

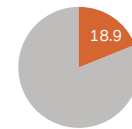
## “ Country recommendation

The Czech government should promptly adopt and implement the Child Guarantee National Action Plan, provide every pupil aged 3-15 years old with a free warm lunch as a part of their education process, and pursue a child participation model that specifically targets vulnerable and disadvantaged children and allows them to express their opinion about all aspects of public life affecting them.

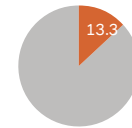
## Country Profile 2022



# Czechia



**Child Population:**  
**2.01 million**  
(18.9% of total population)



**Child Poverty Rate:**  
**13.3% (2021) ▲\***

\* [higher compared to pre-covid rates in 2019](#)

### RESPONDENT ORGANISATION(S):

[Alliance for the Rights of the Child Czechia \(ADP\)](#)

## European Semester Country Report and Recommendations

### Overview of the Country Report: identification of the children in need

The Alliance for the Rights of the Child Czechia argues that the [European Semester Country Report for Czechia](#) does not pay particular attention to the needs of children and subsequent investments in children. The report does, however, mention the need for investments in the green and the digital transition, both of utmost importance for children and young people.

The country report further outlines that **early childhood education and care (ECEC) remain low in Czechia** and urges appropriate measures to address the gaps of availability. Furthermore, while child poverty was relatively low at 12.9 % in 2020, the **risk of poverty and social exclusion**

**appears to be high for certain groups** like, children in low-income households in socially disadvantaged locations and Roma children. This is also due to limited expenditure in increasing the accessibility of social housing. Alliance for the Rights of the Child Czechia also suggests that the legislative framework on social housing should ensure further development, including investments.

The current **deinstitutionalisation strategy** is considered an important tool to connect health and social services, and promote the development of community-based services.

### Needs analysis: alignment at country-level

The Council Recommendations mention Czechia's initiatives to **'create new childcare facilities for children below 3 years'** to support working women. In addition, participation in early

childhood education and care is critical for children's healthy development and wellbeing.

The [Country Specific Recommendations for Czechia](#) also prompt more initiatives to ensure inclusive education through support to disadvantaged schools and tutoring. Alliance for the Rights of the Child Czechia explains that segregation in schools and early drop-out from education still affect most Roma pupils; therefore, it requires a more sustainable approach and funding.

Between 130,000 and 190,000 households, including **100,000 children, are experiencing a housing crisis**. These families are primarily located in the largest cities of Czechia, specifically in northern Bohemia and northern Moravia, the most affected regions due to a higher share of the population living in a difficult situation in these regions.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, vulnerable children

from disadvantaged communities, including Roma, are taken from their biological families and placed in alternative care due to evictions or inadequate housing. In such cases, **family separation could be prevented by providing accommodation for families at risk**. Alliance for the Rights of the Child Czechia welcomes that the Country Specific Recommendations also tackle the problem of social housing, which should be addressed through **'the adoption of a specific legislative framework and improved coordination between different public bodies'**.



<sup>1</sup> [Bydleni-jako-problem-2021.pdf \(socialnibydeni.org\)](#)

## Poverty and Social Exclusion – experiences of children, families, and communities

### Child poverty in Czechia

Czechia has a total child population of 2.01 million, 13.3% of which lived at risk of poverty and social exclusion in 2021.

The percentage of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion increased from 12.9% to 13.3% because of the Covid-19 crisis. The most affected are Roma children and other socially disadvantaged groups of children. Additionally, income poverty has increased for families with three or more children by more than a quarter. A slight increase has also been recorded among single mothers, a group who have long had difficulty making ends meet.<sup>2</sup>

### Example of good practice

In 2005, the *School Education Act* established student parliaments

in schools. **Participatory structures based on delegations of students exist in some municipalities and the majority of regions.** They are represented under a national umbrella organisation, the Children and Youth Parliament of the Czech Republic. However, these operate voluntarily, without a budget and they are not regulated by law.

Alliance for the Rights of the Child Czechia coordinates the work of the Children and Youth Parliament in Czechia. The second national meeting of the Parliament of Children and Youth of the Czech Republic (PDM) was held at the Old Town Hall in Prague in October 2022 under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Science, and the Ministry of the Environment.

The programme included discussions with guests, such as members of the European

Parliament and the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, and an expert from UNICEF Czechia.

In its second year of operation, the PDM aims to establish cooperation with organisations that are involved in public affairs and thus create better conditions for the lives of young people in Czechia. The resolution also includes **strong support for the institution of the Ombudsperson for Children**, which must be a separate and independent body from the existing Office of the Ombudsman in order to effectively provide legal protection for all children without distinction.

The meeting confirmed that despite the difficulties associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, the interest in the participation of students and children living in institutions has not faded out.

## European Child Guarantee

### Czechia National Action Plan

The Council Recommendation on a European Child Guarantee asked Member States to submit a National Action Plan (NAP) that would outline how the Child Guarantee would be implemented at the national level.

Czechia only shared its draft of the National Action Plan with stakeholders including, child rights organisations, in late October.

According to the Alliance for the Rights of the Child Czechia, the **plan identifies all vulnerable groups of children whose needs should be addressed.**

These groups of children include single-parent families, families of 3 and more children, children in need of housing, children in socially disadvantaged communities, low-income

<sup>2</sup> Poverty Watch Czech Republic | Poverty Watch 2021 and 2022 - EAPN

families, children in alternative care, Roma children, children with a migrant background and children whose mother tongue is not Czech, children and young people fleeing Ukraine, children of parents with low educational attainment, children of parents with disabilities, children with disabilities, children in families affected by addiction and violence, and children with risk behaviour.

It also proposes an **ambitious series of measures in early childhood education and care (ECEC), education, housing, healthcare, and nutrition.**

Particular attention is given to Ukrainian children, which make up 36% of the 400,000 refugees arriving in Czechia and registered under the [Temporary Protection Directive](#).

Alliance for the Rights of the Child Czechia calls for the Czech government to move from words to action and put all intended measures into practice.

On October 2022, there were two rounds of consultations on the National Action Plan with civil society organisations, during which the Alliance for the Rights of the Child Czechia provided input.

## EU Funding

### Priorities for EU funding in Czechia

The Alliance for the Rights of the Child Czechia calls the government of Czechia to prioritise investment in:

- providing free meals for all children at schools;
- providing cost -free pre-school facilities, after-school facilities and extracurricular activities; given that these costs are a barrier for the most vulnerable children.

