

New PICUM report puts spotlight on poverty of migrant children in the EU

BRUSSELS, 20 June, 2013 - On the occasion of the meeting of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) in Luxembourg today, PICUM launches a new report calling on the ministers to address the poverty and social exclusion faced by children who have, or whose parents have, an irregular migration status.

PICUM's report "[Child poverty and well-being: Spotlight on the situation of migrant children in Cyprus and the EU](#)" outlines the specific vulnerabilities of migrant children and relevant good practices, in order to inform developments on both European and national levels. The report is the result of a roundtable held by PICUM in partnership with the Commissioner for Children's Rights in Cyprus, the Office of the European Parliament in Cyprus, Eurochild, and KISA, Action for Equality Support and Antiracism in Cyprus on 17 October 2012, prior to a high-level conference on child poverty and well-being, organised by the Cypriot Presidency of the European Union.

Taking the example of the situation in Cyprus, the report identifies major challenges that migrant children face across the EU such as the length of administrative procedures for asylum, lack of access to legal representation, restrictions on accessing services and the gap between rights and entitlements on paper and in practice.

"We know the crisis and austerity measures are having a devastating effect on children and families across Europe. Children with a migrant background are among the most vulnerable, especially when their parents are in precarious employment or they are undocumented. Children only have one childhood. And that experience will shape their chances throughout the life-course," Jana Hainsworth, Secretary General of Eurochild, emphasized.

The situation of undocumented migrant children is a particular concern. Due to their irregular residence status, or the irregular status of their parents, many children face severe restrictions in accessing essential services, such as education and health care, and are at risk of poverty, social exclusion and exploitation. Changes need to be enacted to respect children's rights and to realize a Europe of equality and prosperity.

Today, Ministers from the 27 EU Member States meet to discuss the European Commission's Social Investment Package for Growth and Cohesion (SIP) launched in February this year, and the European Commission's Recommendation "Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage", as part of the package.

The European Commission recommendation is a welcome step, recognizing children as individual rights holders and the need to prioritise integrated social investment in children, particularly in times of crisis. With access to quality services as one of the central pillars of the Recommendation, member states are urged to ensure health care services are adapted to ensure undocumented children can enjoy their right to health. Limiting the human rights of undocumented children and denying access to essential services does not reduce the numbers of irregularly staying migrants but causes great individual harm and exacerbates social inequalities to the detriment of individuals, families and communities alike.

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About PICUM

PICUM - the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants, is a non-governmental international organisation (NGO) that promotes respect for the human rights of undocumented migrants within Europe. PICUM provides a direct link between the grassroots level, where undocumented migrants' experience is most visible, and the European level, where policies relating to them are deliberated. PICUM provides regular recommendations and expertise to policy makers and institutions of the United Nations, the Council of Europe and at EU level. In 2009, PICUM was awarded participatory status with the Council of Europe.

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