



Eurochild



FORUM
FOSTER CARE FOR
UNACCOMPANIED
MIGRANT CHILDREN

S&D

Group of the Progressive Alliance of
Socialists & Democrats
in the European Parliament



Co-funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European Union

How EU policies and funding can support national governments to ensure quality alternative care for children in migration

Roundtable discussion co-hosted by MEP Miriam Dalli and MEP Cécile Kyenge

Date: 3 April 2019 (13:00 – 15:00)

Location: European Parliament, room JAN 4Q2

The session will be followed by a networking cocktail in JAN 3 Brasserie (15:00 – 16:00)

The EU has taken important steps during the last years to ensure that children in migration; including unaccompanied migrant children; are well protected and that they grow up in inclusive societies where their rights are respected and fulfilled.

The latest European Commission Communication¹ on the protection of children in migration, proposes that availability and accessibility of suitable and safe reception conditions for children in migration should be ensured; that a range of care options including family and community based care to protect unaccompanied migrant children should be in place and that children should have access to mainstream and targeted services according to their individualized needs.

The 2016 Action Plan on the integration of third country nationals² promotes actions for integration of children in migration.

The most recent adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)³, although non-binding, will help improve access to protection, care and support for children in migration across the world.

¹ European Commission Communication on the [Protection of Children on Migration](#)

² [European Commission Communication Action Plan on the integration of third country nationals](#)

³ [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#)

The EU has directed vast amounts of EU funds for the management of this situation, and the latest “Toolkit on the use of EU funds for the integration of people with migrant background⁴” focuses on the synergies between different funds to achieve “integration from day one”. The toolkit recognizes that Funds should be directed in mainstream and targeted services for people in migration including access to housing, access to education, and access to quality alternative care options for children in migration.

The next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) presents a unique opportunity for EU Member States to ensure that children in migration are protected both at reception and integration and that those unaccompanied grow up in quality family and community based care.

Eurochild is committed to support governments implementing the necessary reforms of their child welfare and protection systems in line with UN Guidelines on Alternative Care. Hundreds of thousands of children currently live in institutions in Europe.

Children in migration, in particular, are often discriminated against due to their status. They often grow up in segregated institutional care settings, with limited access to basic services such as education, healthcare or community based support⁵. For example, in Greece, until today approximately half of the unaccompanied children⁶ are placed in shelters specifically designed for unaccompanied children. The rest, due to lack of alternatives, stay in police departments, reception centres, temporary appropriate accommodation for unaccompanied children remain one of the biggest gaps in Bulgarian child protection system. In 2017, Belgium constructed a new closed centre for migrant families and children and in 2018, the first family was detained⁷. In Austria⁸, children above the age of 16 usually stay in reception centres until their asylum request is taken into consideration and children above the age of 14 are mostly placed in social pedagogical facilities within the specific welfare system for foreigners.

The event is organized within the project “FORUM FOR Unaccompanied Minors: transfer of knowledge for professionals to increase foster care⁹” (coordinated by L’Albero della Vita Foundation), which aims at promoting foster care for unaccompanied migrant children in Europe. In the 2017 European Commission Communication, the use of foster care for unaccompanied children has been recognized as a viable and cost-effective option to ensure a proper protection and integration of unaccompanied migrant children in the host society. Foster care provision has expanded in recent years but is still under-utilised; national system of family-based care needs support, exchange of practices and transfer of knowledge to improve the service and ensure a quality foster care service to unaccompanied migrant children.

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/policy/themes/social-inclusion/integration-of-migrants/toolkit-integration-of-migrants.pdf

⁵ Eurochild and SOS Children’s Villages (2017), Let Children be Children. Lessons from the field on the protection and integration of refugee and migrant children in Europe.

⁶ <https://reliefweb.int/report/greece/situation-update-unaccompanied-children-uac-greece-31-october-2018-enel>

⁷ <https://www.openingdoors.eu/belgium-plans-to-resume-child-detention-in-2018/>

⁸ <http://www.openingdoors.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/country-fiche-Austria-2017.pdf>

⁹ The project as well as this event are funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European Union (2014-2020). The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for the views expressed.

The conference will bring together Members of the European Parliament, European Commission officials, and civil society from both EU and national level. Its aim is to capitalise on existing EU commitments on the issue of protection of children in migration and will look at how EU policies and the next MFF will champion these commitments, ensuring that children in migration and those unaccompanied in particular, grow up in inclusive societies where their rights are respected. Civil society from national level, including partners of the FORUM project, will share good practices from quality care alternatives and how these can be multiplied across the EU.

Agenda:

Chair: Jana Hainsworth, Secretary General, Eurochild

13:00 – 13:15	<p><i>Welcome and introductory remarks</i></p> <p>MEP Miriam Dalli, Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats Jana Hainsworth, Eurochild Ivano Abbruzzi, L’Albero della Vita Foundation, Italy</p>
13:15 – 13:35	<p><i>How EU policies can support quality alternative care for children in migration both at reception and integration</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isabela Atanasiu, European Commission, DG Migration and Home Affairs • Lilana Keith, PICUM and Initiative for Children in Migration • MEP Jean Lambert, Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance
13:35 – 14:05	<p><i>EU funding – Lessons learned from this funding period and how the next MFF can support quality alternative care for children in migration – Challenges and opportunities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How AMIF has been used for supporting children in migration in the 2014-2020 funding period (Matthijs Korzilius, European Commission, DG Migration and Home Affairs) • How the AMF will support children in migration in 2021-2027 funding period (Shane Murphy, S&D Political Advisor) • The use of EU structural and investments funds during the 2014-2020 funding period (Andor Urmos, European Commission, DG Regional Policy) • How ERDF and CPR will support children in migration in 2021-2027 funding period (MEP Iskra Mihaylova)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the ESF+ will support children in migration in 2021-2027 funding period (Marie-Anne Paraskevas, European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion)
14:05 – 14:35	<p><i>How EU Member States have leveraged EU policy and funding to ensure quality alternative care for children in migration</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learnings from the FORUM Project – ‘Guidance on minimum standards for foster care and child participation’ (Claudia Cui, L’Albero della Vita Foundation & Giulio Valtolina, Catholic University of Milan and ISMU Foundation, Italy) • Good practice from Nidos - ‘Guardianship for unaccompanied minors in the EU context’ (Tin Verstegen, NIDOS, The Netherlands)
14:35 – 14:50	Q&A
14:50 – 15:00	<p><i>Closing remarks</i></p> <p>MEP Cécile Kyenge, Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats</p> <p>Jana Hainsworth, Eurochild</p>