

EU Alliance for Investing in Children's response to the European Parliament's vote on the European Social Fund Plus post-2027

The EU Alliance for Investing in Children **strongly opposes the position taken by the European Parliament** in its vote on the Report on the European Social Fund Plus post-2027. Despite its longstanding commitment to tackling child poverty, the European Parliament **failed to include a dedicated budget of at least €20 billion for the European Child Guarantee**, an allocation the chamber has itself repeatedly called for in previous reports. This is a missed opportunity to strengthen the implementation of a fundamental instrument designed to support millions of children experiencing poverty or social exclusion.

While we welcome the inclusion of key elements such as the **5% earmarking of ESF+ funds to fight child poverty in all Member States, increased allocations for countries with higher poverty rates, and meaningful engagement with civil society and targeted groups**, this decision undermines the ambition needed to ensure every child has access to basic rights and essential services.

In the EU alone, **20 million children – one in four – are at risk of poverty and social exclusion**. Child poverty affects children's physical and mental health, education, and well-being. Even brief periods of deprivation can lead to lasting effects, trapping children and families in a cycle of poverty and disadvantage for generations. Child poverty is not just a **denial of fundamental rights**. It is a crisis that threatens Europe's social cohesion and economic stability. According to the OECD, child poverty amounts to an **average loss of 3.4% of GDP annually**.

Properly funding the eradication of poverty and instruments such as the European Child Guarantee is then essential to drive meaningful and long-term change. Ensuring Europe's security and competitiveness requires protecting its unique social fabric, as **social investments and a strong social model are essential foundations, not obstacles, to a safer and more competitive Europe**. By prioritizing targeted, sufficient, and transparent funding, EU institutions can ensure that every child, regardless of their background or circumstances, has the opportunity to thrive, reducing inequality and strengthening social cohesion across the Union.

The decisions taken on the EU budget in the coming months will be crucial to define the strength of the EU and the rights of millions of children. The Alliance **will continue to advocate** to ensure that **EU institutions uphold their commitment to eradicating child poverty** and **provide adequate financial support** for instruments such as the European Child Guarantee.

Now is the time to turn commitments into action, delivering concrete policies and adequate resources to protect all children, ensuring that no child is left behind.