



Resolution 1995 (2014)¹

Final version

Ending child poverty in Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Child poverty is creeping back into Europe. The Parliamentary Assembly is appalled by 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. While such phenomena have unfortunately always been observed in Europe, the recent economic and financial crisis challenging Europe since 2008, which has undermined social protection systems in many 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. Comprehensive strategies and targets aimed at eradicating child poverty have been drawn up 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 for European children.

4. Some of the root causes of child poverty are not easily tackled through targeted measures in favour of children and need to be addressed through general economic and social policies, linked to economic recovery and the development of countries facing difficulties such as high rates of unemployment or low paid work. This will also be essential to interrupt the “cycle of poverty” that many families are caught in, thus passing on the conditions of poverty and a lack of equal opportunities from one generation to the next.

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

5.1. ensure that the aim of ending child poverty is given sufficient political weight and priority, including by 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 Council of Europe member States that are also members of the European Union, implement in the most committed manner possible the European Commission Recommendation entitled “Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage”, adopted on 20 February 2013, by rigorously following the very pragmatic guidelines it contains;

5.3. take inspiration from this comprehensive European Union 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 appropriate living standards, including through adequate levels of social benefits;

1. *Assembly debate* on 11 April 2014 (18th Sitting) (see [Doc. 13458](#), report of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, rapporteur: Ms Sevinj Fataliyeva). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 11 April 2014 (18th Sitting).

See also [Recommendation 2044 \(2014\)](#).



- 5.3.2. reduce inequality from an early age onwards by:
 - 5.3.2.1. investing in early childhood education and care facilities;
 - 5.3.2.2. improving educational 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 knowledge and public and private funds at the European level in order to ensure material security and equal opportunities for all children;
- 5.5. put into practice national policies by following transversal approaches involving, wherever appropriate, different national ministries and departments, in order to ensure greater effectiveness in the implementation of policies fighting child poverty;
- 5.6. especially in the current period of budgetary 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 and refugees, 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 other 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 competence 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 to child protection and welfare;
- 5.9. support further research into the reasons for and the 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 to 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.