalent incomes were 50% below the median. Italy, Greece and Portugal came close after.<sup>21</sup> In the United Kingdom, according to a report published by the Institute of Fiscal Studies in 2011, child poverty is predicted to begin rising in 2013<sup>22</sup> and would increase by 41.6% by 2020.<sup>23</sup>

19. Albania, after Kosovo<sup>24</sup> one of the youngest countries in Europe, with more than 578,000 children under the age of 15 (2011 census) has many children in dramatic situations: According to the latest official study of INSTAT (National Child Labour Survey), 7.7% of children between the ages of 5 and 17 are exploited for hard labour and begging. There is evidence that, by being in the street, these children are also at risk of being sexually exploited, kidnapped and involved in prostitution or trafficking.<sup>25</sup>

20. The situation is also dramatic in countries such as Romania or the Republic of Moldova: here, many children are currently living without parental care, because their parents were obliged to leave them behind to find employment abroad and to ensure their families' survival, whilst they do not have any relatives to take care of their children in their absence. This often concerns children of a very young age who are left in the company of older siblings only, with limited access to basic resources and services such as adequate food, health care or education.<sup>26</sup> The estimate is that 250 000 children are in this situation in Moldova alone.

21. In the specific area of health care, dramatic situations are once again reported from Greece where the economic crisis has deepened since the country was bailed out by the international community in 2010, leading to the sixth consecutive year of economic contraction in 2013. Despite the rhetoric of "maintaining universal access and improving the quality of care delivery" in Greece's bailout agreement, several policies shifted costs to patients, leading to reductions in health care access. This has also affected child health, due to reduced family incomes and unemployment of parents, and led to an increased proportion of children at risk of poverty with reduced access to health services, a growing number of children receiving inadequate nutrition and a 19% increase in the number of low-birthweight babies between 2008 and 2010.<sup>27</sup>

22. The current situation of children is serious in Georgia as well<sup>28</sup>: 12% of children in the country are currently living below the food poverty line and 28% under the total poverty line. The deprivation items are different from those considered by the EU countries and include a television, an iron, a refrigerator, a cell phone, a washing machine, a car or a vacuum cleaner. Housing deprivation is also very common with 45% of poor children living behind windows with missing glass, and 31% with earth floor needing to be renewed or repaired. In 27% of poor households, part of the dwelling is destroyed, walls are cracked and damp and electric lighting is absent in several or all rooms.

23. From the ECPRD survey it furthermore transpires that Georgia, together with Montenegro and Serbia, were the only responding countries who do not offer tutoring systems for children requiring special support. In the Russian Federation, overall poverty has been halved within a decade falling from 27.5% in 2001 to 13.2% in 2009. However, child poverty is still high with a prevalence of 19.8% in 2009.<sup>29</sup>

24. My own country, Azerbaijan, still faces various challenges regarding the well-being of children. Despite much progress having been achieved in recent years in the status and welfare of children, and despite the

<sup>21</sup> Tobias Buck: School Scheme shows social impact of Spain's economic crisis, Financial Times, 8 September 2013

<sup>22</sup> UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (2012): Measuring child poverty: new league tables of child poverty in the world's rich countries, Innocenti Report Card 10 (Florence: Unicef Innocenti Research Centre).

<sup>23</sup> Kate Pickett: Rising child poverty in the UK makes us all poorer, The Guardian, 8 May 2013.

<sup>24</sup> Any references to Kosovo in this text, whether to the territory, institutions or population, shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

<sup>25</sup> World Vision Albania: The chains of the poverty in Albania, downloaded on 25/02/14: <http://www.wvi.org/albania/article/chains-poverty-albania>.

<sup>26</sup> "Sie haben aufgehört zu weinen" ("They have stopped crying"), Children in Moldova, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, April 2013, [www.faz.net](http://www.faz.net).

<sup>27</sup> Kentikelenis, Karanikolos, Reeves, McKee, Stuckler: Greece's health crisis: from austerity to denialism. Health Policy, The Lancet Vol 383, 22 February 2014.

<sup>28</sup> Bradshaw, J., Chzhen, Y., Gugushyili, D., Hoelscher, P. (2010): Child Poverty in Georgia Working Paper No EC2412, <http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/spru/research/extreme/CP5.pdf>.

