

Education - A gateway to well-being for all children: How the school community can (re)build social & emotional well-being

Eurochild webinar : 18 November 2021, 14.30-16.00 CET

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Addressing the impact of Covid-19 and strengthening well-being for children through education

Across Europe, school closures owing to the pandemic, disruptions to learning, loss of social contact, fractured relationships and a wide digital divide are massively impacting children's life chances and physical and mental health (Eurochild's 2020 [Growing up in Lockdown report](#)).

The educational divide has had far-reaching consequences for children living in poverty and social exclusion (which accounted for more than one in four children in the EU in 2019). Before the pandemic, many children felt that the **education system was not meeting many of their real-life needs** and expectations ([Our Europe, Our Rights, Our Future](#) – a survey of more than 10,000 children aged between 11-17).

November 20 2021, marks World Children's Day and the 32nd anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) by the UN General Assembly. This year, Eurochild, Europe's largest children's rights network, will mark this important milestone with a critical discussion on how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted children's rights to education and their right to be informed about their rights (Article 28 & 42 of the UNCRC respectively). Particularly, this discussion will consider the impact on children in vulnerable situations, such as children living in poverty, children from the Roma community, children in alternative care, children with disabilities, children with a migration background, and children living in precarious family situations.

In this webinar, Eurochild and its partners in the [Including Children Affected by Migration \(ICAM\) Programme](#) will bring together European policy and political decision-makers, and share innovative education practices that examine how to overcome the devastating impact of COVID-19 on children's rights to education and fair access to learning. Perspectives from four countries – Italy, Romania, Spain and the UK – will be featured.

Invited speakers include MEP Laurence Farreng (France - the Renew Group); MEP Frances Fitzgerald (Ireland – the European People's Party); and MEP Victor Negrescu (Romania – the Socialists & Democrats).

With the EU prioritising 'school success' and catalysing investment in early childhood education and school (through the Child Guarantee and the European Education Area), this webinar will be a timely discussion to shine a spotlight on innovative solutions that can help children in the most vulnerable situations and put a brake on the education inequalities exacerbated by the pandemic.

What role does the EU have regarding inclusive education?

The European Union (EU) has an important role to play in the fulfilment of children’s rights to education.¹ The [EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child](#), released earlier this year, emphasises the need to promote inclusive and child-friendly societies, health and education systems, and that each child has the right to the highest attainable standard of quality education irrespective of their background.

Member States unanimously adopted the Council Recommendation establishing the European Child Guarantee on June 14, 2021. This Recommendation aims to prevent and combat social exclusion by ‘guaranteeing’ access to a set of key services for children in need. These key services include effective and free access to high-quality early childhood education and care, education and school-based activities.

Principle 1 of the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) states that “everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education... that enable them to participate fully in society...”. Furthermore, the recently [published Action Plan](#) encourages Member States to develop comprehensive policies to provide access to quality education for all and provide targeted support to disadvantaged learners.

¹ As set out in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (2009) Article 14 – states “1. Everyone has the right to education...”; and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) Protocol (1950) Article 2 states “No person shall be denied the right to education”.