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Making Prevention Work with the Child Guarantee

Advancing Universal Access in EU Member States

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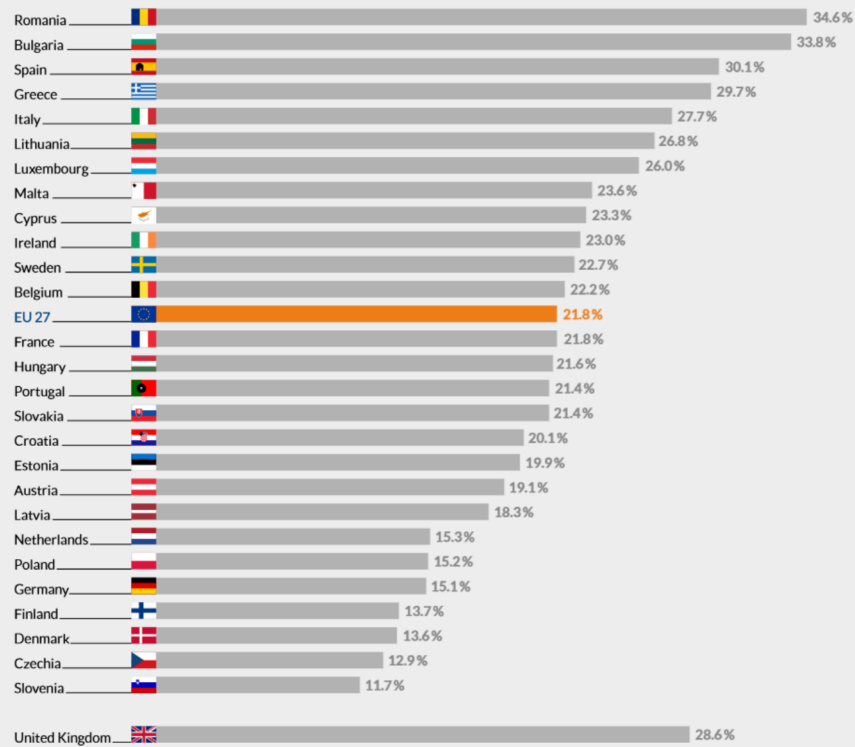
With its recent discussions about a proposed “Child Guarantee,” the European Union is seeking to address the problems associated with child poverty in European member states. In all EU member states, children are the group with the highest risk of poverty. More than 23 percent of the European Union’s under-18 population is classified as being at risk of poverty and exclusion (Eurostat, 2020). Poorer and wealthier member states alike grapple with this problem (Fig. 1). The Covid-19 pandemic is likely to further exacerbate social and health inequalities, with disadvantaged families in particular suffering from the negative consequences of the crisis. In this situation, it is more important than ever to ensure that families have access to support services, and to focus on establishing universal preventive structures for children and youth. The EU’s recently passed €672.5 billion Recovery and Resilience Facility, which aims to help the EU member states recover from the negative impacts of the pandemic, acknowledges

these specific needs of families and children and supports the aims of the Child Guarantee (see European Parliament and European Council, 2021: 8). However, long-term strategies are also needed in order to improve children’s living conditions across the EU.

Living conditions among children in the European Union have gained increased attention within the EU since the passage of the Lisbon Treaty of 2009. One milestone in this regard was the 2013 recommendation “Investing in Children: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage” (European Commission, 2013), which identified three main areas of action for efforts to address child poverty and exclusion: 1) ensuring access to adequate resources, 2) ensuring access to affordable high-quality services (especially with regard to early childhood education and care) and 3) promoting children’s right to participate. Nevertheless, the recommendations issued have not been uniformly imple-



FIGURE 1: Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion (2019)



% of population aged less than 16 years, 2019 | Source: Eurostat (ILC_PEPS01).

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mented or interpreted either from a conceptual or structural perspective, or concerning their specific contents (EU COM, 2017). A recent study examining the feasibility of the EU Child Guarantee found that EU member states show a “lack of overall political prioritization and lack of efficient strategy; fragmentation of responsibilities at [the] national, regional and local level; a lack of data; and [insufficient] monitoring of the children concerned” (European Commission, 2020b).

