

first years
first priority

**A FAIR START
FOR *every* CHILD
IN EUROPE**



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#FirstYearsFirstPriority
FirstYearsFirstPriority.eu



Eurochild
Putting children at
the heart of Europe



epria european
public health
alliance



ROMA
EDUCATION FUND
Invest | Educate | Engage

FIRST YEARS FIRST PRIORITY

A fair start for every child in Europe

CO-LEAD BY:



Eurochild



INTERNATIONAL
STEP by STEP
ASSOCIATION

IN ASSOCIATE PARTNERSHIP WITH:



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EDUCATION FUND
Invest | Educate | Engage

CO-FUNDED BY:

**OPEN SOCIETY
FOUNDATIONS**



European
Commission

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Session 1

Why this campaign?

- Jana Hainsworth, **Eurochild**
- Mihaela Ionescu, **International Step by Step Association**
- Radost Zaharieva, **European Public Health Alliance**
- Ioan Tanase, **Roma Education Fund**
- Sarah Klaus, **Early Childhood Program, Open Society Foundations**

Why prioritise the development & well-being of the youngest children?

- Overwhelming evidence of the importance of early childhood development
- Early childhood receives little attention in politics & public policies
- Many policies impact young children, but they rarely take the child's perspective or address inequality

We will advocate for more political visibility and resource allocation to early childhood

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A time of enormous challenges & opportunity!

- Poverty & social inequality threaten Europe's long-term prosperity & stability
- Everything is inter-connected – we need a more integrated approach to policy making
- Massive recovery spending can transform our societies & economies for the better

Campaign mission

To influence public policies and spending so that all families – but particularly those living with adversity – get the support they need to provide a healthy, safe and nurturing environment for their youngest children.

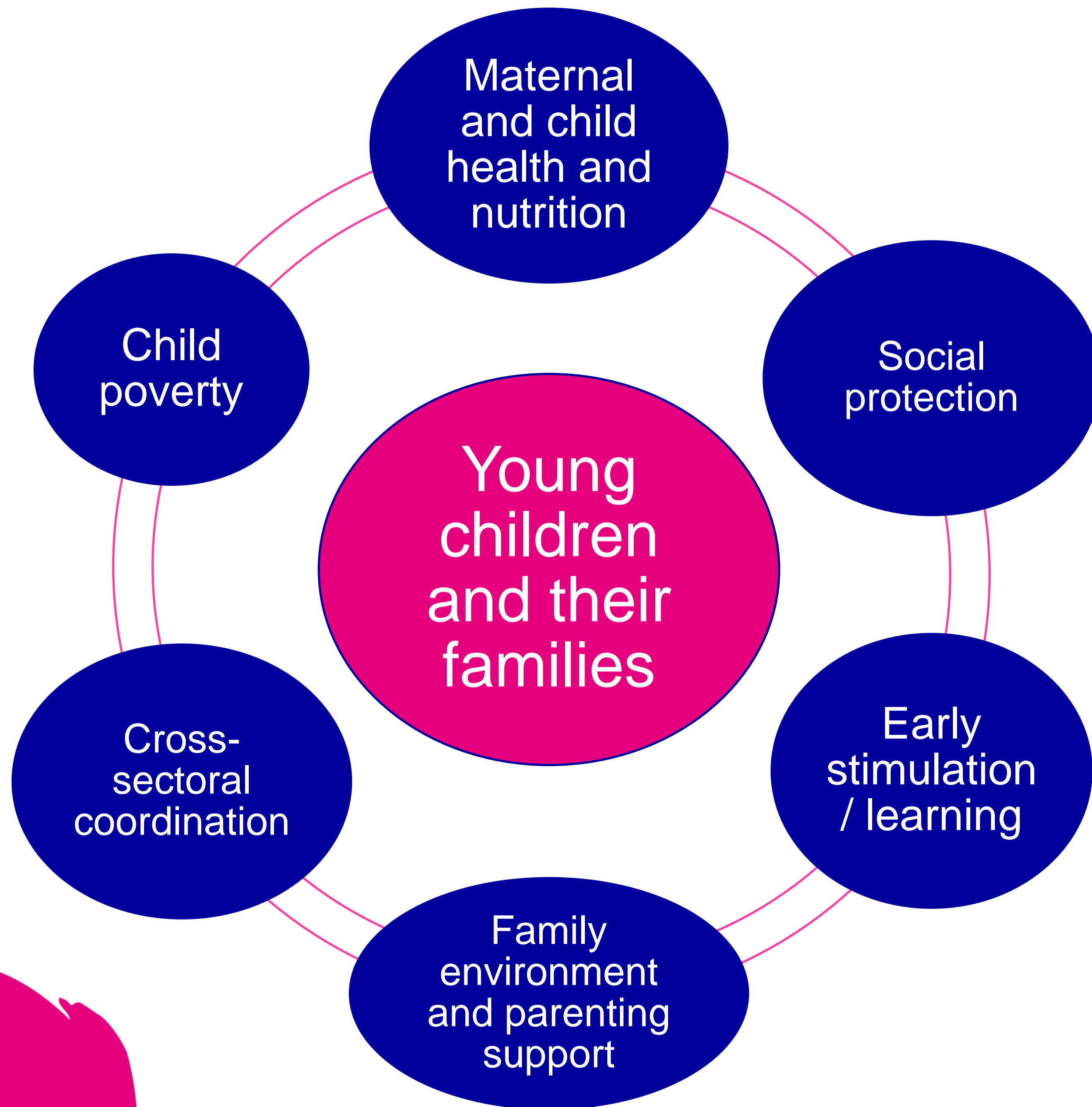
A 360° approach to early childhood development policies and services



