



BEYOND THE MARGINS

Policy Brief on Marginalized Children in Europe

**Social Inclusion &
Diversity Working Group**



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AT A GLANCE

KEY MESSAGES:

- The evidence of the present Policy Brief shows implementation gaps rather than a lack of legal frameworks relevant to the subject matter.
- Segregation, underfunding, weak data and coordination failures persist across contexts regarding marginalized children's protection.
- A shift is needed from project-based approaches to sustainable child-rights systems.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS PREVIEW:

- Strengthen the European Child Guarantee implementation and monitoring.
- End segregation and expand inclusive education and ECEC.
- Invest in workforce capacity, data systems and participation mechanisms.



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Abbreviations

- **CRC** - UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- **ECEC** - Early Childhood Education and Care
- **EU-SILC** - EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions
- **FRA** - European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
- **LGBTIQ+** - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer and other identities
- **NGO/CSO** - Non-Governmental Organization / Civil Society Organization
- **SEN** - Special Educational Needs
- **SOGIESC** - Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Expression and Sex Characteristics

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Across Europe, significant progress has been made in recognizing children's rights and developing strategic measures to prevent and reduce their social exclusion. However, evidence from the research conducted by PAL Network, under the framework of the Social Inclusion & Diversity Working Group, shows that large groups of children remain structurally marginalized and unevenly supported across several national sociopolitical and legal systems.

The present policy brief presents findings from a comparative desk analysis in six member countries of the network, namely Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Ireland, Spain and Türkiye, and a qualitative survey among 30 practitioners, NGOs representatives and public-sector representatives across nine European countries. Together, these sources provide a coherent, field-informed overview of the challenges faced by marginalized children and highlight multi-level policy actions required to address these challenges.

The overarching message of this policy brief is very clear: Europe must shift from a fragmented, short-term intervention logic to integrated, sustainable, rights-based child protection and inclusion system. Achieving this requires political will, cross-sectoral coordination, high-quality data, and long-term investment targeted at the children who need it most.

2. INTRODUCTION

Children's rights are recognized at the highest levels of European and international law, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, and the European Child Guarantee. These frameworks ensure that states are committed to guaranteeing that all children have equal access to essential services, namely education, healthcare, housing, nutrition and protection, and that no child grows up in conditions of poverty, discrimination and/or exclusion. Nevertheless, across Europe, large groups of children continue to experience structural inequalities that hinder their development, wellbeing and integration in society.

The present policy brief has been developed by the PAL Network's Working Group on Social Inclusion & Diversity as a response to these enduring predicaments. Even though many European countries have ensured reforms and strategic frameworks aimed at improving children's inclusion, persistent gaps in laws and policies implementation and coordination continue to undermine these frameworks' effectiveness. The Working Group sought to explore these gaps and challenges through a combined research approach: comparative desk research across six countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Ireland, Spain and Türkiye) and a qualitative field research, gathering insights from a total of 30 practitioners

from civil society organizations, educational institutions, and public bodies across nine European countries.

The desk research, conducted by member organizations of PAL Network and active in the Working Group aimed at mapping legal and strategic policy frameworks, identifying policy and implementation gaps, as well as documenting good practices in the field of social inclusion towards marginalized children at national level. The analysis examined how different welfare models, government policies and structures, as well as demographic dynamics shape the experiences of children at risk of social ostracism. The analysis revealed that even though comprehensive legal frameworks exist, several groups of children, including Roma and traveler, migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking children, children with disabilities of from the neurodivergent spectrum and children living in poverty or state care, continue to face unequal access to services and opportunities. Transversal challenges in all six countries analyzed concerned educational segregation, limited Early Childhood Education and Care (hereafter ECEC) access, insufficient support for migrated children, low inter-agency cooperation and inadequate data collection systems.

The qualitative research, in turn, provided a vital complementary perspective by capturing the experiences and insights of frontline in the field of the subject matter. Respondents to the survey confirmed key issues identified during the desk a -

nalysis, but also highlighted additional concerns, such as the vulnerabilities of LGBTQ+ children, the effects of staff shortages and low capacity, administrative families and the perpetuated discriminatory attitudes and cultural constraints in communities and schools.

The synthesis of these two sources of evidence constitutes the core principle of this policy brief, in order to eventually provide a comprehensive image of the multi-layered barriers faced by marginalized children in Europe. It also demonstrates the importance of integrating formal policy analysis with insights from the direct stakeholders and those who work with the affected communities. The recommendations that conclude this policy brief aim to translate the gathered evidence into actionable policy recommendations at EU, national and local/regional levels.