European social policy: Gaining momentum as a public issue

However, children’s issues have risen on the European agenda in recent years, particularly under the Juncker Commission (2014 – 2019). Moreover, European social policy appears to be gaining momentum, at least on the rhetorical level. The “socializing” of the European Semester, the declaration of a “European Pillar of Social Rights” and a recalibration of the European Social Fund are key aspects of this agenda targeting societal concerns. The introduction of the Child Guarantee, which is scheduled to be addressed in the European Commission’s working program in March 2021, represents the latest development in this trend. The project has been endorsed by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who said, “To support every child in need, I will create the European Child Guarantee, picking up on the idea proposed by the European Parliament.”

The Child Guarantee: A step forward in providing children across Europe basic goods and services

The Child Guarantee marks a step further in the right direction toward establishing equal access to basic goods and services. Among its main goals, the Child Guarantee seeks to secure children’s access to free healthcare, free education, free childcare, decent housing and adequate nutrition (European Commission 2020). This focus on children’s basic needs constitutes an important step forward in focusing on the material conditions underlying a healthy childhood in the European Union’s member states. In this policy brief, we argue that this focus on basic needs is indeed a necessary step, but is not in itself enough to ensure well-being for children. In addition to ensuring the ful-

fillment of basic needs, a policy design centered on children’s early years should enhance links between relevant institutional support programs, and afford access to services tailored to the individual child.

In the following, we draw on the findings of a recent study on preventive structures and policies for children, youth and families in 12 European countries (Grohs, Beinborn, & Ullrich, 2020), focusing particularly on the universalist concept of prevention chains. Our study identified a wide range of deficits in Europe’s preventive structures, as well as a huge variety of preventive concepts, interpretations and measures. The present paper’s aim is to systematically collect and identify these different manifestations of prevention, and to map state-led approaches to fostering universal preventive services. Such a comparison should be able to identify common challenges, allowing the development of recommendations for policymakers at the member-state and EU level.

The paper is organized as follows: First, it outlines the variety of existing preventive approaches and identifies the primary deficits in the member states examined here, with a special focus on the areas prioritized within the Child Guarantee. Second, it discusses common challenges with regard to establishing an integrated preventive approach within the member states. Third, it describes EU-level policies and programs that hold the potential to enhance prevention. Fourth, and finally, it offers recommendations that would facilitate the realization of a Child Guarantee.

Varieties of prevention: The state of preventive policies for children and families in Europe

The comparative study informing this policy brief (Grohs et al., 2020) identifies and analyzes preventive structures and policies for children, young people and families in 12 European countries, including Austria, Czechia, Denmark, England (UK), Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden. Case studies focused on Austria (Ebinger, 2020), France (Reiter, 2020), and the Netherlands (Beinborn et al., 2020) deepen our understanding of how preventive systems are performing. By examining what works in each of the countries surveyed, the study aims to provide a foundation for the development of preventive policies across Europe. The study draws on a concept of prevention that is framed in universalist and integrative terms. The concept is universalist in that it addresses all children and young people, even those not seen as being “at-risk.” It is integrative because it postulates that prevention should be organized from the child’s point of view, not in terms of administrative responsibilities. As such, this concept is directed toward the establishment of prevention chains that link the various institutions that may be relevant at different times throughout an individual’s life (Fig. 2). This is

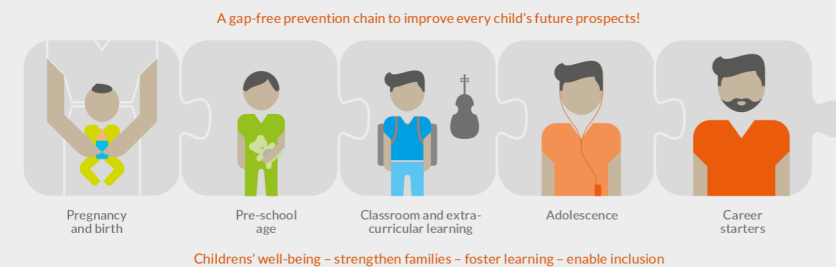
consistent with the Child Guarantee’s call for universal access to free healthcare, free education, free childcare, decent housing and adequate nutrition, and focuses on access points that enable these services to be inter-linked from the child’s point of view.

Despite widespread awareness of the underlying problems, as well as a common frame of reference provided by the European Commission’s 2013 recommendation “Investing in Children: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage,” existing preventive concepts, interpretations and measures vary greatly across Europe. The Nordic countries show the most consistency in this regard, followed by continental European countries such as the Netherlands, France and Germany. Other countries, such as the liberal welfare states of Ireland and England, feature prevention strategies that more specifically target those in need.

