

**Eurochild's reaction to
the Proposed Council
Recommendation on
housing exclusion:
advancing children's
rights to an adequate
standard of living**



Eurochild's reaction to the Proposed Council Recommendation on housing exclusion: advancing children's rights to an adequate standard of living

Eurochild welcomes the proposed Council Recommendation on combating housing exclusion and homelessness as a necessary step towards ensuring the right to an adequate standard of living for every child in Europe. This is key to supporting the implementation of the European Child Guarantee. Given the scale and persistence of child housing exclusion across the EU, we urge the Council to adopt it swiftly and to ensure that a children's rights approach firmly guides its implementation.

An estimated 400,000 children in Europe experience homelessness, a figure that remains persistently high despite existing policy efforts. Even in Brussels, the capital of Europe, nearly 10,000 people - more than 0.6% of the city's population - were homeless on a given night in November 2024. In Ireland, homelessness has doubled in three years, with 15,000+ people in emergency accommodation, including 2,000 families and over 5,000 children. As our members consistently report, these figures are not exceptional but reflect a broader structural challenge across almost all European countries, underscoring the urgent need for coordinated EU action.

Eurochild particularly welcomes that the Recommendation addresses the **full ETHOS spectrum of housing exclusion**. This includes children living in inadequate, overcrowded, insecure or substandard housing, in temporary accommodation, reception centres or informal settlements. Recognising these often invisible situations is essential to ensure that no child is overlooked.

The proposal is anchored in **person-centred, housing-led and integrated approaches**, including the **Housing First model**. Evidence from across Europe, including initiatives such as Austria's *Wohnschirm*, Poland's Housing First programmes and Portugal's *1º Direito* and *Front Door*, confirms that rapid access to permanent housing, combined with tailored and integrated support, is the most effective response to homelessness. For children and families, this principle is particularly important: stable housing is a precondition for continuity of education, healthcare and family life.

One of the strongest elements of the Recommendation is its **focus on prevention**. Member States are encouraged to **identify people at risk of housing exclusion**, develop early-warning systems, improve cooperation across social, education, justice, employment and child protection services, and **provide targeted measures** such as debt and housing counselling, emergency rental assistance and mediation.

Eurochild particularly welcomes the Recommendation's call to **strengthen protection against forced and arbitrary evictions**, especially for families with children and single-parent households. Evictions should never result in children being pushed into homelessness or unsafe accommodation. Where families cannot remain in their home, they must be guaranteed timely, suitable and stable alternatives.

The Recommendation rightly states that Member States should ensure that no child lacks **adequate housing** and that **alternative accommodation must be provided when needed**, while **preserving family unity in the child's best interests**. This principle is critical. Housing insecurity must never be used as a justification for unnecessary family separation. Instead, families should receive comprehensive support to remain together safely, including through housing benefits, adequate income support, family support services and community-based care.

Eurochild welcomes the emphasis on **access to adequate and secure housing solutions**. While emergency shelters and temporary accommodation may be necessary, they are not appropriate long-term environments for children. The commitment to ensure that no child remains roofless or trapped in emergency or temporary accommodation should serve as a clear benchmark for national action.

The Recommendation recognises that support services alone will suffice without a significant increase in the **supply of social and affordable housing**. Eurochild therefore welcomes the proposed measures to expand housing supply, including increased investment, the mobilisation of vacant dwellings and public property, support for non-profit housing models, and the strategic use of EU funding and investment tools.

Importantly, the Recommendation affirms that **quality is a core component of adequate housing**, alongside affordability, security of tenure and access to services. For children, this means living in homes that are safe, structurally sound, sanitary, sufficiently spacious, properly heated and ventilated, and free from damp, mould and environmental hazards. Eurochild calls for these **minimum quality standards**, including strong energy performance requirements, to be explicitly reflected in National Action Plans, and for **energy poverty** to be addressed as an integral part of housing policy.

The inclusion of measures targeting children in particularly vulnerable situations is also essential. Member States are encouraged to **support housing adaptations for persons with disabilities** and ensure that no child or young person leaves alternative care without adequate housing and support services. These obligations are critical to preventing homelessness and social exclusion among care leavers.

Eurochild welcomes the recognition that certain groups are disproportionately affected by housing exclusion, including children in single-parent households, children with a migrant background, Roma children, children belonging to racial or ethnic minorities, children with disabilities and LGBTQI+ youth. The specific attention given to single-parent families in eviction prevention is particularly important, as they face some of the highest risks of housing cost overburden and insecurity across the EU. While the Recommendation acknowledges the need for access to housing and promotes equal treatment, transparent allocation systems, and professional training, it should go further and explicitly address the structural and systemic nature of discrimination that continues to limit access to adequate housing.

The focus on data, monitoring and governance is equally important. Children experiencing housing exclusion are often invisible in official statistics, especially when they live in temporary accommodation, overcrowded housing, informal arrangements, reception facilities or unstable family situations. Member States should strengthen the collection of

disaggregated data on children's housing situations and use this evidence to design, monitor and adjust policies in the design, implementation, and evaluation of policies. Ensuring the meaningful participation of persons with lived experience, alongside civil society, social economy organisations, including food banks and local actors, is essential to making these policies effective.

At the same time, the **implementation of the Recommendation should be clearly aligned with the European Child Guarantee**, which calls on Member States to ensure that children at risk of poverty or social exclusion have effective access to adequate housing. While some progress has been made, housing must be given greater priority in revised National Action Plans.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) affirms that every child has the **right to an adequate standard of living** for their physical, mental, spiritual, moral, and social development, linking this right to the right to housing and requiring states to provide material assistance and support where needed. **The adoption and implementation of this Recommendation is a key opportunity for the EU and Member States to turn this right into a reality for every child in Europe.**

To know more about the housing challenges faced by children in Europe and our proposed recommendations:

- [Housing challenges faced by children in Europe](#)
- [Every Child's Right to Safe, Secure, and Adequate Housing](#)

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