<sup>29</sup> Denisova, I. (2012, Income Distribution and Poverty in Russia, OECD Social Employment and Migration Working Papers, No. 132, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5k9c9f9zcc7c-en>.

fact that free education and healthcare are guaranteed by our country's constitution, improvements can still be made. About one million refugees present in the country are provided with all necessary means of living required, such as schools for their children or houses being built for them; nevertheless, economic wealth, largely drawn from the oil industry, has unfortunately not yet reached the whole population, so that poverty rates amongst a number of families remain relatively high.<sup>30</sup>

25. However, statistics and cases of child poverty are not only reported from crisis-hit southern European countries or Eastern European countries whose economies are still in some kind of transition. Wealthy western European nations also encounter situations of child poverty. For Austria, every sixth child is reported as being at risk of poverty,<sup>31</sup> in the Belgian region of Wallonia,<sup>32</sup> this rate even reaches one child out of four, whilst in Germany almost 20% of all minors face income poverty. Even though these statistics refer to relative poverty rates, i.e. in reality many of these children are still living in wealthier households than children in poorer nations, living conditions behind these figures affect children, and many of them have fewer chances of reaching good education levels or are limited in their physical and mental development.<sup>33</sup>

26. These few unhappy examples reported from across Europe show, in particular in the current economic and financial context where families revenues are threatened and public benefits cut everywhere, that there is urgent need for action in favour of children living in poverty and that no single European country can be exempt given that poor children can even be found in the wealthiest European economies. Efforts and action by different stakeholders, including governments, private sector, NGOs and individual volunteers should be combined to generate tangible results for children in need.

#### 4. Consequences of poverty on children leading to the “poverty cycle”

27. The above-presented evidence from various European countries shows that the situation is dramatic and that action needs to be taken urgently to improve the situation and well-being of children across Europe. Poverty affects children's confidence and self-esteem and their relationship with others. Children who are poor tend to suffer from ill health, obtain lower levels of education and therefore have limited employability and a poor integration in social life. There are five main pathways through which poverty has an impact on the well-being of children. These include health and nutrition, the mental health of the parents, the interactions of the parent with the child, the environment in the home and in the neighbourhood.

28. Malnutrition effects neuro-cognitive functioning. The birth weight of poor children is often low and this may be accompanied by retarded growth. It may also have an effect on the children's cognitive development. There is a body of research which shows that already by age two there is a significant cognitive difference between children living in poverty and those who do not and this continues to be visible and even increases over the years. Tests show that the cognitive performance of advantaged children is 60% higher than that of disadvantaged ones.<sup>34</sup> Even though further research into this matter is certainly needed, some of the data available certainly illustrates the need for early intervention highlighted in Section 5 of this report.

29. Nurturing parents play a crucial role in the emotional climate in the home and the children's sense of wellbeing. Parental quality has a direct impact on children and has an effect on their performance at school, how they get on with their peers and their sense of confidence. Some of the parents living in poverty tend to get stressed, depressed and anxious. This can disrupt the parenting behaviour, they can become harsher and less consistent and may lack the desired warmth and involvement that children need to thrive, although such phenomena can, of course, also be observed in other social strata. This should, however, not lead to the stereotype assumption that poor parents are generally not in a position to be “good parents”.

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<sup>30</sup> Humanium (NGO): Children of Azerbaijan, Realizing Children's Rights in Azerbaijan, downloaded on 25/02/14: <http://www.humanium.org/en/azerbaijan/>.

<sup>31</sup> Source for Austria: *Kinderarmut in Österreich*, FM4-ORF, 16,10,2013, downloaded on 25/02/14: <http://fm4.orf.at/stories/1726693/>.

<sup>32</sup> Source for Belgium: *En Belgique, 424 000 enfants vivent sous le seuil de pauvreté* (In Belgium 424,000 children live under the poverty threshold), RTBF Info, 13 October 2013, downloaded on 25/02/14: [http://www.rtbf.be/info/societe/detail\\_en-belgique-424-000-enfants-vivent-sous-le-seuil-de-pauvrete?id=8111865](http://www.rtbf.be/info/societe/detail_en-belgique-424-000-enfants-vivent-sous-le-seuil-de-pauvrete?id=8111865).