Greater diversity within states’ service-delivery systems

The patterns of internal coordination within states’ service-delivery systems show even greater diversity. Most typically, the five areas covered by the Child Guarantee – healthcare, education, early childhood education and childcare (EHEC), decent housing, and adequate nutrition – are handled by separate administrative units and different levels of government. Even if most countries take a universalist approach that addresses all

FIGURE 2: Interlocking prevention chain



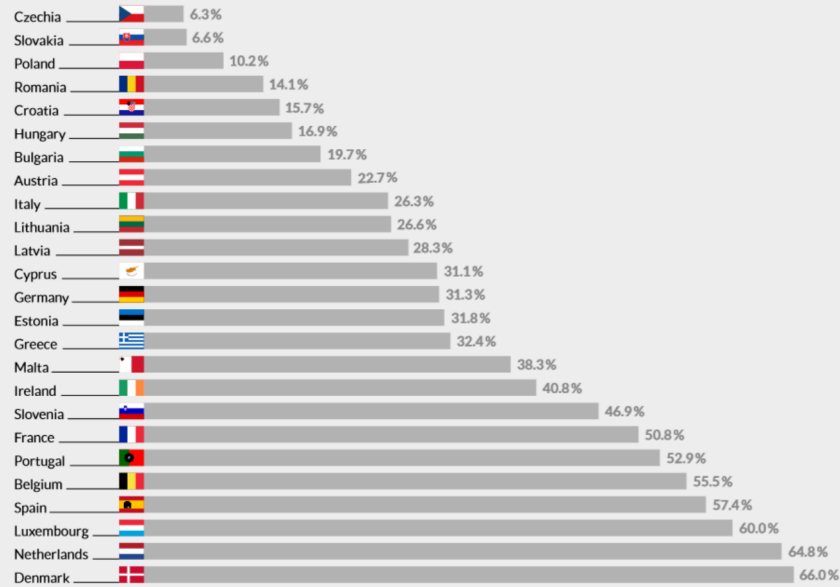
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children and families, the degree of integration between such services displays a substantial amount of variation. Whereas some countries aim to integrate services both across sectors (i.e., health, EHEC, education, youth welfare, welfare) and throughout the life course, others maintain rather fragmented structures. In this regard, the Nordic countries pursue a comparatively integrated approach, contrasting with the rather fragmented departmental structures observed in Ireland and England. Countries in Central, East-Central and Southern Europe are rather inconsistent in this regard, but generally pursue integrated approaches by establishing cross-institutional networks.

Within the issues covered by the Child Guarantee, our study focused particularly on healthcare and EHEC.

These two systems are largely separate from one another in the member states. With regard to free access to health services, all member states have provisions in place that in theory guarantee free provision of healthcare services to children. The main problem remains the de facto accessibility of those services in terms of distance, time and administrative burdens. Members of vulnerable groups in particular often live in areas that are located at some distance from services, or where local services have restricted opening hours. Parents belonging to such groups often face difficulties navigating the administrative hurdles associated with free access, or in many cases are not even aware of the existence of these services. By contrast, EHEC services show a considerably greater diversity.

FIGURE 3: Children aged less than 3 years in formal childcare (2019)



Source: Eurostat [tepsr_sp210]

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**Centralization versus decentralization:
Pros and cons**

The extent to which services are integrated into an administrative architecture depends on each country’s broader administrative setting. The three Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland and Sweden each have a longstanding tradition of extensive welfare provision, as well as municipalities that possess administrative competencies for educational, social – and to varying degrees – healthcare matters. In reforms introduced in 2015, the Netherlands moved toward bundling all relevant preventive competences (with the exception of schools) at the municipal level. England and Ireland take a more centralized and single-purpose-oriented approach, in which local governments play a lesser role. The continental, East-Central and Southern European countries vary in their approaches, but generally aim to establish networks that link actors in centrally governed policy areas (mostly health and employment) with others in areas for which local administrations bear responsibility.

