

TOWARDS A CHILD UNION

Reducing children's inequalities
in the European Union



FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN
PROGRESSIVE STUDIES
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D'ÉTUDES PROGRESSISTES



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TOWARDS A CHILD UNION | Tuesday 24th September 2020

EDVARD, Igriška 5, Ljubljana

17:00 – 17:05

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

László Andor, FEPS Secretary General
and former European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

17:05 – 17:30

TOWARDS A CHILD UNION

A Progressive stand to fight inequalities since early years

Presentation of research's progress by:

Christian Morabito, International expert for Save the Children and the European Commission

17:30 – 18:45

PROMOTING THE CHILD UNION TO BUILD RESILIENT WELFARE SYSTEMS

Urban Boljka, Research fellow at the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia

Majda Hrženjak, Peace Institute - Institute for Contemporary Social and Political Studies, researcher

Barbara Novinec, principal in kindergarten Galjevica, Ljubljana and President of ESHA, the European School Heads Association

Branimir Štrukelj, Trade Union of Education, Science and Culture of Slovenia, Secretary General (tbc)

Chair: **Martina Vuk**, Former State Secretary at the Slovenian Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and member of Društvo Progresiva

Q&A



About the project

Over the last two decades, there has been increasing interest in the role that Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) can play in supporting children's early learning and well-being. A growing body of evidence is showing that participation in quality ECEC programmes lead to positive gains in children's early learning and well-being, the benefits of which might be seen beyond childhood. Particularly, children from disadvantaged backgrounds are benefiting the most from ECEC. Investment in ECEC makes sense; economically, socially and politically and is the only sustainable way of overcoming inequalities in the long term.

However, at present, there are **consistent inequalities in access to services across EU countries and regions**. Moreover, unequal enrolment to services is aggravated by an unequal distribution of quality across groups, with vulnerable children usually accessing lower quality settings. In most European countries early learning programmes poorly interact with other welfare and social policies, such as labour market policies and social safety nets, augmenting risk factors of vulnerability and reducing opportunities for children from lower socio-economic backgrounds to fully reach their development potential.

The objectives

It is imperative for the **European Union to take action and urge all member states to ensure adequate access to quality ECEC along with social welfare policies** aiming at reducing inequalities among children. This research project aims at delineating the mainlines of the 'Child Union' intended as a European programme to fight children's inequalities through access to opportunities for children, above all, ECEC and social safety nets.

The research will help FEPS to show, in a compelling way, for external audiences, in particular European institutions, national institutions, academia, general public, the need for, and the way to structure, the Child Union. The Child Union should be designed as a European framework by which member states could be supported and compelled to increase access to quality ECEC as well as effectiveness of ECEC (and more in general welfare policies) with the ultimate goal of **enhancing opportunities for vulnerable children** (and families).

Contact

Euléane Omez, FEPS Project officer

Euleane.omez@feps-europe.eu

+32 2 234 69 09