<sup>33</sup> Sources for Germany: German Federation for Child Protection (*Deutscher Kinderschutzbund*): <http://www.dksb.de/CONTENT/SHOWPAGE.ASPX?CONTENT=459&TPL=0> ; El-Sharif, Yasmin: *Deutschlandkarte: Wo die meisten armen Kinder wohnen* (Map of Germany: Where most poor children live), *Der Spiegel*, 09/01/2014, <http://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/soziales/kinderarmut-in-deutschland-hier-wohnen-die-meisten-armen-kinder-a-942431.html>.

<sup>34</sup> Abela, A. & Renoux, M.C.: Families living on the Margins in Affluent Societies, in A. Abela & J. Walker (2014): *Contemporary Issues in Family Studies Global perspectives on Partnerships. Parenting and Support in a Changing World* UK Wiley- Blackwell.

30. One of the consequences for children living in poverty is that many of them leave school without achieving a secondary education. Youth unemployment is about twice the average unemployment rate for children who get caught in the poverty trap. It is through this vicious cycle that the intergenerational cycle of poverty is perpetuated from one generation to the next.

## 5. How the economic context and budget austerity programmes are affecting children and families

31. The collapse of one of the biggest global banks in the USA in September 2008 led to the worst economic crisis we have had to experience in 80 years. In Europe, the initial response from governments to the financial crisis was to provide monetary and fiscal stimulus and bailouts. Despite the large amounts of money which the respective governments were pumping into the economy, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported that 60% of government debt that accumulated after the crash in 2008 were due to lower income tax revenue, unemployment and automatic stabilisers (such as unemployment benefits) rather than government spending on monetary and fiscal stimulus and bailouts.

32. As soon as some of the countries in Europe got out of the recession in 2010, they stopped stimulating their economies and proceeded to introduce cuts. In the United Kingdom this brought about a 3% points drop in the budget deficit by 2013. Cuts were even deeper in southern European countries. Whilst austerity measures have a role to play at a macro-economic level, they may have a major social impact and increase inequalities, both through taxing (of wages or consumption) or reductions on social benefits.<sup>35</sup> Some researchers argue that whereas budget consolidation is necessary, it should not be at the expense of the poor.<sup>36</sup> These dynamics have also been examined by the Assembly in its work leading up to Resolution 1884 (2012) on Austerity measures – a danger for democracy and social rights.<sup>37</sup>

33. Most recently, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, Nils Muižnieks, has examined the link between current austerity programmes and the enjoyment of human rights in his latest issue paper. He underlines that “public social spending has indeed been the primary target of austerity measures in many member states”, and that this involves “stricter accessibility conditions for a number of social benefits, and other cuts to education and health-care systems”. He further points out that “austerity measures related to child and family benefits, generalised unemployment and rising food prices are central issues affecting the well-being of children” amongst which poverty rates have increased even more sharply than for the general population.<sup>38</sup>

34. According to country-specific information collected by Eurochild in 2011, the consequences of the financial crisis have been various and have had a severe impact on children and their families.<sup>39</sup> These include a rise in absolute poverty levels, a rise in unemployment which hit marginalised groups more severely, such as migrants, salary cuts which continue to increase in-work poverty levels and fewer opportunities for young people to find work. Some of these young people are “Not in Employment, Education or Training” (NEET). Ireland and Spain have NEET rates of more than 10%.<sup>40</sup> In the United Kingdom, it has been reported that the divide between the young people who are better off and those who are not is of growing concern with those in poor areas sometimes resorting to crime and to informal economies to survive.<sup>41</sup>

35. Spending cuts have also been on the increase. In Lithuania child universal allowances have been abolished, in Denmark they have been reduced by 5%, in Ireland a cut of 10 Euros (20 Euros for the 3<sup>rd</sup> child) has been introduced. In Spain, a baby bonus subsidy will be cut, whereas in the United Kingdom, child benefits have been withdrawn from families with a higher income. Moreover, child benefits have been frozen and child tax credits have been cut back. The commitment to increase child credits by more than the rate of inflation in 2012 and 2013 has been abandoned. According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS)<sup>42</sup> this decision alone is likely to mean that another 100,000 children will fall below the poverty line.