Ultimately, the present policy brief argues that ensuring the rights and wellbeing of children at risk of social exclusion across Europe requires a systemic and structural transformation; from fragmented interventions to child-centered policy systems, and from project-based funding initiatives to sustainable public investments for the full and well-rounded intervention of the affected groups. This policy brief is thus intended to support policymakers, practitioners and stakeholders across Europe in making this transformation a reality.

3. METHODOLOGY

The present policy brief is based on a **mixed-method** research framework. This framework combines comparative desk research conducted in six European countries, and qualitative fieldwork drawn from an online survey with practitioners of civil society and public-sector representatives across Europe. Together, these components provide a solid evidence base that integrates formal policy frameworks with perspectives of the relevant experts and affected (directly and/or indirectly) stakeholders.

3.1 Desk Research

Between mid-spring 2025 and mid-autumn 2025, six member organizations of the PAL Network carried out desk research in their respective countries, namely:

- PAL Network for the Belgian context,
- Educational Cooperation Foundation (ECF) for the Bulgarian context,
- Cube Non-Profit Organization for the Greek context,
- Future Cast for the Irish context,
- Igaxes for the Spanish context, and
- ASES for the Turkish context.

Each member organization assumed the analysis of national legal and strategic frameworks related to the social inclusion and support of marginalized children, including analysis of relevant laws, national strategies and action plans, statistical resources, independent surveys' reports and relevant EU and/or

UN instruments. Their analysis focused on the legal commitments, the governance structures and monitoring mechanisms, the implementation gaps and potential systemic barriers, as well as examples of relevant good practices at local, regional and/or national levels.

This comparative review allowed the Working Group to identify cross-cutting themes and priorities, country-specific challenges and features, as well as transversal structural and/or cultural challenges across different welfare models and sociopolitical systems.

3.2 Qualitative Fieldwork

To complement the comparative desk research and incorporate perspectives from relevant stakeholders and practitioners, the Working Group's members conducted an online qualitative survey, using -mostly- an open-ended questions format. The questionnaire targeted practitioners and experts working with marginalized children in NGOs, educational institutions and public agencies across Europe.

A total of **30 respondents** contributed to the survey, representing a total of nine countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Romania, Italy, the Netherlands and Hungary.

The profile of the respondents represented a variety of organizational backgrounds and roles, including:

- non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations,
- education providers and specialists on inclusive education and training,
- public sector representatives of local and/or regional level,
- experts from social services and youth support entities.

The questionnaire addressed several issues related to the research topic, such as familiarity with national policies relevant to the subject matter, perceived effectiveness of policy implementation, identification of policy and/or implementation gaps and of the most marginalized groups in practice, examples of effective practices and recommendations for national and EU-level policy reforms.

The responses were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach, allowing patterns, transversal themes and recurring concerns to emerge across all participating countries and sectors.

3.3 Integration of Findings

Accordingly, the findings from the combined research method were eventually synthesized to form a well-rounded and multi-layered understanding of marginalization in European child systems. This approach enabled the Working Group to validate the desk research findings based on the experts' perspectives, to identify specific gaps between policy commitments and implementation on the ground -or, to put it in Roscoe Pound's words, between "law in books" and "law in action" -, as well as to highlight promising approaches and good practices, before concluding with actionable policy recommendations grounded in the evidence gathered.

4. FINDINGS FROM DESK RESEARCH ON MARGINALIZED CHILDREN ACROSS EUROPE

The present section synthesized the findings of the desk research conducted in six member-counties of PAL Network, namely in Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Ireland, Spain and Türkiye. Each member organization responsible for the analysis gathered and analyzed national legal and policy frameworks, perceived implementation gaps and relevant good practices. In spite of the different welfare and governance structures, the six national reports showed strong relevance on the most vulnerable groups, how systems are designed, and where policy implementation falls short.

4.1 Who are the marginalized children?

Across all six countries, four core groups emerge consistently as those furthest from equal rights and provision of services:

•Roma, Traveler, Dom & Abdal children: central in Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Spain and Türkiye, explicitly recognized in Ireland through related strategies, with evidence showing persistent school segregation, precarious housing and discrimination affecting these children (FRA, 2019; FRA, 2024; Eurochild, 2024; Roma Civil Monitor, 2022, 2023; FSG, 2023).

•Migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking children, including unaccompanied minors: barriers concerned legal statuses, documentation, language, and fragmented reception systems (especially in Greece, Spain, Türkiye and Belgium), with specific concerns for unaccompa -

nied minors and young people transitioning out of official care (Ombudsman, 2025; CEAR, 2024; Greek Council for Refugees, 2023; Save the Children & GCR, 2025; UNHCR, 2023).

•Children with disabilities, special education needs (SEN) and neurodivergent children: all six countries show commitment to inclusive education, with evidence, however, reporting that children with disabilities and/or SEN remain in segregated school or are being poorly supported within mainstream settings (EASPD, 2022; European Agency, 2023; MEB, 2023).

•Children growing up in poverty, alternative care or homelessness: high child-poverty rates and material deprivation frames are documented in Bulgaria, Greece, Spain and Türkiye, while Belgium and Ireland report significant child poverty and, in Ireland, rising child homelessness (UNICEF Bulgaria, 2021; ELSTAT, 2025; UNICEF Innocenti, 2023; EAPN Greece, 2024; Eurochild, 2024).

4.2 Legal and Strategic Frameworks: strong on paper, uneven in practice

Across all six countries concerned, national legislation formally embodies children's rights and aligns with the UN CRC (United Nations, 1989), the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child (European Commission, 2021) and the European Child Guarantee (Council of the EU, 2021). Common elements include *inclusive education frameworks*,

with legislation mandating support for learners with SEN, *group-specific strategies*, including Roma/Traveler strategies and strategies related to the support of children with disabilities, aligned with the EU Roma Framework 2020-2030, and national Child Guarantees and Action Plans (European Commission, 2022; MI-IS, 2022; Government of Greece, 2021; Gobierno de España, 2021, 2022; Aile ve Sosyal Hizmetler Bakanlığı, 2023; DCEDIY, 2024), as well as *child protection reforms*, particularly in Bulgaria and Greece, where deinstitutionalization has seen progress with support from UNICEF, EASPD and EU-funded programmes (Chardaloupa, 2025; UNICEF Bulgaria, 2021; UNICEF, 2024).

However, systemic weaknesses were also observed, such as several countries not having a fully integrated national child strategy, fragmented governance, either due to decentralization (Belgium, Spain, Ireland) or uneven local capacities (Bulgaria, Greece, Türkiye, leading to territorial inequalities (Defensor del Pueblo, 2025; Eurochild, 2024), and insufficient disaggregated data on ethnicity, disability, migration background and care status, limiting evidence-based policymaking (Eurostat, 2024; Statbel, 2025; ELSTAT, 2025; UNICEF Türkiye, 2023; UNICEF Innocenti, 2023).

4.3 Key Implementation Gaps

The main policy implementation gaps identified included:

a) Persistent educational segregation

Roma/Traveller children remain over-represented in segregated settings across Bulgaria, Spain, Belgium, Greece and Türkiye (FRA, 2019; FRA, 2024; Roma Civil Monitor, 2022, 2023; FSG, 2023).

Children with disabilities frequently experience placement in special schools or poorly supported mainstream settings (EASPD, 2022; European Agency, 2023; MEB, 2023).

b) Barriers to ECEC access

Roma, migrant/refugee and low-income children face obstacles such as cost, distance, capacity limitations, documentation issues and discrimination (UNICEF Bulgaria, 2021; UNICEF Türkiye, 2023; Maes et al., 2023; Eurochild, 2024).

c) Weak protection for migrant/refugee children

Asylum procedures, documentation delays and restrictive migration reforms hinder access to services in Spain and Greece (Defensor del Pueblo, 2025; CEAR, 2024; Greek Council for Refugees, 2023).

d) Over-reliance on short-term projects

Effective initiatives—mediation programmes, ECEC pilots, deinstitutionalisation projects and supports for care leavers—often rely on temporary EU/international funding (EASPD, 2022; Fundación Cepaim, 2022; UNICEF Greece, 2021; UNICEF, 2024).

e) Coordination and capacity gaps

Fragmented governance and weak inter-ministerial coordination are common in

Ireland, Spain and Belgium (European Commission, 2024; Eurochild, 2024; Children's Rights Alliance, 2025).

4.4 Good practices and Implications for Policy

Despite the aforementioned challenges and gaps, the desk research provided also a solid base of good practices, as well as suggested several overarching implications for policy.

