

Children and youth at risk

Every child has the right to a childhood safe from abuse, exploitation, neglect, exclusion and discrimination. Yet many children in Europe live under difficult conditions and are exposed to risks. Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway have set around than €63 million on programmes supporting children and youth at risk.

WHY FOCUS ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT RISK?

As some of the most vulnerable members of society, children require particular protection. Despite European, national and international efforts to protect and promote the rights of the child, the situation of many children in Europe is far from satisfactory. Children's access to education, health care, justice, social protection and to a nurturing and caring environment is often limited.

- > Children (aged 0-17) are generally more at risk of poverty or social exclusion than the overall population – 27% compared to 24% for the total population in the EU in 2011¹
- > According to the Council of Europe, about one in five children in Europe are victims of some form of sexual violence. It is estimated that in 70% to 85% of cases, the abuser is somebody the child knows and trusts
- > Children, as victims, witnesses or offenders in the justice system, are particularly vulnerable

WHAT WILL WE ACHIEVE?

The three donor countries have set aside approximately €63 million from the EEA Grants to support efforts to make life better for vulnerable groups of children and young people.

Programmes have been established in seven countries: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania and Romania.

HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE IT?

Support from the Grants is focused on:

- > Putting in place support systems for vulnerable groups of children and young people at risk
- > Developing and implementing policies and standards of intervention in the field of youth justice and helping with the reintegration of young offenders

1. Eurostat (2011) Population at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age group (%)



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- > Improving school attendance and preschool day-care
- > Preventing and tackling violence, abuse and exploitation against children and young people
- > Enhancing the quality of child welfare systems and protection
- > Ensuring equal access to health and social care services for those most vulnerable and excluded

Types of activities supported by the programmes include:

- > In the Czech Republic, projects focused on raising awareness of children's rights and increasing their participation in decision-making processes as well as efforts to strengthen community-based services for children instead of institutions have received support
- > In Lithuania, a support centre is being set up for child victims of sexual abuse
- > In Malta, efforts to develop and implement policies and intervention standards in the field of youth justice, as well as training programmes for staff dealing with young offenders have been supported

In addition to the dedicated programmes on children and youth at risk, other programmes funded by the EEA and Norway Grants such as public health and civil society, also provide support for projects targeting vulnerable young people.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Projects are supported under the specific programmes in seven EU countries. Projects are selected following calls for proposals organised by the programme operators in each country. Calls are published on the websites of the programme operators and donor programme partners and on www.eeagrants.org.

BILATERAL COOPERATION

Pooling expertise helps to tackle shared challenges. To enhance knowledge exchange and mutual learning, partnerships between public bodies in the donor and beneficiary countries are widely encouraged. Funding is available to support networking and foster project partnerships.

The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities is involved as a donor programme partner in Estonia. The Icelandic Child Protection Agency is project partner in Lithuania whereas the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs shares its expertise in the Czech Republic. The Council of Europe is also a partner in several programmes, mostly on issues around minority rights.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW: CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT RISK

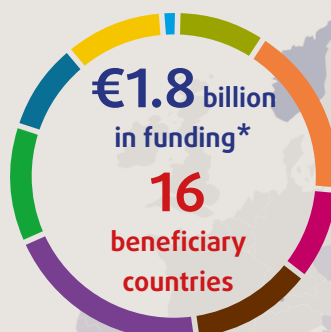
Country	Measures addressing vulnerable groups of children and youth at risk	Juvenile justice and reintegration of young offenders	Preventing and tackling violence, abuse and exploitation against children and youth	Improving quality of child welfare systems and protection	Equal access to health and social care services	Local and regional anti-discrimination initiatives for vulnerable groups	Partners	Grant amount (€ million)
Bulgaria	●						• Council of Europe	8.6
Cyprus	●							0.4
Czech Republic*	●	●						2.7
Estonia	●	●					• Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities	6.5
Hungary	●			●	●		• Council of Europe	11.2
Lithuania**	●		●					6.3
Romania	●					●	• Council of Europe	27.0
Total	●							62.7

*The Norwegian Directorate of Children, Youth and Family Affairs - Bufdir is a donor project partner

**The Icelandic Child Protection Agency is a donor project partner

ABOUT THE EEA AND NORWAY GRANTS

Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway provide funding to:



AREAS OF SUPPORT

- Environmental management
- Climate change
- Civil society
- Cultural heritage and diversity
- Human and social development
- Green industry innovation
- Justice and home affairs
- Research and scholarships
- Decent work and social dialogue

* EEA Grants €993.5 million (Norway 95.7%, Iceland 3.2%, Liechtenstein 1.1%) – Norway Grants €804.6 million, financed by Norway alone