Even if some states’ institutional frameworks are structurally better suited for coordinating different children- and youth-related services, there is no guarantee that this potential will be fulfilled in practice. Elements that make such coordination more likely include a clear political commitment to prevention policies on the part of local councils and administrative leaders, and a culture of cooperation between administrative actors and local service providers. To help ensure that such conditions are in place, the state (and EU-level bodies) can use instruments that oblige

certain actors to cooperate (e.g., by conditioning the provision of additional funding on the establishment of binding cooperation agreements). However, the effects of enforced cooperation of this kind are limited when not backed by other instruments. One important factor can be the opportunity for political actors to demonstrate to a broader public that their preventive work has been successful. The introduction of benchmarks, awards and additional grants, for example, can increase actors’ motivation to enhance local-level cooperation by giving them public recognition for their successes.

Financing preventive measures

In most countries, financing for preventive measures comes from budgets distributed along sectoral lines. This reinforces sectoral lines of administration, and encourages problems to be framed within this same sectoral perspective. By contrast, for preventive policies to reach their full potential, it is essential to have cross-cutting sources of funding, for example for shared establishments and shared promotion, further-education programs and advertising. Funding mechanisms of this nature can be found in Nordic countries, but are lacking in most other countries (as well as at the EU level).

In most cases, financial restrictions severely constrict preventive options, as prevention often receives only what is left over after budgets have been largely exhausted handling more “urgent” and often legally binding measures. One means of combating this

TABLE 1: **Administrative responsibilities:
Centralization versus decentralization,
fragmentation versus integration**

Mostly decentralized and integrated	Mixed	Mostly centralized and fragmented
Denmark Finland Sweden Netherlands Lithuania	Germany France Austria Czechia Spain	Ireland England

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“short-termism” could be a stronger reliance on evidence-based policy, as is currently evolving in the Netherlands, for example. In some cases – once again the Nordic countries stand out in this regard – there are additional lines of funding earmarked specifically for preventive offers or strategies, but even these tend to be based on individual applications and are limited in time.

Guidance for prevention

This said, governments can also offer resources beyond funding alone. For example, the countries with the greatest degree of centralization (Ireland and UK) provide more materials (e.g., manuals), and are consistent in exercising some form of performance-management oversight function. By contrast, many Central European states do not issue national guidelines; Germany and Austria represent exceptions here, as each feature national forums for dialogue that focus on early intervention programs. While information and guidelines are often discussed in voluntary horizontal networks, no binding structures are implemented at the regional or community levels and, for the most part, performance management is lacking. In Austria, Germany and France, and to a certain extent the East-Central and Southern European countries, preventive services are arguably undergoverned by central actors.

Monitoring

In theory, some of these monitoring and oversight functions could also be performed at the EU level. In fact, there have been some cautious attempts to establish common monitoring indicators via the European Social Scoreboard, and to provide some recommendations via the European Semester. However, these approaches have to date had little impact on member states’ policies in the areas examined here.

Finally, the quantity of available evidence and data on preventive programs – a vital prerequisite for monitoring and improving programs – varies across Europe, but largely at a low level. The Nordic countries, England and Ireland have somewhat more robust data on their preventive programs, but on the whole we as yet lack an overarching body of evidence. The European Social Scoreboard (for more on this program, see the next section) remains a very sketchy approach in this regard.

Developing a broader evidence base could also help motivate subnational actors to engage more substantially in preventive policies. While evidence-based policymaking remains quite rare in practice, many political and administrative actors in fact wish to have more information on how well policies actually function, and on how well they are reaching target groups. A group of municipalities in the Netherlands offers a positive example in this regard, as they have recently begun collecting and evaluating data to improve their preventive services (and to convince political stakeholders of the value of the programs).

The study identifies common challenges for Europe as a whole that require stronger EU involvement (Grohs et al. 2020). Topping the list is the absence of a common understanding of prevention and social investment. Second, there is a lack of cooperation between different sectors that calls for greater structural and practical coordination efforts. Third, we need more community-driven, integrated preventive care that brings services closer to people where and when they need it. Fourth, the visibility and general awareness of such services must be strengthened in order to ensure that both professionals and clients are informed of existing services. Fifth, an effort to balance centralized with local adaptation approaches to competencies could bring together the best of both worlds. Sixth, budgets for preventive measures follow sectoral lines or are otherwise restricted, which leaves no room for cross-sectoral innovation.

Supporting prevention and the Child Guarantee at the EU level

The European Union could help strengthen preventive action across Europe. Given these shared challenges within the EU member states, a further question is whether stronger coordination at the EU level could effectively support national governments and subnational actors in efforts to implement the Child Guarantee and develop universalist prevention policies. Most of the shared problems fall under the competencies of the member states. Nevertheless, the European Union

could support and coordinate national and subnational policies through a variety of means, including funding, guidance and “soft law.” Ideally, the three channels could complement one another.

