

# Terms of Reference for National Correspondents in the DataCare Project II

***Sub-contracting for the period: January-December 2022***

## Introduction

In the [DataCare Project](#), Eurochild and UNICEF ECARO, together with Eurochild members and over 50 'National Correspondents' across Europe, have mapped how EU Member States and the UK currently collect data on the situation of children in alternative care. These final findings were published in December 2021, and are available through the following links:

[\*\*Policy recommendations for EU and national decision-makers: \*Children in alternative care: Comparable statistics to monitor progress on deinstitutionalisation across the European Union\*\*\*](#)

[\*\*Our full technical report: \*Better data for better child protection systems in Europe: Mapping how data on children in alternative care are collected, analysed and published across 28 European countries\*\*\*](#)

Despite differing national definitions and categorisations of alternative care across the region, enough data are being published at national level that can be used at an aggregate level to establish comparable indicators on children in residential care and three other relevant and interlinked indicators:

1. The rate of children aged 0-17 in alternative care at a specific point in time (per 100,000)
2. The rate of children aged 0-17 in residential care at a specific point in time (per 100,000)
3. The rate of children aged 0-17 in formal family-based care at a specific point in time (per 100,000)
4. The percentage of children aged 0-17 in residential care (of the total number of children aged 0-17 in alternative care at a specific point in time).

With our findings in hand, Eurochild is now engaging with EU and Member States to include our proposed indicators on children in alternative care into the National Action Plans & the EU monitoring framework for the European Child Guarantee.

## Why are we doing this?

The proportion of children placed in residential care compared to those placed in formal family-based care provides a useful indicator to monitor progress towards a shared goal: to ensure that children in alternative care receive high quality, inclusive, family and community-based care. Such an indicator would shed light on the effectiveness of the deinstitutionalisation reforms that are taking place in many European countries, including under the European Child Guarantee.

Eurochild has secured additional funding from UNICEF ECARO to help us advocate for uptake of these indicators at national and EU level. A large part of this advocacy needs to happen at national level, therefore some of the funding will go to sub-contract National Correspondents to help persuade national & EU decision-makers to adopt these recommendations to strengthen alternative care data

systems across the region. This work is focused on four EU countries – **France, Ireland, Portugal** and **Romania**. These countries have been selected because:

1. Eurochild possesses strong and existing relationships with key identified decision-makers through our advocacy activities, our membership and National Correspondents from the first phase of the DataCare project.
2. In addition, each country poses strategic significance in line with the DataCare’s goals of transforming how the EU collects data on alternative care. France holds the Presidency of the Council of the EU for the first half of 2022, and decision-makers have enthusiastically engaged with the recommendations from DataCare; Ireland has transformed its child protection system to be largely family-based in recent decades, and has developed a comprehensive data reporting system in recent years; Romania has a long-established commitment to deinstitutionalisation and reform of its child protection system; and Portugal has an over-reliance on residential-based care yet its government is committed to reform.
3. Finally, these four countries are not among those currently closely working with UNICEF ECARO through the Child Guarantee Feasibility Study Phase III, where significant work has already taken place to embed CiAC within the ECG NAPs.

The rest of this document outlines a Terms of Reference to detail the role and expectations for National Correspondents to be sub-contracted to carry out advocacy activities within this new phase of the DataCare project.

## **The role of National Correspondents in the DataCare Project**

To help us achieve our goals to influence child protection reform, Eurochild is looking to build on existing collaborations built from the mapping and analysis carried out in the first phase of the DataCare project.

National Correspondents are experts in the field of academic research and policy-influencing for children in alternative care (CiAC). Eurochild wishes to cooperate with National Correspondents from each country of the advocacy campaign (France, Ireland, Portugal and Romania) to influence the inclusion of our proposed indicators into National Action Plans (NAPs) to be submitted under the Child Guarantee.

NAPs are expected to be submitted between March-June 2022. Eurochild also envisions a number of follow up actions after the submission of these plans for the remainder of 2022, detailed below. See Annex 1 for the estimated project timeline.

National Correspondents should anticipate an active period of advocacy between now and submission of the NAPs to influence inclusion of our proposed indicators. Once the NAPs are published, National Correspondents will be asked to provide their feedback to Eurochild analysis of the submitted plans. At EU level, Eurochild, together with UNICEF, will also be looking to mobilise a coalition of willing Member States at EU level to champion including these indicators into a Common Monitoring Framework for the European Child Guarantee.

