

Lessons learned for the member states

The development of services friendly to children and families has received increased attention in recent years. Member states across Europe have adopted measures to strengthen the quality of their services, make them more attuned to the needs of children and families, and recognise children as rights holders with a say in decisions affecting them. These evolutions have taken place in the broader context of increased attention to the implementation of the CRC. Yet across Europe significant gaps remain, and new challenges keep emerging, such as the ongoing economic depression, which has taken a toll on public financing while increasing family needs for social services, or the increased vulnerability of a number of children due to poverty, various forms of violence and abuse including bullying, and specific situations such as migration. Yet although there is much evidence for the problems still to be faced, there are also indications of solutions and resources that are available to member states.

■ In the light of the above, the lessons learned for member states are to:

- ▶ Translate legislation on social services and child protection systems into concrete strategies, policies and measures;
- ▶ Enhance accountability frameworks by carrying out evidence-based planning, monitoring and evaluation, with the involvement of children and families;
- ▶ Establish effective and permanent child participation mechanisms;
- ▶ Develop and implement guidelines and protocols on key issues (such as the best interest of the child and participation of children in their own care) for professionals working for and with children;
- ▶ Make children visible in budgets at the national, local and service-delivery levels;
- ▶ Increase awareness raising, dialogue and debate on child rights at national and local levels;
- ▶ Address vulnerable children and ensure the accessibility of all children to friendly social services, without discrimination;
- ▶ Harmonise legislation, policies and practices for social service delivery across national territory and structures;
- ▶ Promote regular assessments of social service delivery, including the impact of legislation and policies and the outcomes for children;
- ▶ Measure the impact that the austerity measures have had in the delivery of social services for children;
- ▶ Develop requirements for periodic reviews of professionals' suitability to work with children;
- ▶ Increase training on child rights for specialist and non-specialist professionals working for and with children.