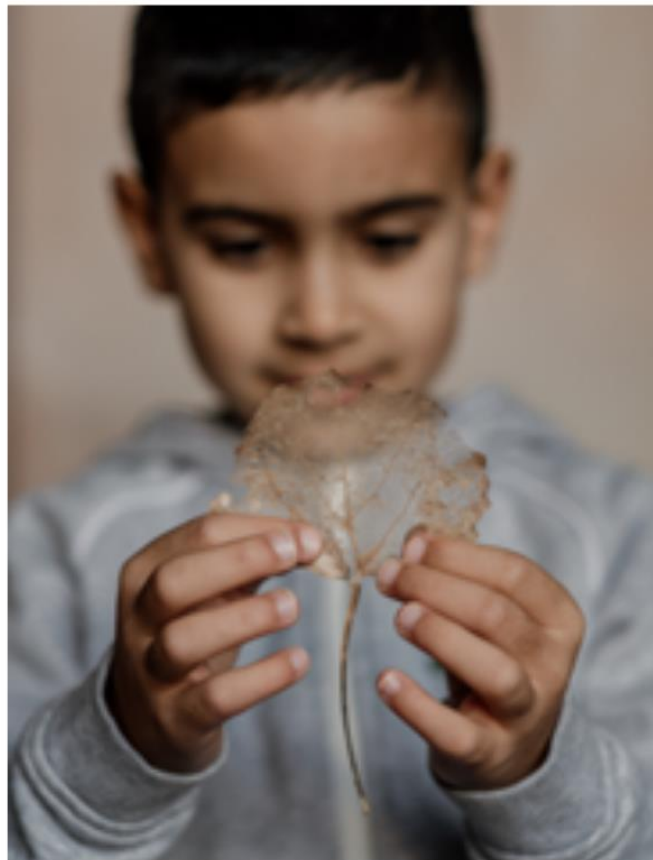


## Objective 2: Equal opportunities and social inclusion for all children



## Session on combating child poverty and promoting social inclusion of all children

### Mid-Term Review Conference for the Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027)



Building a Europe  
for and with children

Construire une Europe  
pour et avec les enfants



PRÉSIDENCE DU / PRESIDENCY OF  
**LUXEMBOURG**  
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE / COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
11/2024 - 05/2025



# Combating child poverty and promoting social inclusion of all children

## *How can European child rights protection systems be leveraged to address the challenges of poverty and social exclusion faced by children across Europe?*

Poverty and social exclusion<sup>1</sup> are huge and growing challenges faced by children in Europe.<sup>2</sup> Addressing these challenges is key to ensuring equal opportunities and social inclusion - the second priority objective of the [Council of Europe's Strategy for the Rights of the Child](#) (2022-2027). Children at greatest risk of poverty and social exclusion are often the subject of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, with key examples including children with disabilities, migrant children, children in sole-parent families, and those who are Roma or members of other ethnic and racialised minorities.

While chronologically closest to the Covid-19 crisis, the ongoing impacts of the cost-of-living crisis in Europe are linked to and have been exacerbated by the legacies of the financial and economic crises of the late 2000s, including the erosion of social protection systems caused by the fiscal austerity policies adopted nationally and promoted supranationally in response to those crises. Furthermore, the cost-of-living crisis has run side by side with (and is strongly linked to) the Ukraine conflict, while taking place against the backdrop of the ever-strengthening climate crisis. All these crises combine to form a polycrisis that increases and entrenches child poverty and social exclusion in Europe, thereby directly affecting children's enjoyment of their human rights, whether social, political, civil, economic, cultural or environmental in nature.

Child poverty and social exclusion are potential causes of child rights violations (i.e. through the impact of child poverty and social exclusion on children's enjoyment of rights) and are a potential outcome of such violations (i.e. through child poverty resulting from a failure to secure children's rights). They are also, in and of themselves, a violation of a wide range of children's rights. This latter point is especially clear in the Council of Europe context where the [European Social Charter](#) expressly includes a right to protection against poverty and social exclusion (Article 30) and the right of children to social, legal and economic protection (Article 17).<sup>3</sup> Reflecting this, child poverty and social exclusion have been addressed using a rights framing by the political bodies of the Council of Europe, notably its [Parliamentary Assembly](#) (PACE) and [Committee of Ministers](#) (CM).