Good practices included **community and school mediation** for Roma/Traveler and migrant families, **integrated ECEC and family support hubs**, including Belgium's Huizen van het Kind, Child Guarantee pilots in Bulgaria and Greece, mobile units in Türkiye and inclusive ECEC initiatives in Spain and Ireland (MI-IS, 2022; Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs, 2022; UNICEF Türkiye, 2023), **deinstitutionalization and strengthened alternative care** with progress in Greece and Bulgaria, and **child-friendly justice models**, including Ireland's Barnahus-type systems (European Commission, 2024; HIQA, 2025; OCO, 2025).

Regarding the overarching policy implications, these can be summarized into a **shift towards integrated national child-rights strategies**, aligning Child Guarantee implementation with Roma, disability, migration and child protection policies under coherent governance (Eurochild, 2024), **elimination of educational segregation**, specifically focusing Roma, migrants/refugees and disabled children (FRA, 2019; Maes et al., 2023), **reassurance of rights and dedicated services for migrant/refugee children**,

addressing barriers in documentation, guardianship and transition supports (UNHCR, 2023) and **scaled and sustainable effective models**, institutionalizing mediation, integrated hubs, deinstitutionalization and transition support programmes (EASPD, 2022; UNICEF, 2024).

5. FINDINGS FROM QUALITATIVE FIELD RESEARCH AMONG STAKEHOLDERS

This section presents the key findings from the online qualitative survey carried out within the PAL Network's Working Group on Social Inclusion & Diversity. As stated in the Methodology section above, the survey targeted civil society organizations (NGOs and CSOs), education providers and public sector's representatives, working directly with marginalized children across Europe, receiving a total of 30 responses from relevant stakeholders across Europe.

5.1 Who is marginalized in practice?

When asked which groups of children are most underrepresented in current policies, stakeholders largely confirmed the categories identified through the desk research phase but also added important nuances.

Specifically, besides the strong focus on Roma/traveler and migrant/refugee children, the respondents highlighted also the marginalization of LGBTIQ+ children and girls, as well as children with disabilities, with additional groups mentioned being neurodivergent children, children living in remote/rural areas, children from low-income backgrounds and broadly at risk of exclusion.

This confirms that Roma and migrant/refugee children remain a central concern, in line with the desk research, but the fieldwork adds a stronger emphasis on LGBTIQ+ children and gendered vulnerabilities, as well as neurodivergent learners and children

from remote areas.

Several respondents also stressed that intersectionality is critical, for example for children who are Roma and living in poverty or of migrant background and identifying as LGBTIQ+, facing compounded barriers and social ostracism.

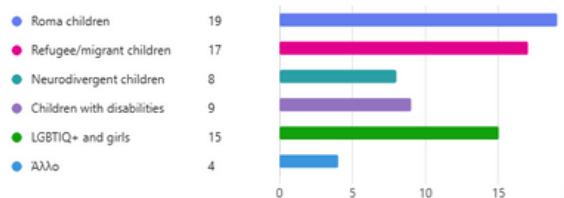


Figure 1. Groups most frequently identified as underrepresented in current policies (multiple responses).

Respondents most frequently highlight Roma/Traveller children, migrant/refugee children, LGBTIQ+ children and girls, and children with disabilities, underscoring intersectional patterns of marginalisation.

5.2 Perceptions of policy implementation

Across all countries and sectors represented in the field research, the respondents have described a systemic gap between formal policy commitments and the reality of the lived experiences. Policies are seen as "good on paper" but weak in implementation, with frequent references to insufficient funding and human resources, fragmented or short-term programmes, lack of trained professionals and discrepancies between urban centers and rural/deprived areas.

Some respondents have noted positive developments, such as the existence of inclusive education frameworks, national strategies on Roma and/or migrants'

inclusion, and specific child protection reforms.

However, in spite of these cases, the respondents stress that the reach and quality of implementation vary significantly between regions, municipalities and institutions, especially in countries with decentralized administration procedures.

Overall, the dominant narrative is that frontline actors (including experts from CSOs, NGOs and community-based organizations and initiatives) carry a high burden, often trying to fill in the gaps created by fragmented systems and limited resources.

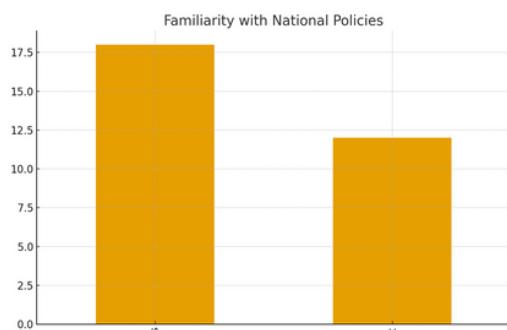


Figure 2. Familiarity with national policies on marginalized children among survey respondents (n=30)

Most respondents report being familiar or somewhat familiar with national policy frameworks, indicating high awareness among frontline actors.