### **What tasks will National Correspondents be expected to carry out?**

Between February-December 2022, participating experts will be expected to:

- Utilise their expertise at country level to influence inclusion of indicators from the DataCare project into national monitoring frameworks of the European Child Guarantee (**Feb-Apr 2022**).

- Co-deliver, with Eurochild, key messages to decision-makers in national child protection systems to raise the case of indicators and the need to strengthen data systems for children in alternative care (**Feb-Apr 2022**).
- Provide feedback on Eurochild's assessment of National Action Plans to determine if DataCare indicators are included (**May-July of 2022**).
- Participate in a roundtable with EU and national decision-makers to discuss the importance of indicators for CiAC, identifying outstanding gaps & recommendations (**end of 2022**).

### **Profile of the National Correspondents**

Candidates interested in becoming National Correspondents should possess the following profile:

- Working in research and/or advocacy in the area of child protection reform and data collection analysis in the selected countries (France, Ireland, Portugal and Romania), with a knowledge of international developments too.
- Possess an in-depth understanding of national child protection systems in their country, and an understanding of international child protection terminology.
- Established relationships with national and/or local authorities with responsibilities for child protection and alternative care and national statistical agencies.
- Capacity to reach out to decision-makers, organise meetings, provide input to National Action Plan's analysis, and report back to Eurochild.
- Familiarity with [the DataCare project](#), its [final findings and analysis](#), and our [recommendations](#) for decision-makers at EU and national level.

### **How will Eurochild support the National Correspondents?**

Eurochild will support the contribution of National Correspondents to the DataCare Project by:

- Providing a dissemination toolkit, containing key messages and findings from the DataCare project, in conjunction with UNICEF ECARO.
- Supporting through ongoing communication from initial engagement through to conclusion of the project (Jan-Dec 2022), including sharing relevant updates vis-à-vis the European Child Guarantee.
- Facilitating engagement with key identified decision-makers at national and EU level, drawing on Eurochild/UNICEF's established relationships and access.
- Facilitating exchange and collaboration between National Correspondents across the selected countries of the project.
- Supporting capacity building and facilitate network development for National Correspondents through contact with fellow Correspondents and EU child protection stakeholders.

### **Conditions of collaboration**

The ambition of the DataCare Project is transformative in nature, and seeks to harness existing data and national expertise to issue powerful evidence-based recommendations for EU Member States to improve how they collect data on CiAC. In order to achieve this goal under constrained resources, Eurochild is looking to sub-contract a total of 2,000 EUR per country to support advocacy activities of selected National Correspondents.

Experts who engage in the DataCare Project will have the opportunity to contribute to a landmark development in the EU for children in alternative care. As experts engaged in the study, National Correspondents will be recognised clearly for their contribution both at national and EU levels.

**To apply**

Interested experts are invited to confirm their interest by signing a **Letter of Intent** and sharing a Curriculum Vitae by 21 January 2022, to formalise their contribution to the DataCare Project.

Upon receipt, a Service Agreement will be issued. Additional inquiries can be sent to [Ciaran.odonnell@eurochild.org](mailto:Ciaran.odonnell@eurochild.org).

## Annex 1: Project Timeline

	Jan/Feb	March/April	May/June	July/August	Sep/October	Nov/Dec
<b>1. National level advocacy</b>						
1.1 Prepare a <b>dissemination toolkit for national &amp; EU advocacy</b> to drive key monitoring indicator on care reform	★					
1.2 <b>Mobilise national-based assets</b> to engage with Child Guarantee National Coordinators	→					
1.3 Support activated national assets to <b>influence inclusion of proposed indicators into national monitoring frameworks of the ECG</b>	→					
1.4 <b>Assessments of individual NAPs</b> to assess if indicators on care reform are included		★		★		
<b>2. EU level advocacy</b>						
2.1 <b>Influence the development of a common monitoring framework for children in alternative care across the EU</b> before & after NAPs published	→					
2.2 <b>Identify a Member State to champion alternative care within the ECG</b> ; and work with champion to convene other Member States to drive key monitoring indicator on care reform	★	→				
2.3 <b>EU cross-country analysis of the NAPs</b> on their inclusion of indicators on care reform				★		
2.4 <b>Event in the EP to influence the EU-wide monitoring &amp; accountability framework for the ECG</b>					★	