Setting the Scene
Measuring progress in deinstitutionalisation and improving data availability, quality and comparability on children in alternative care

Ciaran O’Donnell, Eurochild

Anja Teltschik, UNICEF
## The ‘Why’?

**Why is it important to produce statistics on children in alternative care?**

- Measuring progress and results of existing policy commitments
- Among the most excluded groups of children
- Often overlooked in national statistics, surveys and census
- Missing from international reporting frameworks
- Absence of internationally agreed standards and definitions

**Why is it important to have comparable statistics on this group of children?**

- Helps identify national data gaps
- Supports evidence-based policymaking and analysis, and the assessment of public policies
- Prompts improvements in collection, measurement, and reporting, improving quality of data for international and national purposes
PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN IN RESIDENTIAL CARE OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN ALTERNATIVE CARE AT A SPECIFIC POINT IN TIME (EU + UK)

Percentage of children in residential care

Source: Data collected from official sources in the DataCare Project (2017-2020)
Preliminary analysis of the integration of indicators on children in alternative care into Child Guarantee National Action Plans

- **19** National Action Plans submitted – all 19 refer to children in alternative care
- **15** refer to available data on children in alternative care
- **9** have monitoring frameworks including selected indicators on children in alternative care
- **2** include an action to carry out specific surveys on children in alternative until 2030
The ‘What’?

Global, Regional and National Frameworks

Prevention

Entry indicators (inflow)
Other quantitative and qualitative indicators (some countries only)

Suitable alternative care

Stock indicators (type, profile): #, %, rate
System performance indicators
Other quantitative and qualitative indicators (some countries only)

Reunification and reintegration

Exit data (outflow) by destination
System performance indicators
Other quantitative and qualitative indicators (some countries only)

Safe transitioning to adulthood

Outcomes for children in care and care leavers (some countries only)

RED: Available data from a critical mass of countries
A flavour of the growing evidence and knowledge base

Regional and national level

Global level

National Good Practice Examples
Key Findings

National definitions and classifications vary and reflect diversity of systems

No internationally accepted standard definitions

The population of children in alternative care is not fully captured in all countries – exclusion of groups of children and specific types of care

Disaggregation variables are not standardized

Commonly used variables: age, sex, disability status

Some statistics on children in alternative care are available in most countries (Residential and Family-based)

Issues concerning data availability (gaps), comparability (methodological work needed), quality (data systems strengthening)

Issues are recognized at national level – high interest in improving data

Good practices exist

International work required
Main Recommendations

For the European Commission and in particular the Social Protection Committee - Indicator Sub-Group to:

- Develop guidance on monitoring progress in EU child policy implementation and evaluating outcomes for children.
- Use the available data from national sources on children in alternative care to fill in the gaps in EU-level data collection in this area.
- Invest in the methodological work required to allow more comparable results.

For Eurostat and National Statistical Offices to continue supporting and actively engaging in the follow-up work to the Guidance on Statistics on Children > Expert meeting in 2024.

For the European Commission to continue supporting Member States through the Technical Support Instrument in the implementation and monitoring of their national action plans (children’s rights, European Child Guarantee).

For Governments to seize the available policy instruments and support mechanisms and work with national statistical offices on assessing the quality of their data systems on children in alternative care, and develop and implement data improvement plans – engaging also civil society and children in these processes.
THANK YOU!

For more information contact:

Eurochild: Ciaran O’Donnell,
Policy & Project Officer:
ciaran.odonnell@eurochild.org

UNICEF: Anja Teltschik,
Child Protection Specialist –
Monitoring & Evaluation and Data:
ateltschik@unicef.org