<sup>35</sup> The Economist: Stimulus versus austerity - Sovereign Doubts, 28 September to 4 October 2013.

<sup>36</sup> Davies, R (2013): Child poverty and social exclusion. A framework for European action. Library briefing. Library of the European Parliament 14/6/2013.

<sup>37</sup> Resolution to be downloaded at: <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewPDF.asp?FileID=18916&lang=en>.

<sup>38</sup> Commissioner for Human Rights: Safeguarding human rights in times of economic crisis, Issue Paper, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, November 2013, [www.commissioner.coe.int](http://www.commissioner.coe.int).

<sup>39</sup> Eurochild (2011): How the economic and financial crisis is affecting children and young people in Europe.

<sup>40</sup> UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (2013) Child well-being in rich countries A comparative overview, Innocenti Report Card 11 (Florence: Unicef Innocenti Research Centre).

<sup>41</sup> The Economist: Poverty seen up close, 14 January 2013.

<sup>42</sup> UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (2012): Measuring child poverty: new league tables of child poverty in the world's rich countries, Innocenti Report Card 10 (Florence: Unicef Innocenti Research Centre).

36. A whole range of other benefits have been under threat across Europe. In Germany, cuts in 2010 included social care for those looking for a job, housing subsidies and parental benefits. In Hungary, a housing subsidy has been suspended whereas in Denmark unemployment benefits are available for two years rather than four. Likewise, child and family services are also being dismantled. In Romania, NGOs providing preventive work for children and their parents in day centres no longer have the financial support to continue the service. In Northern Ireland, a joint-up health and social care service was dismantled leaving only the health service in place.

37. A recent Eurochild study confirmed that since the economic and financial crisis began, several governments have introduced social expenditure cuts that were directly felt by children and their families, especially in areas such as child benefits, unemployment benefits, statutory services providing support for children and families, or health care services. Such effects are regularly proved by reports from specific countries, such as Latvia, where far-reaching austerity programmes, praised as good examples on the international scene, have clearly increased poverty and income inequality and had an impact on the most disadvantaged groups, such as children in single-parent families, whilst children from middle- and high-income families were supported more generously (as noted by World Bank experts).<sup>43</sup>

38. Already in 2009, the Overseas Development Institute in the United Kingdom had suggested that “governments can do much to protect children from the impacts of the economic crisis, but only if they recognise the problem and plan accordingly”.<sup>44</sup> Whilst the phase of recognition of the problem now seems to have been reached, at least at EU level (see below), it is high time to step up action in favour of poor children under the crisis and take concrete measures to break the poverty cycle threatening far too many of them.

## 6. Policy responses given and required for effectively reducing child poverty

### *European strategies and targets to fight against child poverty*

39. As far as policy responses at the European level are concerned, protecting children and upholding their fundamental rights are amongst the priorities of the Council of Europe, in particular through its programme “Building a Europe for and with children” and its current Strategy 2012-2015. Already, in Resolution 1800 (2011) on “Combating poverty”, the Parliamentary Assembly called on member States to commit to ending child poverty by 2025.

40. The EU, in its “Europe 2020” Strategy, sets a common European target to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion by at least 20 million by 2020. In its recommendation of 20<sup>th</sup> February 2013 entitled “Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage”, the European Commission calls for a children’s rights approach in the fight against poverty and provides a common European framework for addressing this issue. The document also provides a “greater visibility to the consensus that has developed”<sup>45</sup> on the way forward and comprises a set of policy guidelines on how best to tackle child poverty in Europe. It advocates access to adequate resources, access to affordable quality services (including good quality early childhood education) and, last but not least, implementation of children’s right to participation.<sup>46</sup> The EU recommendation further notes that the importance of fighting child poverty is a crucial investment in the future of a society and of Europe given the long term pervasive effects of poverty on children. Early intervention and prevention are highlighted and perceived as part of an integrated strategy that also takes into account the successful employment of parents in work that pays. The right to adequate health, education, housing and social protection services is also highlighted.

