

# Bulgaria - 2024 Biennial report on the implementation of the Child Guarantee

*This summary provides key highlights from the first Biennial report on the Child Guarantee implementation in Bulgaria. It is not exhaustive or evaluative.*

## Roll-out of key services

**Early childhood education and care:** Improving the coverage and quality and expanding the network of early childhood development services. Fee paid for children at risk. Establishment of a *National Quality Framework*, and an inter-institutional working group, including the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Health and other institutions, various organisations and professionals with expertise on the subject.

**Education and school-based activities:** Creation of a *Functional Assessment Map* and a platform with resources for children with special educational needs. Support for personal development in school education and promoting intercultural education.

**Healthcare:** A *National Coordinating Council on Maternal and Child Health* was established, alongside training on reproductive health and child care. Legislative changes improved medical care quality and access. Preventive examinations for children expanded, and support for children with disabilities increased. Establishment of a National Pediatric Hospital and strategies for child health and mental health.

**Healthy meal each school day:** Free meals for children in full-day nursery and kindergarten and a *National Strategy for the implementation of a scheme for the supply of fruit, vegetables, milk and dairy products* in kindergartens, schools and special education support centres.

**Adequate housing:** Funding social housing projects and providing appropriate accommodation for children seeking and receiving international protection.

**Alternative care:** Twenty centres for children with disabilities and six for high risk children are under construction. A Council has been established to support the closure of the four remaining institutional care settings, including by developing a foster care system for children with disabilities. Two interministerial groups are working to close two of the institutions. Social services sector reform remains a priority.

## Resources

- [Full Biennial report on the implementation of the Child Guarantee](#)
- [Bulgaria Child Guarantee National Action Plan – Eurochild’s overview](#)
- [Eurochild Bulgaria Country Profile](#)

## Monitoring and Evaluation

A *Permanent Expert Working Group*, comprising representatives from all relevant institutions and organisations, including the civil society sector and academia, was established to support the coordination and monitoring of the implementation process of the Plan. The Working Group developed the first Operational Plan for the period 2023-2024, which outlines specific activities with indicators, timelines, funding amounts and sources, and responsible institutions.

## Target groups

The target groups have been listed in the National Action Plan and [Eurochild’s overview](#).

## Funding to implement the Child Guarantee

The implementation of the National Action Plan is mainly financed from the state budget and the European Structural and Investment Funds through the *Education Programme 2021-2027*, the *Human Resources Development Programme 2021-2027*, the *Regional Development Programme (RDP) 2021-2027*, the *Food and Basic Material Support Programme 2021-2027* and other sources.

## Lessons learnt and further development

- Specialised events and actions, involving health mediators in Roma communities and promoting and raising awareness of the European Child Guarantee.
- Effective coordination between institutions is essential to tackle child poverty.
- With current gaps in official statistics, there is a need for better information exchange, integrated support, clear roles, local authority involvement, and public support.

## Relevant trends

- The kindergarten enrolment rate increased from 79.1% to 87.3% between the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years.
- Child mortality decreased from 5.6‰ in 2021 to 4.8‰ in 2022.
- From 2021 to 2023, compulsory immunisation coverage rose from 91% to 93%, and births among girls under 19 decreased from 4,408 to 4,241.
- From the period 2021-2023, there was a 37% increase in the expansion of the coverage of children with disabilities who received complex health services within the Centres for Complex Services for Children with Disabilities and Chronic Disease.
- In 2023, the share of AROPE children rose by 0.9% compared to 2019.
- The report details residential care services for children and recipients of benefits under the *Family Allowances Act*.