

Brussels, 25 June 2015

Press Statement of the EU Alliance for Investing in Children¹ on the occasion of the European Parliament's adoption of the European Fund for Strategic Investments

Juncker's Investment Plan – Investing in social progress, human capital, health and education

The EU Alliance for Investing in Children welcomes the European Parliament's adoption of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) – yesterday during their plenary session in Brussels:

MEPs have added important provisions on how the EFSI should be allocated which will ensure long-term strategic investments and societal progress, such as investment in targeted social policies in line with the 2013 Social Investment Package and support of projects in the fields of human capital, culture, education and health. In addition, we welcome the inclusion that the EFSI should contribute to achieving the Europe 2020 targets.

However, the Alliance for Investing in Children regrets that investing in education from an early age is no longer explicitly mentioned in the adopted text. There is considerable evidence on the benefits of investing in early childhood education and care for all children for achieving long term results in tackling poverty, exclusion and unemployment.

Moreover, it still seems that the EFSI will focus mainly on short-term projects financed through public-private partnerships, which are not the only solution to investing in Europe's human capital and long-term sustainability. While acknowledging the importance of infrastructure, investment in human capital – including children – does not stop at 'bricks and mortar'. What goes inside the building, the qualitative and inclusive dimension of education reforms, is what makes the real difference in children's lives and the future of society.

Growing up in poverty can dramatically change children's chances to enjoy their rights – as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Across Europe, we are witnessing how poverty deprives children of educational opportunities, access to healthcare, healthy diets, adequate housing and living environments, family support, care and protection. We see how children experience increased and multiple discrimination due to their socio-economic status and how they are socially excluded, for example through limited opportunities to participate in leisure, play, culture and sports activities. Latest Eurostat figures estimate that more than one in four children are experiencing poverty or social exclusion. For children, the negative effects of living in poverty and social exclusion can last a lifetime – making it even more urgent to act now.

The right investment in children makes sense – socially, politically and economically. Investing in all children's development and well-being, including their relational and cognitive skills, is essential to realise child rights and enable children to reach their full potential. Therefore, investing in Europe needs to start by investing in children, families and communities. This is crucial to achieve social cohesion and inclusion, as well as economic growth and prosperity – now and in the longer-term.

Background: The Investment Plan is part of the Commission's new approach based on three pillars of structural reforms, fiscal responsibility and investment. The Investment Plan aims to unlock public and private investments in the real economy of at least € 315 billion over the next three years (2015-2017). To provide this additional financing a new European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) is being set up based on a proposal by the European Commission.

See the European Commission's Proposal for a Regulation on the European Fund for Strategic Investments [here](#).
See the compromise text on the European Commission's Proposal [here](#).

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Further information on the **EU Alliance for Investing in Children**: <http://www.alliance4investinginchildren.eu/>
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ⁱ The EU Alliance for Investing in Children brings together over 20 European networks sharing a commitment to end child poverty and to promote child well-being across Europe. At a time when over a quarter of children in the EU face poverty and social exclusion, the added-value of this Alliance is to remind of the importance of the full implementation of the European Commission Recommendation "**Investing in Children – Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage**". The Alliance partners believe the EU policy framework and funding opportunities can catalyse political commitment and policy reform within Member States, thereby improving the quality of life of children and young people in Europe.

Partners of the EU Alliance for Investing in Children include:

- Alliance for Childhood
- ATD Quart Monde
- Caritas - Europa
- COFACE – Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union
- Don Bosco International
- Dynamo International – Street Workers Network
- EAPN – European Anti-Poverty Network
- EASPD – European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities
- ECSA - European Child Safety Alliance
- ELIANT Network
- ENSA – European Network of Social Authorities
- EPA - The European Parents Association
- EPHA - European Public Health Alliance
- ESN – European Social Network
- Eurochild
- Eurodiaconia
- EuroHealthNet
- FEANTSA – European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless
- ISSA - The International Step by Step Association
- Mental Health Europe
- PICUM – Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants
- Save the Children EU Office
- SOS Children's Villages International
- UNICEF EU Office