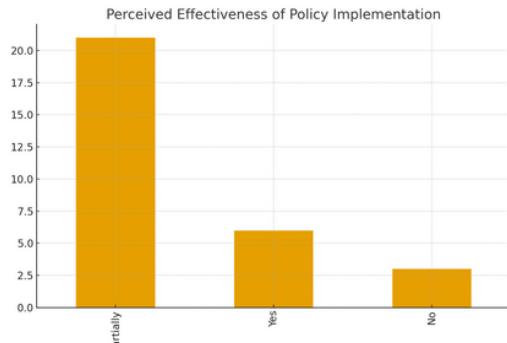


Figure 3. Perceived effectiveness of policy implementation in respondents' areas of work (n=30).

The majority report partial implementation, reinforcing the gap between formal commitments and practical delivery.

5.3 Main challenges in supporting marginalized children

The open-ended responses on challenges reveal strong convergence across all reported countries. The key themes included:

Lack of resources and staffing (many described a situation where services are overstretched and unable to offer continuity of support required for marginalized children)

Barriers in Education and ECEC (especially gaps in teachers' training on inclusion, diversity, trauma-informed approaches and SOGIESC-related topics/issues)

Legal and administrative obstacles (especially regarding procedures for registration, residence and access to services for migrant/refugee children, uncertainty for legal status and complex eligibility criteria for support programmes)

Discrimination, stigma and stereotyped social attitudes (negative stereotypes and perpetuated stereotyped cultures towards Roma, migrants/refugees, LGBTIQ+, embodied even through bullying and harassment in schools and communities)

Fragmented services and weak coordination (poor communication between different factors/institutions and lack of multi-disciplinary teams)

5.4 Good practices identified by practitioners

Despite the above-described challenges,

6. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

respondents pointed to a wide range of good practices, including:

- **Daily care centers** offering after-school support, psycho-social support, safe spaces for marginalized children,
- **School-based support programmes**, including socio-educational support for vulnerable pupils and diversity education in classrooms,
- **Inclusive education projects and teams**, including flexible learning support within mainstream classrooms and cross-disciplinary school teams,
- **Specialized NGO programmes** (especially in Greece and Spain), and
- **Municipal initiatives**

5.5 Stakeholders' Recommendations for Policy Change

Lastly, the respondents were asked to provide specific input regarding policy changes and reformations they'd expect to see at local/regional/national and EU levels, in order to systematize proper support towards children from marginalized communities. These propositions are more analytically reflected in the next section, but they generally concerned the following main pillars:

- Stable and adequate funding,
- Strengthening inclusive education,
- Early identification and prevention of marginalization,
- Reduction of legal and administrative barriers.

The following policy recommendations were derived from the combined findings of the comparative desk research across the six aforementioned member-countries of PAL Network with the qualitative field research among civil society and public sector's representatives, as they were presented and analyzed above.

All these resources highlight a particular gap between formal commitments and real-life implementation, particularly for Roma/traveler children, migrant/refugee children, children with disabilities or neurodivergent children, children at risk of poverty, as well as LGBTIQ+. The policy recommendations below aim to support systemic, sustainable and rights-based change/advancement at EU, national and local levels.

6.1 Recommendations at EU level

1. Strengthen the European Child Guarantee as a binding implementation framework

The European Child Guarantee is widely referenced in national strategies but shows uneven and non-binding implementation and enforcement. EU institutions are proposed to:

- Strengthen monitoring and accountability mechanisms for relevant National Action Plans, including disaggregated indicators and time-bound targets;
- Require from Member States to timely-bound report and enhance monitoring mechanisms;
- Link the Child Guarantee progress more directly to EU funding conditionalities.

2. Issue EU-level guidance to explicitly prevent segregation in education and ECEC

Segregation remains widespread, especially affecting Roma children and children with disabilities. The European Commission should:

- Issue practical, operational guidelines on preventing ethnic, disability-based and socio-economic segregation, inclusive school placement procedures, and non-discriminatory education practices and environments;
- Strengthen infringement and monitoring mechanisms for schools, to identify persisting segregation despite EU (and national, wherever applicable) relevant legal obligations.