Since the social investment package and the “Investing in Children: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage” recommendation (European Commission, 2013), child development issues have drawn considerable attention on the EU level. Nevertheless, the concepts of social investment and prevention are not uniformly applied and interpreted – conceptually, structurally but also concerning their specific contents (European Commission 2017, see also our findings in Grohs et al., 2020). It is important for the EU to promote a more common understanding of prevention as an aspect of social investment. This conceptual framework should focus not only on investment targeting individual children but institutional and societal issues as well. It should demonstrate how such investment shapes the future of a continent whose resources are its people. Given that our case studies reveal a broader interest in structures seen in other countries, European prevention summits at which actors exchange best practices and other information concerning effective prevention seem plausible.

Using EU funds to promote prevention

Though a powerful instrument, the European Social Fund (ESF) is rarely drawn upon for prevention funding in part because the administrative burden involved with apply for and managing these funds is too high for many potential recipients, such as local governments. Lowering these thresholds would mark a step in the right direction. To date, there has also been little use of EU funding in the areas covered by the Child Guarantee. Indeed, there have been comparatively few instances in which disbursements from the ESF or other European funds have been used to finance preventive programs of any kind. The “Leave no Child Behind!” project in Germany’s North Rhine-Westphalia is a good example of a universalist and integrated approach that draws on ESF funding, and our study additionally identified some training programs for teachers (e.g., in the Netherlands) and other smaller projects. However, most projects financed with ESF resources instead target specific population groups (e.g., Roma) or life transitions (e.g., from school to employment).

Thus, one general recommendation resulting from our research is that the status of integrated and preventive measures within the ESF or ESF+ and the regional operational programs be enhanced. To some extent, this is already beginning to happen, as we describe below.

The ESF was created with the goal of enhancing worker mobility and supporting employment within the EU. However, since the passage of the Lisbon agenda, it has also added aims such as inclusion and cohesion. In its 2014 – 2020 programming period, the ESF for the first time added the aim of reducing poverty. More specifically, it stated that 20 percent of the funds were to be used for the purposes of social inclusion and poverty reduction. Nevertheless, these EU programs have not to date focused directly on the problems of vulnerable children, addressing this population instead through broader categories such as social inclusion.

During the 2021 – 2027 programming period for the multiannual framework (MFF), the ESF is slated to be fused with the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), and the Health Programme, with the goal of tackling all of these issues with greater coordination and flexibility. The main areas of intervention will be employment, education and social inclusion. In the discussions over the creation of the ESF+ for the 2021 – 2027 funding period, the European Commission proposed 11 specific objectives, among them improving access to childcare and promoting the social inclusion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, including the most disadvantaged persons and children (European Commission 2018).

The ESF+ will be closely linked to the European Social Scoreboard and the Country Specific Recommendations of the European Semester process through the program’s own funding priorities. The share of disbursements focused on issues of social inclusion and poverty reduction is to be increased to 25 percent. Nevertheless, the new proposed budget (as of November 2020) for the ESF+ 2021 – 2027 program is €87.9 billion, which is a reduction compared with previous amounts.



In January 2021, the European Council and the European Parliament agreed on a minimum share of ESF+ funding on child poverty. Member states with a level of child poverty above the EU average are requested to use at least 5% of their ESF+ resources to reduce child poverty. All other member states must allocate an "appropriate amount" of their ESF+ resources for measures against child poverty. This agreement is weaker than the parliament's proposal, which had demanded states allocate at least 5 percent of their ESF+ resources to the implementation of the European Child Guarantee (European Parliament 2019). Once agreement is achieved, the European Parliament and the Council will have to formally approve the ESF+ Regulation to bring it into force.

Soft law: The European Pillar of Social Rights, the European Social Scoreboard, and the European Semester

The European Pillar of Social Rights, or Social Pillar, is an inter-institutional proclamation made by the European Parliament, the European Commission and the European Council. At the same time, it is classified as a recommendation according to Art. 292 TFEU. It consists of a list of 20 principles organized into three chapters. While the first and second chapter can be classified as falling into traditional EU social-policy categories ("equal opportunities and access to the labor market" and "fair working conditions"), the third chapter, at least in some parts, extends surprisingly beyond the typical reach of EU competences. For instance, principle 11 states:

(A) Children have the right to affordable early childhood education and care of good quality. (B) Children have the right to protection from poverty. (C) Children from disadvantaged backgrounds have the right to specific measures to enhance equal opportunities (European Parliament, European Council, & European Commission, 2017).