41. The EU document takes a rights-based approach and is inspired by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which has been ratified by all Council of Europe member States. At the same time, it acknowledges the importance of families in children’s lives. Indeed the quality of relationships in the family is considered as the robust variable when gauging children’s sense of well-being.<sup>47</sup> It gives importance to integrated strategies that go beyond material security for children and aims at promoting equal opportunity to

<sup>43</sup> “The Invisible Side of Latvia’s Success Story: Life with “God’s Mercy” and the Goodness of Others”, Re: Baltica, The Baltic Centre for Investigative Journalism, 17 October 2012, downloaded on 17 May 2013.

<sup>44</sup> Harper, Jones, McKay, Espey: Children in times of economic crisis: Past lessons, future policies, Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Background Note, March 2009.

<sup>45</sup> Davie, R (2013): Child Poverty and social exclusion, a framework for European action, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/bibliotheque/briefing/2013/130537/LDM\\_BRI%282013%29130537\\_REV1\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/bibliotheque/briefing/2013/130537/LDM_BRI%282013%29130537_REV1_EN.pdf).

<sup>46</sup> European Commission: Commission Recommendation “Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage”, Commission Recommendation of 20.2.2013, C (2013) 778 final.

<sup>47</sup> See: Children’s Society Quarterly Surveys in the UK.

all children. Special attention is given to 'at risk' groups. Finally the importance of policy continuity and long-term planning is also highlighted. The integrated strategies promoted by the EU are based on three pillars which are (1) access to adequate resources, (2) the need for quality services and (3) the need for children's participation.

#### *Current challenges in effectively eradicating child poverty*

42. Many of the situations described above have shown that the process of eradicating child poverty entails providing comprehensive support to families whose distress is having a knock-on effect on their children. Helping families to improve their living conditions, e.g. by finding employment or decent housing, enables them to raise their children in a healthy, stable environment and breaks the intergenerational transmission of poverty. Effective policies against child poverty moreover have to reach out to children in the places where they live and where they can be assured equal access to basic resources and services; next to the family environment this also includes educational facilities. Taking the three pillars for fighting child poverty as currently promoted by the EU as a grid (see paragraph 35), allows identifying some of the remaining challenges for national policies.

43. Firstly, adequate resources for families as called for by the EU require jobs that not only provide an adequate income but are also respectful of family life. Jobs may need to be complemented with effective redistribution policies where necessary.<sup>48,49</sup> Unfortunately, the financial crisis has prompted governments to go for cuts on social transfers and other forms of support for children and families which exacerbate social inequality. From the ECPRD survey launched for the present report, it transpires that whereas all the participant countries provided financial benefits to support families including specific social assistance, a number of them do not offer specific support to poor parents to help them enter the labour market. These include eight countries belonging to the European Union as well as Georgia, Iceland and Turkey.

44. The second pillar of effective strategies against child poverty requires quality services for children. Quality public services are, in particular, required for disadvantaged children whose parents depend heavily on such support and cannot afford alternative private services. The importance of quality services is also raised by UNICEF who point out that there should be indicators to measure service quality. In this respect, they consider the lack of such indicators as a "glaring omission" that precludes us from the possibility of auditing services and comparing them with those of other countries.<sup>50</sup> This emphasis on evidence-based policies that guarantee the highest rate of return for the investment made, has become even more important in the context of the current economic situation where resources are scarce and need to be invested wisely.

45. From the above-mentioned ECPRD survey, it transpires that, whereas a wide array of services is offered in schools to ensure equal opportunity, early childhood education is still not offered to all children in many countries in Europe in spite of the beneficial effects especially to those children living in poverty. The targets agreed at the 2002 Barcelona European Council for the Provision of Child Care were that 90% of children aged 3 should attend nursery schools whereas 33% of children under 3 (a target considered low by some) should attend childcare institutions.

46. It is evident that introducing early childhood education services without giving attention to the quality (and affordability) is not the answer to introducing child care and the issue of quality over quantity cannot be stressed enough. We now know that the earliest years play a pivotal role in the child's cognitive and emotional development and those living in poverty are riddled with disadvantage from this very early age. It is therefore wise to invest in accompanying children living in poverty and their parents by channelling resources and providing more support during this crucially important time for the child's development.