3. Improve EU-wide disaggregated data on marginalized children

All six countries report major gaps in disaggregated data, contributing to the invisibility of the most excluded children. The European Union should:

- Support Member States in the collection of ethnicity-, disability-, migration- and care-status-disaggregated data, in compliance with data protection standards, as well as harmonize indicators across education, social protection and health;
- Mandate Eurostat and FRA to produce regular, comparable child inclusion dashboards at EU level.

4. Mainstream child participation within EU social and education policy

Children's participation (even throughout the participation of their guardians ad litem) remains weak in most countries. EU institutions should:

- Embed meaningful participation of marginalized children (either directly, or via mediators and legal guardians) in Child Guarantee governance, Roma strategies, di -

sability strategies education and youth funding programmes;

- Provide guidance and funding for safe, inclusive, and accessible participation models.

6.2 Recommendations at national level

The open-ended responses on challenges,

5. Develop integrated, cross-sectoral national child strategies

Many countries operate with multiple, fragmented strategies, without unified frameworks and monitoring responsibilities. National governments are advised to:

- Adopt integrated national child strategies that link education, health, social protection, housing and justice, as well as define single/unified governance and coordination structure and assign clear accountability across ministries;
- Ensure these strategies are backed by stable public funding and are not solely dependent on EU project cycles.

6. Fully implement inclusive education and end segregation

Stakeholders consistently report that inclusive education exists in law but not in practice. Accordingly, national authorities should:

- Set clear national target for the reduction of special school placements, segregated classes/schools, exclusion from mainstream education;
- Establish independent monitoring mechanisms on segregation and discrimination.

7. Strengthen capacity for the workforce in social, education and protection services

Shortages on frontline people's capacities and knowledge constitute a structural challenge. National governments should:

- Prioritize recruitment, training and retention of social workers, school psychologists, cultural mediators, special education staff;
- Introduce sustainable staffing ratios and workload standards;
- Support continuous professional development on inclusion, anti-discrimination, trauma-informed practices, SOGIESC-responsive teaching and intercultural dialogue.

8. Remove legal and administrative barriers for migrant and refugee children

The field research highlighted administrative obstacles as a core exclusion driver. National reformations should:

- Simplify registration, access to healthcare, school enrollment and access to housing and social protection;
- Ensure firewalls between essential services and migration enforcement;
- Provide automatic access to guardianship and legal aid for unaccompanied children.

10. Address material deprivation and housing as core inclusion issues

Stakeholders stressed that education and protection policies alone cannot overcome poverty and social ostracism. Indeed, restraining measures, although sometimes needed, cannot solve the referred challenges without proactive measures.

Accordingly, local and regional actors should:

- Integrate housing support, minimum income schemes, food security and access to utilities into relevant child inclusion strategies and/or awareness raising campaigns and advocacy efforts towards national governments;
- Prioritize families with young children, children with disabilities, single-parent households, refugee and Roma families.

6.3 Recommendations at regional and local level

9. Expand local participation mechanisms for children and families

Participation at grassroots levels remains weak and underreported. Accordingly, local authorities and schools should:

- Create safe, inclusive spaces for children's participation, especially for Roma and migrant/refugee children, children with disabilities, children in care, as well as for safe disclosure of SOGIESC;
- Support parent and community participation in school and municipal decision-making.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The findings from both the above-presented desk and field research points to the same conclusion: Europe's marginalized children are not failed by the absence of legal commitments, but by the inconsistent and uneven implementation of those commitments in practice. Fragmented governance, under-resourced services, persistent discrimination, weak data systems and limited coordination and monitoring continue to undermine children's rights across countries (European Commission, 2021; Council of the EU, 2021).

Both research components identified Roma and traveler children, migrant and refugee children, children with disabilities and children growing up in (or at-risk-of) poverty as those facing the greatest barriers. The fieldwork added further insights on LGBTIQ+ children, frontline workforce shortages and even burnout, as well as the value of local innovation – issues that are often absent from official policy documents.

Taken together, the evidence demonstrates the need for a structural, three-fold shift:

- 1)** from short-term projects to sustainable policy systems,
- 2)** from fragmented sectoral measures to integrated child-rights strategies, and
- 3)** from high-level commitments to measurable implementation and accountability.

These conclusions are directly recom -

mendations of this brief: They call for: stronger EU mechanisms to enforce the Child Guarantee; integrated national child strategies; universal access to inclusive education and ECEC; removal of administrative barriers for migrant and refugee children; investment in workforce capacity; improved data collection and institutionalization of children's (or their guardians, or their guardians ad litem) participation.

Implementing these recommendations would move European child policy from aspiration to impact – ensuring that no child remains invisible, underserved or excluded.

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