The Child Guarantee clearly mirrors this principle

The Social Pillar is accompanied by the European Social Scoreboard (ESSC), a monitoring instrument that also functions as a governance tool. The ESSC monitors EU countries' performance on the basis of a dozen indica-

tors related to the Social Pillar. Among these, only one – the share of children aged less than three years in formal childcare – relates specifically to children's issues. Others, such as the indicator measuring the share of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion (indicator 4), are not broken down according to age group, a data point that would be important in developing a core set of data on the situation of children in the European Union. Of course, some of these data are available elsewhere. But the inclusion of more child-specific indicators in the ESSC would enhance the political standing accorded to the issue of children's rights.

The European Pillar of Social Rights in the European Semester

The integration of the Social Pillar and Social Scoreboard into the European Semester process has been the biggest factor in enhancing their impact. The European Semester is an instrument for coordinating economic and fiscal policy within the EU, organized as an annual cycle based on a fixed timeline of steps. As part of the European Semester, the European Commission reviews member states' draft budget plans, the national reform programs, and the various stability and convergence programs.

Over time, the Commission's once-narrow focus on stability and growth has increasingly expanded beyond fiscal and economic recommendations toward social-policy issues. In 2017/18, the Social Pillar was included in this process. However, it has remained unclear how this integration would change the content and direction of the Commission's country-specific recommendations (CSRs) (Grohs, 2019; Hacker, 2019). In 2018 and 2019,¹ for example, most children-related

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2018-european-semester-country-specific-recommendations-commission-recommendations_en
https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2019-european-semester-country-specific-recommendations-commission-recommendations_en

recommendations referred to affordable childcare; moreover, they were framed not using prevention-related arguments, but with reference to the goal of fostering equal access to labor markets (Czech Republic 2019 (2); Ireland 2019 (2); Italy 2018 (2), 2019 (2); Cyprus 2019 (3); Poland 2018 (2), 2019 (2); Slovakia 2018 (2), 2019 (2)) (European Parliament, 2019).² Some recommendations additionally touched on educational achievements by disadvantaged groups (e.g., Germany 2018/ 2019 (2); Romania 2019 (2)). More directly related was the recommendation to improve support for families (Spain 2019 (2)).

As Eurochild (2019)³ has noted in its publication of alternative country recommendations, the Commission's CSRs placed a stronger focus on child-related issues in their annexes, especially with regard to funding priorities. However, the current paucity of child-specific recommendations makes it clear that there could be more emphasis placed on these topics, especially given principle 11b of the Social Pillar and its associated "right to specific measures to enhance equal opportunities."

² Figures in parentheses refer to number of CSR enumerations.
³ <https://www.eurochild.org/about-us/>



Recommendations

As we have seen in our study, European welfare states are still fundamentally distinctive, and face multifarious challenges. An effective push toward harmonization and convergence on the issue of children's issues is likely only if the Child Guarantee is ultimately made stronger, and becomes better integrated into other, less symbolic EU policies, especially the structural funds and regulatory policies. This would strengthen the visibility and influence of the Social Pillar and the Child Guarantee for actors working at the local level.

Below, we offer specific recommendations drawn from our research in each of the areas we have addressed above.

Funding

To encourage the development preventive approaches, it will ultimately be necessary to **include overarching, prevention-focused coordination projects directly within European funding programs**, especially the ESF+. This would help build cooperative structures between services, for example by providing funds for the creation of exchange forums and encouraging communication between prevention actors. Specifically, a certain amount of EU funds should be reserved for programs directly aiding vulnerable children. Regrettably, the 5 percent ESF+ earmark for this purpose promoted by the European Parliament was weakened in the agreement with the European Council in January 2021. Similarly, prevention, investing in children, and addressing child poverty should be made an explicit aim of the EU funds, especially the ESF+.

For the most part, the European Semester process has neglected the importance of investment in children and the administrative structures that support them. To remedy this, it should **include recommendations that tackle child poverty and integrative approaches** (including Principle 11 of the European Pillar of Social Rights), and **work to channel EU funding toward these issues**.