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<sup>1</sup> Child poverty is typically conceptualised in either monetary or multidimensional terms. Definitions of monetary poverty relate to income or expenditure in relation to absolute or relative standards. Approaching poverty as multidimensional entails the conceptualisation of poverty as a denial of choices and opportunities due to a lack of resources that leads to social exclusion. Both of these understandings of child poverty are used by the European Committee of Social Rights and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in their work in this area.

<sup>2</sup> As of February 2024, about 1 in 4 children within the EU were at risk of poverty and social exclusion – a staggering 20 million children across 27 EU member ('State of Children in the European Union 2024: Policy Brief 1: Child Poverty' (UNICEF, 2024) - <https://www.unicef.org/eu/media/2571/file/Child%20poverty%20brief.pdf>).

<sup>3</sup> The European Social Charter also includes a wide range of other poverty-related rights such as the right to social security (Article 12), the right of the family to social, legal and economic protection (Article 16), the right to housing (Article 31) and the right to protection of health (Article 11).

## Aim of the session

In the face of this entrenched, structural problem faced by children across the Council of Europe member States, it is urgent that attention be focused on how the international rights protections enjoyed by children in Europe can be leveraged to provide solutions to child poverty and social exclusion.

How can these standards be operationalised as a framework for the law, policy and resource decision-making that is fundamental to addressing child poverty and social exclusion? How can they be better used – through legal action, political advocacy, direct action and other efforts – to ensure accountability where they are not respected in child poverty-related contexts? Crucially, given the lived experience and other expertise of children, how can their views and participation be ensured in anti-poverty work and processes at the national and international level?

Bringing together a range of international experts, including young experts, this session seeks to answer these questions. In doing so, it aims to turbo-charge the efforts of Council of Europe actors, national policymakers and other key stakeholders to secure a child poverty-free Europe.

## Practical information

<b>Session</b>	<b>Combating child poverty and promoting social inclusion of all children</b>
<b>Strategic objective</b>	Objective 2 - Equal opportunities and social inclusion for all children
<b>Day &amp; time</b>	Thursday 3 April, 10:30-13:00
<b>Venue</b>	Agora Building, Council of Europe
<b>Room</b>	G02 and online
<b>Languages</b>	English and French

# Programme

10:30	<b>Introduction and moderation:</b> <i>Saskia Kluit, Chairperson of the PACE Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, co-organiser of this session</i>
10:40	<b>I. Setting the scene</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Welcome words</b> – <i>Aoife Nolan, President of the European Committee of Social Rights, co-organiser of this session</i></li> <li>• <b>Overview of child poverty in Europe</b> - <i>Olivier de Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights</i></li> <li>• <b>Young person</b> sharing lived experience expertise - <i>Amirali Arian</i></li> </ul>
11:00	<b>II. Frameworks, mechanisms and solutions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do children's rights offer in terms of combating child poverty and social exclusion? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Aoife Nolan, President of the European Committee of Social Rights</i></li> <li>- <i>Benoit van Keirsbilck, Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Director DCI Belgium</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
11:20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can children's rights be used to ensure accountability and change where children live in poverty and social exclusion? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Karolina Babicka, International Commission of Jurists</i></li> <li>- <i>Rafael Cid, Gentium</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
11:40	→ <b>Q&amp;A/Discussion with participants</b>
12:00	<b>II. Frameworks, mechanisms and solutions (continued)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can children's rights be used to push forward solutions to child poverty and social exclusion in law, policy and budget-making? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Pierre-Alain Fridez, member of PACE</i></li> <li>- <i>Marguerite Krier, Coordinator of the European Child Guarantee in Luxembourg and CDENF member</i></li> <li>- <i>Emma Archbold, Children's Rights Alliance - Ireland/Eurochild</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
12:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can children's views and participation be ensured in anti-poverty work and processes at the national and international level? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Mieke Visser-Schuurman, Eurochild</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
12:40	→ <b>Q&amp;A/Discussion with participants</b>
13:00	<b>End of the session</b>