



# Delivering on the EU strategy on the Rights of the Child



**23 APRIL 2024**

Today the Commission adopted an initiative on integrated child protection systems in the best interests of the child, including a Commission Recommendation and a communication. The aim of this package is to put all prior actions of this mandate in an integrated framework and to support Member States with implementation.

With this package, the Commission is reaching another key milestone to turn the **2021 EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child into action**. This is bringing **decisive progress to empower children and to promote and protect their rights**, offline and online, in the EU and globally. In order to embed a child perspective in all EU actions, the Commission established the EU Network for Children's Rights to reinforce the dialogue and mutual learning between the EU and Member States on children's rights, and support the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the strategy. This work is the result of a whole College approach, bringing together all 27 Commissioners to protect children.



*"Since the adoption of the Strategy, this Commission has taken bold actions to make children's rights a reality. We want to empower children to become resilient citizens in this ever-changing society. It is our shared responsibility to make sure every child can fulfil its rights, everywhere."*

Vice-President for Democracy and Demography, **Dubravka Šuica**

## ○ CHILD PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL AND DEMOCRATIC LIFE

*An EU that empowers children to be active citizens and members of democratic societies*

- The **EU Children's Participation Platform**, set up in 2022, connects child participation mechanisms at local, national and EU level and involve children in the decision-making processes at EU level.
  - Tools developed under the European Climate Pact such as **Education for Climate Coalition** and the **Climate Pact Ambassadors**, to help children become active participants
  - **Guidelines** for policy makers on how to **design child friendly and accessible documents and meetings** produced together with children
- The Recommendation calls on taking children voices into account in cases of violence. Children were consulted through the EU Children's participation platform, making their voices heard.





## ○ SOCIO-ECONOMIC INCLUSION, HEALTH AND EDUCATION

*An EU that fights child poverty, promotes inclusive and child-friendly societies, health and education systems*

- Council Recommendation establishing a **European Child Guarantee** (June 2021) with 27 national action plans submitted to the Commission
- Council Recommendation on **Blended learning approaches to achieve the goal of high-quality and inclusive primary and secondary education** (November 2021)
- Council Recommendation on **Pathways to School Success** (November 2022)
- Council **Conclusions on the contribution of education and training** to strengthening common European values and democratic citizenship (November 2023)
- The **EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027**, to work towards the fulfilment of the rights of all young people in Europe
- Council Recommendation on the **Revision of the Barcelona targets** (within the **European Care Strategy**) (December 2022)
- **Europe's Beating Cancer Plan**, including a focus on paediatric cancer with the 'Helping Children with Cancer Initiative' (February 2021)
- The '**Healthier together**' initiative to identify and implement effective policies and actions to reduce the burden of major non-communicable diseases (June 2022)
- Proposal of revision of the **EU legislation on medicines**, including for children (April 2023)
- Communication on a **Comprehensive approach to mental health**, with a focus on children and young people (June 2023)

This dimension is key in the Recommendation to prevent violence and for children to recover from violence.

## ○ COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN ENSURING CHILD PROTECTION

*An EU that helps children grow free from violence*

- The EU accession to the **Istanbul Convention** (October 2023)
- Revision of the **Directive on Trafficking in human beings** (political agreement January 2024)
- Proposal of recast of the **Child Sexual Abuse Directive** (February 2024)
- **Directive on Combating violence against women and domestic violence** which applies to women and children and foresees specific measures for children (provisional political agreement February 2024)
- **Commission Recommendation on developing and strengthening integrated child protection systems in the best interests of the child** (April 2024)

This Recommendation is one of the key deliverables – acting as an overarching framework to ensure integrated child protection systems.





## ○ DIGITAL AND INFORMATION SOCIETY

*An EU where children can safely navigate the digital environment, and harness its opportunities*

- European strategy for a **Better Internet for Kids+**, to ensure that children are protected, respected and empowered online (May 2022)
- **European Digital Rights and Principles** stating children and young people should feel safe and empowered online (January 2022)
- Entry into force of the **Digital Services Act** with provisions on protection of children (November 2022)
- Proposal of **Regulation to effectively prevent and combat Child sexual abuse** in relation to online abuse (May 2022)
- As part of the **Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027)**, Guidelines for teachers and educators on **tackling disinformation and promoting digital literacy** through education and training (2022)

Children are facing increased digital risks. This dimension is imperative in the new Recommendation to ensure their safety online.



## ○ CHILD-FRIENDLY JUSTICE

*An EU where the justice system upholds the rights and needs of children*

- **Brussels IIb Regulation** on cross-border family matters such as divorce, parental child abductions, custody and access rights (became applicable August 2022)
  - Proposal of **Regulation to support the mutual recognition of parenthood** between Member States (December 2022)
  - Proposal for the **revision of the Victim's rights Directive** (July 2023) and the **EU Strategy on victims' rights** (2020 – 2025) on actions related to targeted and integrated support to child victims of crime
  - Launch of the **Joint project** European Commission and the Council of Europe to support the application of the Council of Europe **2010 Guidelines on child-friendly justice** (January 2024)
  - Political agreement on the **New Pact on Migration and Asylum**, including rules and safeguards for the protection of children in migration (provisional agreement in December 2023)
  - Activation of the **Temporary Protection Directive** following the Russian invasion of Ukraine (March 2022), including **Frequently Asked Questions on Registration, Reception and Care for the Unaccompanied and Separated Children fleeing from war in Ukraine**
- A justice system that protects children is also part of an integrated approach to child protection, as highlighted in the Recommendation.



## ○ THE GLOBAL DIMENSION

*An EU that supports, protects and empowers children globally, including during crisis and conflict*

- Adoption of the **Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024**
  - Proposal for a **Regulation on prohibiting products made with forced labour on the Union market** (September 2022)
  - Adoption of the **Youth action plan** in EU external action (October 2022)
  - Proposal for a **Directive on corporate sustainability due diligence**, including on promoting the rights of the child (provisional agreement in December 2023)
  - Adoption of the **Decent Work Communication** including on zero tolerance on child labour
  - Update of the **EU Guidelines on children in armed conflicts** (June 2024)
- This Recommendation also contributes to the EU priority to ensure child protection globally