47. Finally, child participation is the third important pillar of the EU strategy. So far, no indicators exist on the implementation, and experts agree that more experience is needed in this area.<sup>51</sup> In their last report on the issue, Unicef highlighted the fact that the participation of children on matters of concern to them is not easy to take on board. They argue that middle-class children are often privileged in these circumstances and their voices tend to be heard more. Studies with disadvantaged children, however, point out that, if given the

<sup>48</sup> Whiteford, P. & Adema, W. (2007): What works best in reducing child poverty: a benefit or a work strategy? OECD

<sup>49</sup> Pisu, M. (2012): Less income inequality and more growth –are they compatible? OECD.

<sup>50</sup> UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (2013) Child well-being in rich countries. A comparative overview Card 11 (Florence: Unicef Innocenti Research Centre).

<sup>51</sup> Davie, R (2013): Child Poverty and social exclusion A framework for European action [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/bibliotheque/briefing/2013/130537/LDM\\_BRI%282013%29130537\\_REV1\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/bibliotheque/briefing/2013/130537/LDM_BRI%282013%29130537_REV1_EN.pdf).

opportunity, they are able to voice their views in a very articulate manner and are able to make important contributions not only with regards to the running of services but also on aspects related to their well-being.<sup>52</sup>

48. Subsequently to or in parallel to some of the above-mentioned European standard-setting activities, many European countries have developed national policies or strategies against child poverty today. However, the major challenge in overcoming child poverty will be to bridge the gap between the actual situation of children which tends to worsen in a context of economic crisis and political intentions and declarations on the one hand, and the effective implementation of policies in favour of children on the other hand. As reports from various countries have shown, national policies and measures very often either fall short in protecting children against poverty, because they are not sufficiently targeted, or even worsen the situation of children when it comes to austerity measures leading to cuts in social benefits directly concerning children and families in need.

49. In their analysis of the National Reform Programmes (NRPs) of 2013, Eurochild<sup>53</sup> concluded that, compared to previous years, modest improvements could be registered from a child rights point of view. Certain countries had apparently not taken account of problems arising from austerity cuts, unemployment or the dire situation of the working poor. Some progress was recorded in Bulgaria, Spain, France, Romania and Hungary as compared to 2012. Nevertheless, the general situation of many children has not changed, and fighting child poverty remains a very arduous endeavour.

50. A certain consensus seems to have been reached among the 28 EU countries with regards to the deleterious effects of poverty on children and their parents and on society in general. However, the heterogeneity of the different countries in Europe, including those countries that are not part of the European Union, calls for recommendations that are applicable to all of Greater Europe.

## 7. Conclusions

51. The EU Recommendation on child poverty (mentioned above) was adopted and published in February 2013. It contains very comprehensive guidelines aimed at eradicating child poverty that could serve as a source of inspiration for all countries of Greater Europe. It lists, amongst others, the following main measures against child poverty:

- Allow families to access adequate resources by supporting parents' participation in the labour market and providing for adequate living standards through a combination of benefits;
- Allow all children and families to access affordable quality services by reducing inequality at a young age by investing in early childhood education and care, by improving the education systems' impact on equal opportunities, by improving the responsiveness of health systems to address the needs of disadvantaged children, by providing children with safe and adequate living environments and by enhancing family support and the quality of alternative care;
- Promote children's right to participate in recreation, sport and cultural activities as well as in decision making that affects their lives.

52. The recent adoption of the EU Recommendation was very much welcomed by the European network Eurochild and other child's rights activists. The Recommendation was perceived as an important document that bridged the gap between the rhetoric of politicians and the implementation of policy.<sup>54</sup> Following the adoption of this document, Eurochild provided a number of recommendations on how the European policy could be implemented. Amongst these, the following are worth mentioning<sup>55</sup> and could complement the EU strategy when it comes to implementation:

- Political will to fight child poverty needs to be a priority in all European countries. In this respect clear objectives and targets need to be set at the outset;
- Tried and tested indicators monitoring outcome for the children and their families should be the main tools for assessing the successful implementation of policy. More research needs to be carried out in

<sup>52</sup> Abela, A and Smith La Rosa, M. (2007): Maltese Youngsters with very Challenging Behaviour Speak about School *Journal of Maltese Educational Research* 5, 2 62- 85.

