



Feasibility Study for a Child Guarantee



Fact-finding workshop Children with disabilities

Riga (Latvia), 23-24 September 2019

(draft programme dated 29 August 2019)

Context of the workshop

Following the call in 2015 from the European Parliament to introduce a Child Guarantee and the subsequent request to the European Commission (EC) in 2017 to implement a Preparatory Action to explore its potential scope, the Commission launched a feasibility study in 2018 that is aimed at examining and making proposals as to how a specific programme could best be developed in order to fight poverty and social exclusion amongst the EU's most disadvantaged children (in particular: children living in precarious family situations, children residing in institutions, children with a migrant background [including refugee children], and children with disabilities) and to ensure their access to the five key policy areas (PAs) identified by the European Parliament, (i.e. free healthcare, free education, free early childhood education and care [ECEC], decent housing, and adequate nutrition).

This *Feasibility Study for a Child Guarantee (FSCG)* has been commissioned as a key part of the Preparatory Action agreed between the EC and the European Parliament. The FSCG is managed by a consortium consisting of Applica and the Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research (LISER), in collaboration with Eurochild and Save the Children.¹

The various FSCG deliverables include four Target Group Discussion Papers - one on each of the four Target Groups (TGs) identified by the Commission.

Each of them examines in detail issues in relation to the access of children in the TG to the five PAs identified by the Parliament and reviews and assesses the strengths and weaknesses of existing approaches and policies at the national and EU level. It draws heavily on the analysis presented in the FSCG Inception Report, on the findings from the 28 FSCG Country Reports and the five FSCG Policy Papers, as well as on the results of the FSCG online consultation, the existing literature and the consultation with key experts.

The TG Discussion Papers constitute important resources for the four TG fact-finding workshops. Discussions at the workshops together with the findings of the various reports will then feed into an Intermediate Report, which will provide the basis for discussion at a concluding conference in early 2020. The final outcomes of the study will then be summarised in the Final FSCG Report.

¹ See FSCG Inception Report for more information on the Study:
<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1428&langId=en>

Programme

Workshop rapporteur: Hugh Frazer (FSCG Core Team)

Workshop moderator: Eric Marlier (FSCG Core Team)

23 September 2019

8.30-9.00: Registration

9.00-9.30: Introductory session

1. **Daiga Eiduka**, Latvian Child Welfare Network, welcomes everyone
2. **Eric Marlier**, FSCG Core Team, explains the overall FSCG, where this workshop fits into it, the main questions to be discussed, the main targeted outcomes and the schedule for the workshop
3. **Jiri Svarc**, EC, DG EMPL, explains the EU context of the FSCG

9.30-10.45: Session 1: Setting the scene: International legally binding obligations and EU framework

1. **Elena Schubert (TBC)**, EC, DG EMPL, explains the international legally binding obligations of EU Member States and the EU framework with regard to access of children with disabilities to the five key social rights under scrutiny (nutrition, education, ECEC, healthcare and housing) (15 min)
2. **Paula Hunt**, FSCG expert, presents the definition of “children with disabilities” and discusses the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in EU Member States, as far as children are concerned (10 min)
3. **Juris Jansons**, Ombudsman of the Republic of Latvia, highlights examples of relevant litigations involving children with disabilities which have used national/ international legally binding obligations for one or more of the five key social rights (15 min)
4. Discussion with the audience:
 - Are there ways the EU framework could be strengthened and what more could the EU do to support implementation of international obligations?

10.45-11.15: Coffee break

11.15-12.30: Session 2: definition of “children with disabilities” and overview of national instruments in place for these children, main barriers/weaknesses and gaps in provision

1. **Paula Hunt**, FSCG expert, provides an overview of the national instruments available in Member States, identifies the barriers/gaps limiting access by children with disabilities to the five key social rights and how these are different from those encountered by the majority of children. (15 min)
2. Fieldwork information illustrating barriers and gaps faced by children with disabilities:
 - **Martha Stickings**, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), provides some perspectives from the ground about community living for persons with disabilities (12 min)
 - **Simoni Symeonido**, European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, discusses main barriers limiting access and highlights examples of successful policies in reaching children with disabilities and ensuring their access to inclusive education (12 min)

- **Inga Šķestere**, Latvian Movement for independent living, identifies barriers and gaps faced by these children in Latvia (12 min)
3. Discussion with audience:
- Are the main barriers limiting access and gaps in provision highlighted in the presentations the most important ones or are there others that should be added?