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- ! Child's wellbeing depends on family's wellbeing.
- ! Early years' experiences matter tremendously in a person's life and have long term impact on individual's health, learning and wellbeing.
- ! Fragmentation of policies and services affects primarily vulnerable families, but also all families. (Geinger et al, 2015)
- ! Complex problems require joined-up and systemic approaches (Moore & Fry, 2011).

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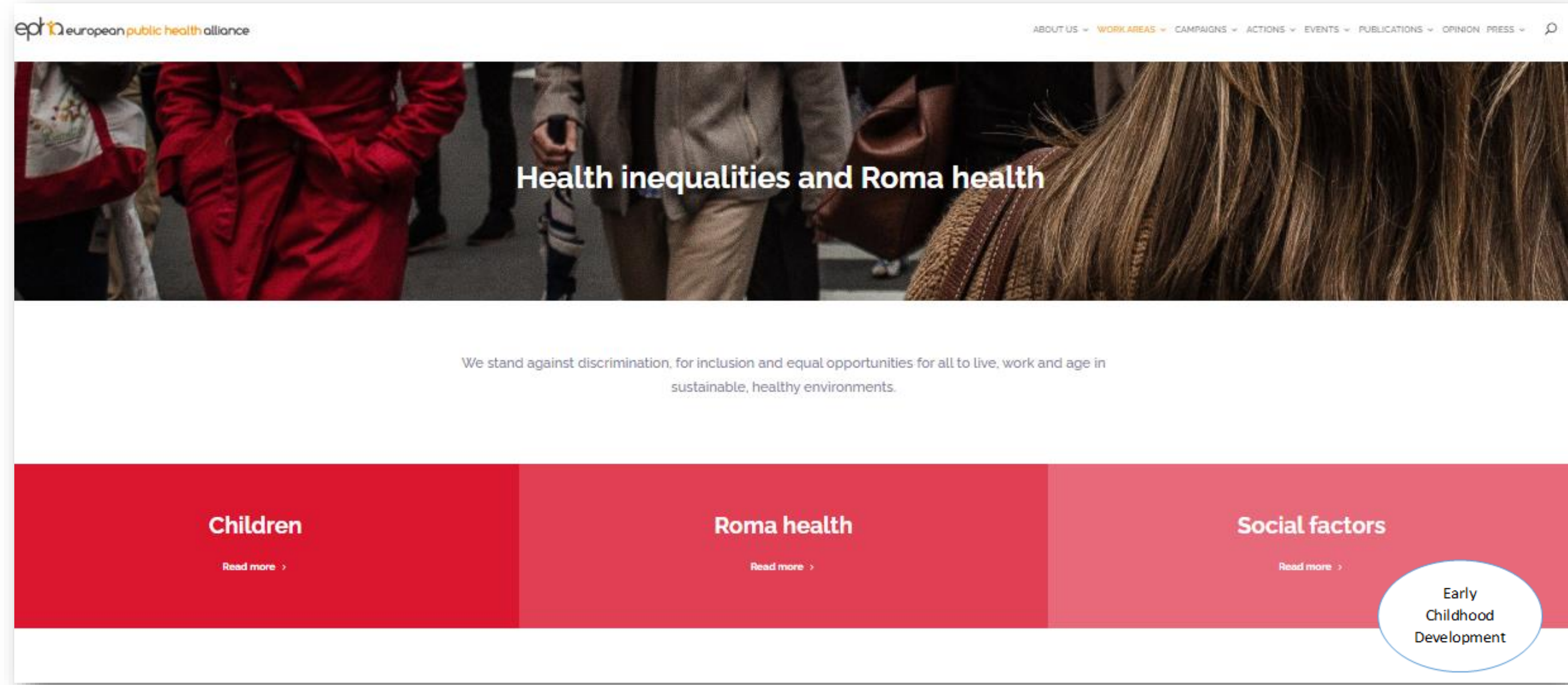
A 360° approach to early childhood development policies and services

