EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child

Integrated approach to child protection
Implementation of the **EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child** (2021)

1. Participation in political and democratic life
2. Socio-economic inclusion, health and education
3. Combating violence and ensuring child protection
4. Child-friendly justice
5. Digital and information society
6. The Global Dimension
7. Embedding a child perspective in all EU actions
Commission Recommendation on integrated child protection systems (2024)

- Commission priority in 2024 (Commission Work Programme)

- Supporting the development and strengthening of integrated child protection systems in EU Member States

- Child protection systems resilient and respond in an integrated/coordinated/holistic/multidisciplinary way to various children’s needs

- Multilevel coordination, continuum of support: prevention, early identification, cross-sectorial support (e.g. health, education, psycho-social, child-friendly justice, care)

- Evidence-based approach (FRA mapping), broad consultation, child consultation (EU Children’s Participation Platform)

- Connecting the dots between existing supporting EU action (e.g. laws, policies, funding), synergies
Staff Working Document

Collection of evidence and consultation, Starting from children’s views and children’s need

Gaps, challenges and opportunities on integrated child protection systems, main findings from the collection of evidence and consultation.

Continuum of support, cross-cutting from prevention to support, multidisciplinary

- Prevention, identification and reporting
- Child friendly justice, including referral, investigation
- Integrated response activities (e.g. medical, education, psycho-social support, foster care, reintegration)
- Integrated approach to child protection (legal and policy framework, coordination, protocols, training, data and monitoring, child participation, whole of society approach)

How EU can best support Member States strengthening more integrated child protection systems
1. Child Participation in political and democratic life

- **EU Children’s Participation Platform**: first consultation on child protection
2. Social inclusion & healthcare

• **European Child Guarantee** (26 national action plans submitted)

• **Mental health**: Best practices projects and calls for proposals; Communication on a *comprehensive approach to mental health* with focus on children and young people;

• Best practices projects and **calls for proposals**, e.g. flagship ‘European depression and suicide prevention initiative’ (EU 6m), EU4Health programme (e.g. Let’s talk about children’ projects, EU 4m)

• CERV call on rights of the child (incl. child participation, comprehensive approach to mental health)
2. Right to education

- **20%** of school children experience **mental health problems** during their school years *(EU, 2015; WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2018; WHO 2022)*
- **one in five** reported growing up **unhappy and anxious** about the future because of bullying, challenges in coping with schoolwork and loneliness *(UNICEF, EU report, 2021)*

- **Council Recommendation** on **Pathways to School Success** *(Nov. 2022)*, special attention on well-being at school
- **Expert group on well-being** at school, **Factsheets**

- Early childhood education and care: **Council Recommendation** on the **Revision of the Barcelona targets** *(within European Care Strategy)*
3. Combating violence against children and ensuring child protection

- Legislative proposal to combat gender-based violence against women and domestic violence (March 2022)

- Children in migration (Ukrainian child protection central in the implementation of the temporary protection directive)

- Proposal to revise the Directive on Trafficking in human beings

- Child Sexual Abuse – planned review of the 2011 Directive

- EU accession to Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence – EU becoming (along with EU Member States) a full party
4. Child-friendly justice

- Brussels IIb Regulation entered into force in cross-border cases of parental responsibility, handbook

- Proposed Regulation to support the mutual recognition of parenthood focused on the best interests of the child (Dec. 2023)

- Cooperation with Council of Europe to better implement its guidelines

- Projects on child-friendly justice (grants, trainings)

- Proposed revision of the Victim’s rights Directive

- Justice scoreboard (data collection in 2024)
5. Digital & information society

• **Digital principles** (Jan. 2022), including provisions to empower and protect children

• **Digital Services Act** (incl. EU code of conduct on age-appropriate design)

• Renewed European strategy for a better internet for children (**BIK+**) (May 2022)

• Proposed Regulation to effectively prevent and combat **child sexual abuse** (May 2022)
6. Global dimension

• Zero tolerance on child labour: Decent Work Communication and proposed Directive on corporate sustainability due diligence (Feb 2022)

• Youth Action plan in EU external action (September 2022)

• 91 EU Delegations have designated Youth focal points, training modules

• Consultation: Relevant action, support, policies to integrated child protection?

“You have got to get deep into the mining pit by a rope, take what you have been ordered and then go back to the surface. I nearly suffocated inside the pits due to an inadequate supply of oxygen.”
7. **Mainstreaming** child perspective in all EU actions

*Child-friendly culture in EU policy-making*

- **EU Network** for Children’s Rights (last meeting on 16 March 2023)

- **EU Forum** on the Rights of the Child (Sept. 2022)

- Training and capacity-building to EU staff
- Commission’s Interservice group
Thank you very much for your attention!

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