12.30-13.30: Session 3: Voice of children with disabilities & voice of parents' associations

- Voice of children (outcomes of focus groups by **Elisabeth De Schauwer**, Ghent University)
- Voice of parents' associations, by **Vineta Grigāne**, Spina bifida and hydrocephalus association, Latvia

13.30-15.00: Lunch

15.00-16.10: Session 4: Main priorities for addressing gaps/barriers and most successful policies in reaching children with disabilities and ensuring their access to the five key social rights (first part)

1. **Paula Hunt**, FSCG expert, provides a short overview of the priorities for coping with gaps/barriers and gives some examples of successful policies and programmes in Member States (good practices) (15 min)
 2. **Pedro Perista**, FSCG country expert, explains how inclusive education is organised in Portugal (15 min)
 3. **Aaron Greenberg**, UNICEF, shares his views about the most successful policies in reaching children with disabilities and ensuring their access to the five key social rights (15 min)
4. Discussion with audience:
- Which of the priorities for addressing gaps/barriers highlighted would you prioritise? Or would you suggest others?

16.10-16.40: Coffee break

16.40-17.45: Session 5 (parallel discussions): Main priorities for addressing gaps/barriers and most successful policies in reaching children with disabilities and ensuring their access to the five key social rights (second part)

Discussions of the "main priorities" for action aimed at providing additional evidence of successful policies, including how (inter)national obligations might be more effectively used to enforce access to rights and what (if any) role a Child Guarantee could play in this regard

- Education & ECEC (moderator **Pedro Perista**; rapporteur: **Simoni Symeonido**)
- Healthcare and Nutrition (moderator: **Paula Hunt**; rapporteur: **Anne-Catherine Guio**, FSCG Core Team)
- Housing and accessibility (moderator: **Jana Hainsworth**; rapporteur: **Gunta Anca**)
- Institutions and independent living (moderator: **Inga Šķestere**; rapporteur **Zara Todd**, European Network on Independent Living)

20.00: Dinner

24 September 2019

9.00-10.00: Session 6: Main priorities for addressing gaps/barriers and most successful policies in reaching children with disabilities and ensuring their access to the five key social rights (third part)

- Reports from parallel discussions of session 5 (4*7 min)
- Discussion with audience

10.00 - 10.30: Coffee break

10.30-11.45: Session 7: Role of the EU and use of EU Funds: How funds are used to support access of the children with disabilities to the five key social rights and how this could be improved in the future

1. **Marianne Doyen**, EC, DG EMPL, provides some evidence about the ways EU Funds have been used to support policies and programmes in favour of children in general and children with disabilities in particular. She also provides a short presentation of the next (2021-2027) Multiannual Financial Framework with a focus on children. (20 min)
2. **Gunta Anca**, European Disability Forum identifies strengths/weaknesses and makes suggestions for improving the use and efficiency of EU funds in future (15 min)
3. **Jana Hainsworth**, Eurochild, discusses the potential interests of the next Multiannual Financial Framework for all children and children with disabilities in particular (10 min)
4. Discussion with audience:
 - What are the concrete ways in which EU Funds could be better used in supporting the development of more effective policies/ programmes/ services at national, regional or local level so as to ensure access of children with disabilities to the five key social rights?
 - Can the barriers faced by children with disabilities be addressed by enforcing existing legislation and policies and better using existing EU funding mechanisms, would a new mechanism and/or specific fund be needed?
 - What enforcement exists or could be introduced to ensure all EU funds are spent in equitable, non-discriminatory and accessible ways?
 - How c/should the next Multiannual Financial Framework (better) prioritise vulnerable children?
 - What might (or might not) be the added value of establishing a specific Child Guarantee for children with disabilities or for all children in vulnerable situations?

11.45-12.15: Conclusion of workshop by Hugh Frazer: Going forward: good practices and recommendations for future actions (30 min)

12.15-13.45: Lunch