**Child Guarantee
(European Commission)**

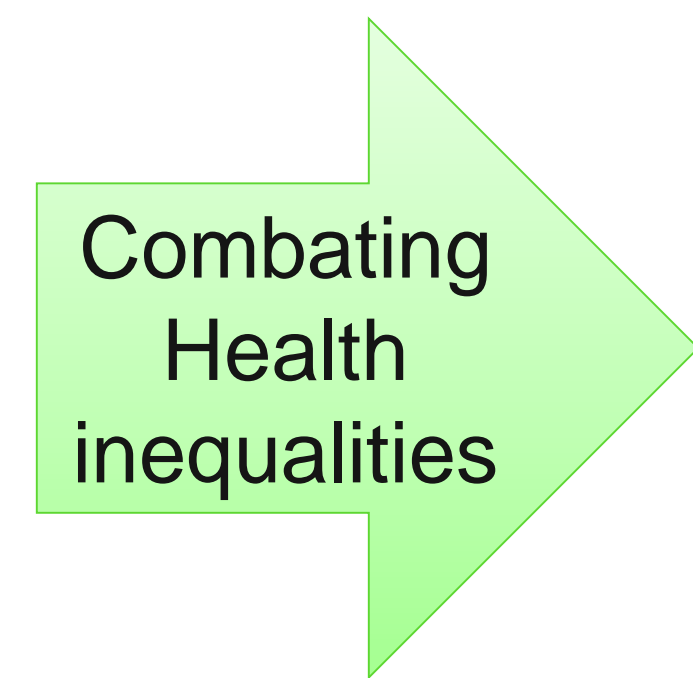
**Nurturing Care Framework
(WHO, UNICEF, World Bank)**

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EPHA is a change agent aiming to build public health capacity to deliver equitable solutions to European public health challenges, to improve health and reduce health inequalities.




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Investing in ECD to reduce health inequalities across Europe



1. ECD as a driver for closing the gap in health
2. Policy commitment for combating disparities in health from the first years of life
3. Looking forward



Healthy from the beginning: ensuring a good start in life for all Roma children

by Radost Zaharieva | Aug 27, 2020 | Children and Youth, Health Inequalities, Roma Health | Publications

The first thousand days of a child's life are vital for their optimal physical and mental development and the realization of their full potential. The lack of adequate nutrition, quality healthcare and prevention services, vaccination, affordable medicines, learning...

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Revising our social and political priorities to ensure health equity across Europe



Tackle child poverty by expanding the scope of the EU Child Guarantee

by European Public Health Alliance | Oct 8, 2020 | Children and Youth, Health Inequalities, Roma Health | Latest Developments

The European Public Health Alliance, the International Step by Step Association (ISSA), through its initiative the Romani Early Years Network, welcomes the European Commission's commitment to strengthen the protection of vulnerable children through the development of...

