



Resolution 2442 (2022)¹

Eradicating extreme child poverty in Europe: an international obligation and a moral duty

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Despite the efforts being made, poverty, especially extreme child poverty, is far from being eradicated. In Europe, there are still too many squalid living conditions. In 2022, children, whatever their gender, origins or their parents' status, should no longer go to bed or school hungry. Children should be protected from disease, deplorable housing conditions, disproportionate consequences of the climate crisis, exclusion and lack of access to healthcare, hygiene, education, culture and sport. These situations are reminiscent of stories from another century and tell of unbearable human rights abuses against those most vulnerable.
2. In 2021, the Covid-19 pandemic pushed 150 million more people into extreme poverty worldwide, especially women and girls, who were disproportionately affected. In Europe, it confirmed the collective failure of public policies to combat extreme child poverty. We will be unable to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1: "End poverty in all its forms everywhere". Without the salutary intervention of States during the health crisis, the already serious situation of these children could have been disastrous. As far as the pandemic's adverse impact on the effective protection of the human rights of girls and boys is concerned, the Parliamentary Assembly recalls its [Resolution 2385 \(2021\)](#) "Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on children's rights".
3. The coincidence of the climate emergency with the migrant, health and social crises demands strong responses by public authorities to end extreme child poverty. In view of the unacceptable situations and referring to its [Resolution 2399 \(2021\)](#) "The climate crisis and the rule of law", which emphasises the need for climate resilience, the Assembly calls on Council of Europe member States to demonstrate the political will to address every dimension of extreme child poverty and ensure that no one is left behind.
4. The Assembly invites Council of Europe member States to adopt a holistic approach in defining and implementing public policies to combat extreme child poverty. This will involve impact assessments that take into account all aspects of child poverty as violations of the child's well-being and best interests, without discrimination regarding the child's origins, birth environment, family, gender or personal orientation.
5. In light of the above, the Assembly encourages member States, when determining and drawing up their public policy to combat extreme child poverty, to:
 - 5.1. strengthen their commitments contained in the European Social Charter (revised) (ETS No. 163), especially Articles 30 (right to protection against poverty and social exclusion) and 31 (right to housing), and ensure that these rights are enshrined in national constitutions and that they are implemented;
 - 5.2. translate these commitments into concrete measures through action plans that make the child's best interests, well-being and right to be heard the focus of public policies to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030;
 - 5.3. intensify the efforts to benefit children in their development programmes in order to end extreme child poverty worldwide by 2030.

1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 31 May 2022 (see [Doc. 15524](#), report of the committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, rapporteur: Mr Pierre-Alain Fridez). See also [Recommendation 2234 \(2022\)](#).*



6. Recalling its [Resolution 2410 \(2021\)](#) “Best interests of the child and policies to ensure a work-life balance”, the Assembly urges member States to invest heavily in combating extreme child poverty and to recommit rapidly to the initial goals laid down by the United Nations. The aim of this commitment is to establish environmental equity by:

- 6.1. ensuring that all children living in Europe enjoy comprehensive and free social protection, capable of providing adequate and appropriate care, while contributing to a better understanding of the challenges of living together;
- 6.2. mobilising the massive resources needed to initiate a thorough policy covering the first one thousand days of life in order to combat the inequalities that develop during this decisive period of childhood by taking account of the accumulation of exposures to which individuals are subjected (their “exposome”);
- 6.3. ensuring that children have the right to food in sufficient quantity and quality. To reach this goal, the Assembly proposes that member States abolish VAT (value added tax) on essential food items;
- 6.4. providing children living in poverty in neighbourhoods in which it is concentrated with the facilities and programmes necessary for their educational, health, cultural and sporting development and adopt financial measures to help them escape poverty, such as adequate child benefits;
- 6.5. encouraging, with regard to mobility, parents’ access to green conversion bonuses to ensure that the benefits of environmental transition are enjoyed by everyone and do not create new inequalities;
- 6.6. enabling better screening of children’s developmental problems, including cognitive and sensory disorders, by school health services and ensuring follow-up;
- 6.7. ensuring children’s access to free and adequate health services, including preventive and restorative dental care, since teeth are a strong social marker of inequality;
- 6.8. ensuring that the housing where these children live benefits from energy efficiency measures and that the parents of these children actually receive the assistance provided for in the event of an immoderate rise in the price of energy.

7. The Assembly encourages the nine member States that have not yet ratified the European Social Charter (revised) to resume their work towards ratifying to it. It calls for the ratification of the Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter Providing for a System of Collective Complaints (ETS No. 158) in order to speed up concerted efforts to combat extreme child poverty. It also invites Switzerland and Liechtenstein to sign and ratify the Charter.

8. The Assembly welcomes the European Union’s recent initiative to establish a European Child Guarantee. It encourages member States to support this initiative or adopt corresponding policies. It calls on member States to:

- 8.1. regularly monitor the implementation of this guarantee at parliamentary level, taking into account the voice of children, in accordance with [Resolution 2414 \(2022\)](#) “The right to be heard – Child participation: a foundation for democratic societies”;
- 8.2. support the efforts of education services to include the most vulnerable children and combat inequalities.

9. The Assembly reiterates its desire to bring about synergies between the Council of Europe and the European Union agencies responsible for the European Pillar of Social Rights. It renews its invitation to the European Union to accede to the European Social Charter.

10. Lastly, the Assembly proposes to carry out a mid-term review, in 2026, on the implementation of environmental equity in public policies and the progress of the various public measures in Europe aimed at combating extreme child poverty with a view to achieving United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 1.2.