

Eurochild

World Children's Day 2020

Webinar 2:

Why is tackling child poverty a pre-requisite to sustainably exist the crisis?

19th November 2020

Welcome Note

Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca

It is truly a pleasure to welcome our imminent speakers and participants to Eurochild's second webinar, which is being held on the occasion of World Children's Day 2020.

Today we will be addressing our belief that tackling child poverty is fundamental to overcoming the crisis and subsequently to inclusive prosperity and peaceful co-existence. We, therefore, are being asked to respond to the question:

Why tackling child poverty is a pre-requisite to sustainably exit the crisis?

We are proud that Eurochild is co-hosting, today's webinar, with our Spanish National Partner Network, the Plataforma de Infancia.

We are proud of Plataform de Infancia, as it is an organisation, which shows activism and leadership, in its work to champion children's rights.

I must admit, that today's topic is at the very heart of Eurochild's DNA.

Tackling child poverty and social exclusion and promoting children's well-being, has been one of our core objectives since Eurochild's network came into being.

Eurochild believes that Europe is at a historical crossroad. It is a moment where Europe needs to decide where it wants its societies to be in 10 and 20 years time.

We, at Eurochild are worried.

The high levels of child poverty on our continent, cannot be ignored, any longer.

Nearly one in four children in the European Union alone, are at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Moreover, this is a pre-pandemic indicator. This is a clear

indication of deep rooted structural socio-economic challenges, which unfortunately I believe have been left simmering for far too long.

On the other hand, research is showing us that the pandemic has not only brought new and unprecedented challenges, but has also exacerbated poverty, social exclusion and other inequalities. The current realities are showing that more and more children are falling out of the empowerment and protective systems.

This situation is compounding our worries.

The COVID-19 pandemic has, undoubtedly, imposed a huge strain on Europe's social and economic fabric, and is exposing inherent weaknesses, with far-reaching effects, including on children's well-being.

Yet we are hopeful, because the President Von der Leyan and her Commission are committed to address child poverty by introducing a European Child Guarantee.

The European Union is therefore standing on the brink of taking up the opportunity to do more for its children.

The commitment by the EU Commission to create a **European Child Guarantee** could be the most promising initiative that the EU has ever given to the issue of child poverty.

This year Eurochild members from 25 countries, have contributed to a report titled: ***Growing up in lockdown: Europe's children in the age of COVID-19.***

In this report our members are highlighting their worrisome concerns about a surge of children and families experiencing, financial difficulties, mental health problems, domestic violence, educational and digital divide.

Children in vulnerable situations, such as children in alternative care, have been deeply affected by these challenges, as well as with, social distancing and lockdown measures, and lack of adequate support services.

We are therefore keen, that the efforts to be made, to improve the lives of children in our countries, are done in a coordinated and holistic way, to reflect the multi-dimensional nature of the problems, that children are facing.

We need the necessary political will and determination from our governments to build the much needed, national strategies for tackling child poverty and social exclusion, together with set targets for reducing it.

It is essential, that public budgets, including that of the European Union is mobilised to invest in children.

Eurochild is keen to see EU countries invest resources from the **Next Generation EU recovery package, as well as through the next 7-year budget**, in reforms aimed at ending child poverty.

We are keen to see that the European Child Guarantee aiming at leaving no one behind, will bring together, important components, such as:

- 1) the realisation of political commitment;
- 2) the mobilisation of EU and national resources;
- 3) strategic thinking and planning; and
- 4) a trigger for deeper structural reforms.

Indeed, investing in children and tackling child poverty is undoubtedly, a pre-requisite to sustainably exit this crisis.

I am now honoured to introduce a video address by the **Prime Minister of Spain, His Excellency Mr Pedro Sánchez**, which was recorded specifically for our event today.

It encouraging to know that heads of government like the Prime Minister of Spain is so much in congruent with the Eurochild network's perspective on what is needed to address child poverty across Europe.

On behalf of Eurochild I would like to convey our heartfelt appreciation to the Prime Minister of Spain for finding the time in his busy schedule to address.

The Prime Minister of Spain, His Excellency Mr Pedro Sanchez.

