



**MINISTÉRIO PÚBLICO
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PROCURADORIA-GERAL DA REPÚBLICA
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WHY DO WE NEED A STRATEGY ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD?

A European Strategy on the Rights of the Child will allow a collective vision of the ongoing challenge and will inevitably have consequences in the decades to come.

This is a challenge that all the Member States are called upon to face with a view to electing the key areas of intervention – and, amongst them, those absolutely crucial – and defining the guidelines of future solutions.

Upon recurring to the recent historical memory of the European area, several and relevant documents have inspired improved responses and actions but we believe they have so far been insufficient.

Recital J. of the European Parliament Resolution of 26th November 2019 states that *“almost 25 million children under 18 are at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU, whereas poverty deprives children of educational opportunities, childcare, access to healthcare, adequate food and housing, family support and even protection from violence, and can have very long-lasting effects”*.

The national plans and policies aimed at the protection of the fundamental rights of the children in the European area have failed so far to achieve the desired satisfactory levels capable of safeguarding effectively their protection, at least in key and priority areas.

The truth is that challenges have multiplied recently and uncertainty reigns over a wide range of aspects of children’s lives that were usually considered common ground.

A world free of fear and violence, where no one is left behind is a statement we are all familiar with.

And we also know that to end violence and to make positive changes to children’s lives, it will be necessary to start acting in early childhood.

Member States need a strategy that defines integrated policies for early childhood development.



But what can be said when reality confronts us with the existence of a worldwide and unexpected tragedy, the full proportions of which are still unknown?

In light of the fact that children are a particularly affected group in case of serious social and economic crisis situations, the investment in their well-being should continue to be Europe's unquestionable goal.

Health, education, protection, family support, alternative quality care and effective participation in the issues that concern them will have to become the horizon-targeted priorities.

In April 2020, outplacements of unaccompanied migrant children from the Greek islands began with several Member States involved in these humanitarian programmes which are nothing more than the recognition that children cannot be denied their dignity.

The challenge is increased but the strategy cannot disregard it.

The pandemic crisis has intensified the use of the digital world, either as a mean or complement to school or as a form of socialization among young people.

The longer online presence must be supported by digital education plans.

A higher level of strictness in setting Member States priorities and in allocating adequate resources to their effectiveness is needed.

It is essential to ensure the commitment of each Member State to adopt internal strategies that incorporate the key and priority objectives defined in the European Strategy and also ensure the monitoring of the strategy's implementation by the Member States.

Equally relevant is the acceptance that the preparation of the strategy will be a way of granting children the ability to express themselves regarding their concerns and needs, since this is an initiative in which they have forcibly to be involved in.

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