Abela, A.,(with Abdilla ,N., Abela, C., Camilleri, J., Mercieca, D., Mercieca, G.) (2012): Exploring the long term outcomes of children in out of home care, [http://www.tfal.org.mt/MediaCenter/PDFs/1\\_Study%203%20full%20version.pdf](http://www.tfal.org.mt/MediaCenter/PDFs/1_Study%203%20full%20version.pdf) ;

Gonzi, M. Abela, A. et al (2006): See me! Listen to Me! Children's Perspectives in A FAIR DEAL. A Study on Children and Young People with Very Challenging Behaviour, published by the Commissioner for Children Media Centre, Malta.

<sup>53</sup> Frazier, H.: The 2013 National Reform Programmes (NRP) from a child poverty and well-being perspective, Report August 2013, Eurochild.

<sup>54</sup> Eurochild (March 2013 Overall Assessment of the European Commission Recommendation on "investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage and suggestions for implementation at national level".

<sup>55</sup> Governments drag their feet on child poverty, Eurochild says, Agence Europe, Brussels, 10 September 2013.

this important area if policy is to be more evidence-based. Indicators should also be common across countries in order to mutually learn from good practice;

- Especially for the poorer countries, additional sources of funding are required to help bridge the gap between the different countries;
- Countries who are better equipped in terms of available data can help others, including through knowledge transfer, in building up national data bases;
- Income distribution ratios need to be adjusted especially in countries where the difference between the richest quintile and the poorest income is big;
- National planning needs to be long-term and transversal approaches and synergies developed among different ministries would help maximising resources.

53. Together with the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN), Eurochild has edited an excellent “Explainer on Child Poverty in the EU” in which it identifies risk factors, causes and myths surrounding child poverty, outlines the EU Recommendation in an easy-to-understand manner and illustrates implementation opportunities through good practice examples. This handbook can be warmly recommended to the stakeholders of any country wishing to improve the effectiveness of its strategies against child poverty.<sup>56</sup>

54. In its 2012 study on children and young people and the crisis, Eurochild also underlined that it is the most vulnerable groups, including children, who are most affected when social protection systems are undermined, and that access to preventive support services, health care and education that are affordable, available and of good quality is an investment in the future and not a cost.<sup>57</sup> With regard to certain categories of children, such as those belonging to national minorities (Roma children and others), particular efforts will be required to improve data collection on their situation (to allow for monitoring), to end discrimination facing their communities generally and to guarantee them the same rights and support as other children.<sup>58</sup> In general, children must also be protected against any harm and human rights violations while still living in poverty, i.e. against child labour, physical or psychological violence, sexual abuse and exploitation or trafficking – thus flaws that the Council of Europe is also fighting through its own standard-setting action.

55. All children across Europe must be enabled to cover their basic needs in accessing food, education and health care but also to enjoy equal opportunities for their development without facing social exclusion or risks for their physical or moral integrity in any way. The Assembly should therefore call upon all member states to resolutely pursue the fight against child poverty through their strong commitment to this cause and targeted national strategies.

56. When it comes to the implementation of such strategies, the involvement of all levels of government is of crucial importance. Local authorities are amongst the main stakeholders and in the first line of contact with disadvantaged groups of population. They must therefore be provided with sufficient levels of resources and enabled to fulfill their responsibilities with regard to their local communities,<sup>59</sup> not least through local action plans.

57. In the current economic context, member states should in particular continue, or if this is not done yet, start to question national austerity programmes and their direct or indirect impact on the well-being of children, and develop and implement national policies which take into consideration the most urgent needs of children and employ mechanisms ensuring that resources dedicated to child poverty efficiently reach those most in need.

58. In his latest issue paper, the Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner calls for “systematic human rights and equality impact assessments of social and economic policies and budgets”.<sup>60</sup> The Parliamentary Assembly should support this proposal and go further by saying that any social expenditure cuts should be closely supervised and assessed according to their possible impact on the most vulnerable groups of society and in particular the well-being of children. Supporting poor children now, and giving them equal opportunities for their development, also ensures that family and child poverty are not prolonged into the future and multiplied, thus risking that our societies as a whole get poorer.