We can also learn from recent experiences. We have seen that many existing opportunities to obtain funding have not been used for preventive approaches due to actors' lack of knowledge about the opportunities, and in some cases due to excessive administrative burdens. Thus, another goal should be to reduce the administrative burdens associated with applying for and managing European funds. Similarly, a concerted effort should be made to **raise awareness of funding opportunities** of the European Structural and Investment funds (ESIF) in general and **specifically the ESF+** among subnational (and other) actors, and to increase the capacities of potential users and coordinators. At the moment, it is precisely the local governments and regions most dependent on external support that are the least likely to apply.

Soft law

The EU should **promote prevention and preventive measures** within the context of EU discussions on social investment and the Child Guarantee. This could precipitate the creation of a shared understanding of prevention in Europe, while enabling member states to learn more from each other's best practices.

The issues and principles included in the European Pillar of Social Rights and Social Scoreboard, particularly those relating to prevention and to support for children, **should be given greater emphasis within the European Semester process**. Creating such a **year-long focus on the well-being of children** would be invaluable in helping the Child Guarantee gain momentum.

We also need further ideas as to how successful projects can be consolidated into established structures. Evaluation and monitoring are important in order to identify what works, but also to provide an argument within national policy debates that such policies work, and should be expanded. To aid in this process, **European Social Scoreboard indicators should be adjusted** to provide the data necessary to push member states to act.

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Coming up

No. 4 | 2021

Ensuring sustainable local prevention chains will require making changes to Germany's Basic Law and Fiscal Code

The "Leave no child behind!" project has focused on establishing local prevention chains since 2012. Early childhood care and education, youth welfare assistance, as well as health and social services that are attuned to a child's needs must be coordinated at the local level. How these chains of prevention are designed and implemented thus depends on the political will, decision-making authority and capacities of community actors. Yet healthy environments facilitative of a child's well-being has become increasingly important as the key to their capacity to participate in society and the workforce.

The legal opinion piece on potential constitutional amendments by Prof. Dr. Constanze Janda, "Prävention verankern – Verfassungsrechtliche Konsequenzen aus dem Verbot der Benachteiligung auf Grund sozialer Herkunft," explores the possibilities for binding local governments to introducing coordinated measures financed by the federal government.

Bertelsmann Stiftung | German Research Institute for Public Administration in Speyer

Ausblick

Nr. 4 | 2021

Gelingendes Aufwachsen und verfassungsrechtliche Änderungsbedarfe

"Kein Kind zurücklassen!" beschäftigt sich seit 2012 mit dem Aufbau kommunaler Präventionsketten. (Frühkindliche) Betreuung und Bildung, Erziehung, Gesundheit und Soziales lassen sich "vom Kind her" nur kommunal koordinieren. Das hat zur Folge, dass Implementierung und Ausgestaltung kommunaler Präventionsketten abhängig sind vom politischen Willen, den Kompetenzen und Kapazitäten kommunaler Akteure. Gleichzeitig kommt gelingendem Aufwachsen eine stetig wachsende Bedeutung zu, denn hier liegt der Schlüssel für gesellschaftliche und wirtschaftliche Teilhabe.

Das Rechtsgutachten von Prof. Dr. Constanze Janda „Prävention verankern – Verfassungsrechtliche Konsequenzen aus dem Verbot der Benachteiligung auf Grund sozialer Herkunft“ beleuchtet die Möglichkeiten, verbindliche Koordination in allen Kommunen vom Bund finanziert sicherzustellen.

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Mission

The "Analysis and Concepts" policy brief series derives from the "Communities for Better Living" program at the Bertelsmann Stiftung. Communities for Better Living focuses on the three major challenges faced by municipalities in Germany and other countries: demographic change and its impact on all aspects of politics; growing social inequality, particularly among children and young people; and deepening budget crises that increasingly constrain municipalities in their capacity to deliver services. Analysis and Concepts aims to communicate the results of the Bertelsmann Stiftung's work on these issues and thereby facilitate the practical application of good practices while providing decision-makers with relevant, actionable information.

In the tradition of its founder, Reinhard Mohn, the Bertelsmann Stiftung is committed to ensuring common goods for everyone. The Stiftung's programs therefore aim to facilitate social progress and the creation of a sustainable society. As a non-partisan foundation, the Stiftung is an advocate of strong municipal autonomy in tackling social challenges, which are often best addressed at the local level.

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