<sup>56</sup> Eurochild / EAPN: Towards Children’s Well-Being in Europe – Explainer on Child Poverty in the EU, Brussels 2013.

<sup>57</sup> Eurochild: How the economic and financial crisis is affecting children and young people in Europe? Report based on evidence collected through Eurochild membership, December 2012.

<sup>58</sup> Unicef Regional Office for CEE/CIS: Romani Children in South East Europe – The challenge of overcoming centuries of distrust and discrimination, Social and Economy Policy for Children, Discussion Paper Issue 7 (March 2007).

<sup>59</sup> Child Poverty Action Group / Rys Farthing: Local authorities and child poverty: balancing the threats and opportunities, London, July 2013.

<sup>60</sup> Commissioner for Human Rights: see footnote 35 above (Recommendations by the Commissioner).

**Appendix: National data on children at risk of poverty**

<b>Table 1: National Prevalence rate of Children at risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion for 2011 by type of risk<sup>61</sup></b>					
	AROPE	Severe material deprivation	Low work intensity	At-risk of monetary poverty	Figures provided for survey
Sweden	15.9	1.3	5.4	<b>14.5</b>	<b>14.5</b>
Denmark	16.0	3.3	8.9	10.2	1% of all children
Finland	16.1	3.2	7.6	<b>11.8</b>	<b>11.9</b> (2009)
Slovenia	17.3	5.3	4.4	14.7	13.5
Netherlands	18.0	2.9	6.3	15.5	--
Austria	19.2	5.6	6.7	15.4	331,000 under 20
Germany	19.8	5.4	8.6	15.6	17.34
Czechoslovakia	20	8	6.9	<b>15.2</b>	<b>15.2%</b> (2012)
Luxembourg	21.7	1.2	2.9	<b>20.3</b>	<b>20.3</b>
Cyprus	21.8	13.7	2.9	<b>11.9</b>	<b>11.90</b>
France	23.0	7	8.2	18.8	19.6% (2010)
Belgium	23.3	8.2	13.9	<b>18.7</b>	<b>18.7</b>
Estonia	24.85	9.1	9.1	19.5	9.5%?
Malta	25.8	7	8.3	21.1	-- 21.1% EU (SILC 2011)
Slovakia	26	12.4	7.3	21.2	18.8
UK	26.9	7.1	14	18	17% (2011/2012)
Portugal	28.6	11.3	7.1	22.4	21.70%
Poland	29.8	13.2	4.1	22	16.7%
Greece	30.4	16.4	7.2	<b>23.7</b>	<b>23.7</b>
Spain	30.6	4.2	9.8	27.2	26.20%
Italy	32.3	12.2	7.6	26.3	17.6% out of which 7% in absolute poverty
Lithuania	33.4	15.9	11.3	24.3	25.2% before social transfers
Ireland* (Data from 2010)	37.6%	10.6	25.5	19.7	9.3% (2011)
Hungary	39.6	29.8	14.1	23	20.3% (2010)
Latvia	43.6	33.5	12.9	25	---
Romania	49.1	35.8	4.6	32.9	48.70%
Bulgaria	51.8	45.6	14	28.9	---
Croatia	Not a member state in 2011				21.5%

<b>Table 2 : Children at risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion in Countries with Observer Status</b>	
Canada	15% (50% below the median)
Israel	36% (50% below the median)

<b>Table 3: Children at risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion in non EU European Countries</b>	
	Figures provided from the survey undertaken via the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD)
Albania	--
Andorra	--
Armenia	--
Azerbaijan	--
Bosnia and Herzegovina	--

<sup>61</sup> As can be seen, only the figures in bold in the at-risk-of monetary poverty column provided by Eurostat tally with those provided in the survey.

Georgia	12% below the food poverty line
Iceland	4.7% (50% below the median) .9% Child Deprivation
Liechtenstein	--
Republic of Moldova	19% 10.4% malnutrition
Monaco	--
Montenegro	14.1%
Norway	7.6%
Russian Federation	Not provided
San Marino	--
Serbia	12.2% according to FAO criteria
Switzerland	17.5% (60% below the median)
"the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"	--
Turkey	16% (60% below the median)
Ukraine	--