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Toy Library A Magic Place

Learning through playing

64 Toy Libraries

10 COUNTRIES



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INVEST IN QUALITY EDUCATION FOR GENERATIONS
AND GENERATIONS

Community participation & parental involvement



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Leaving no child 'behind'



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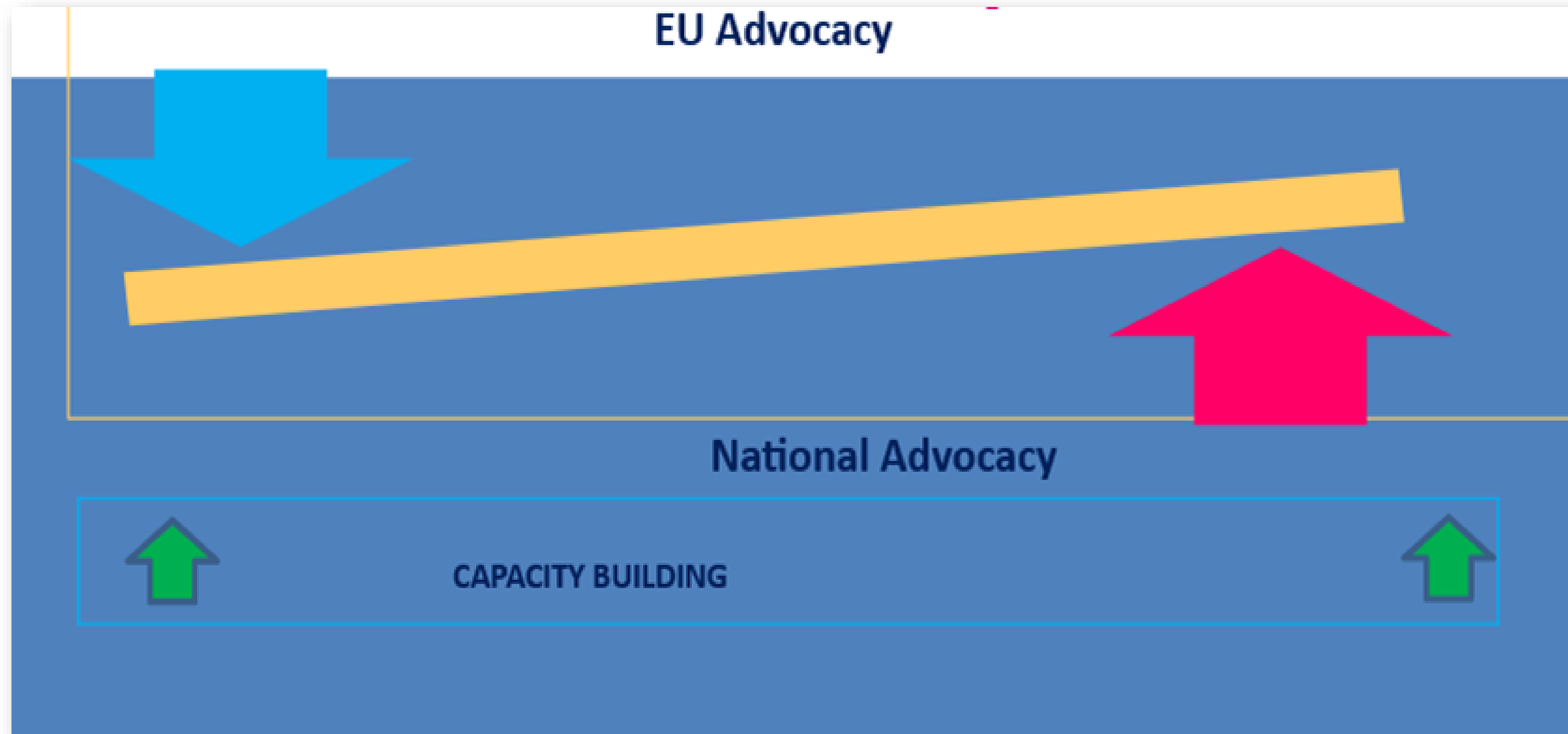
Session 2: How does the campaign achieve change for young children in Europe?

Pathways for achieving change

3 components to the campaign:

1. Building a community of ECD advocates at national & EU level
2. Leveraging EU policies & funding to support reforms & public investment at national level
3. Raising awareness of ECD and collecting and disseminating a strong evidence base

Campaign strategy: Top-down Bottom-up advocacy

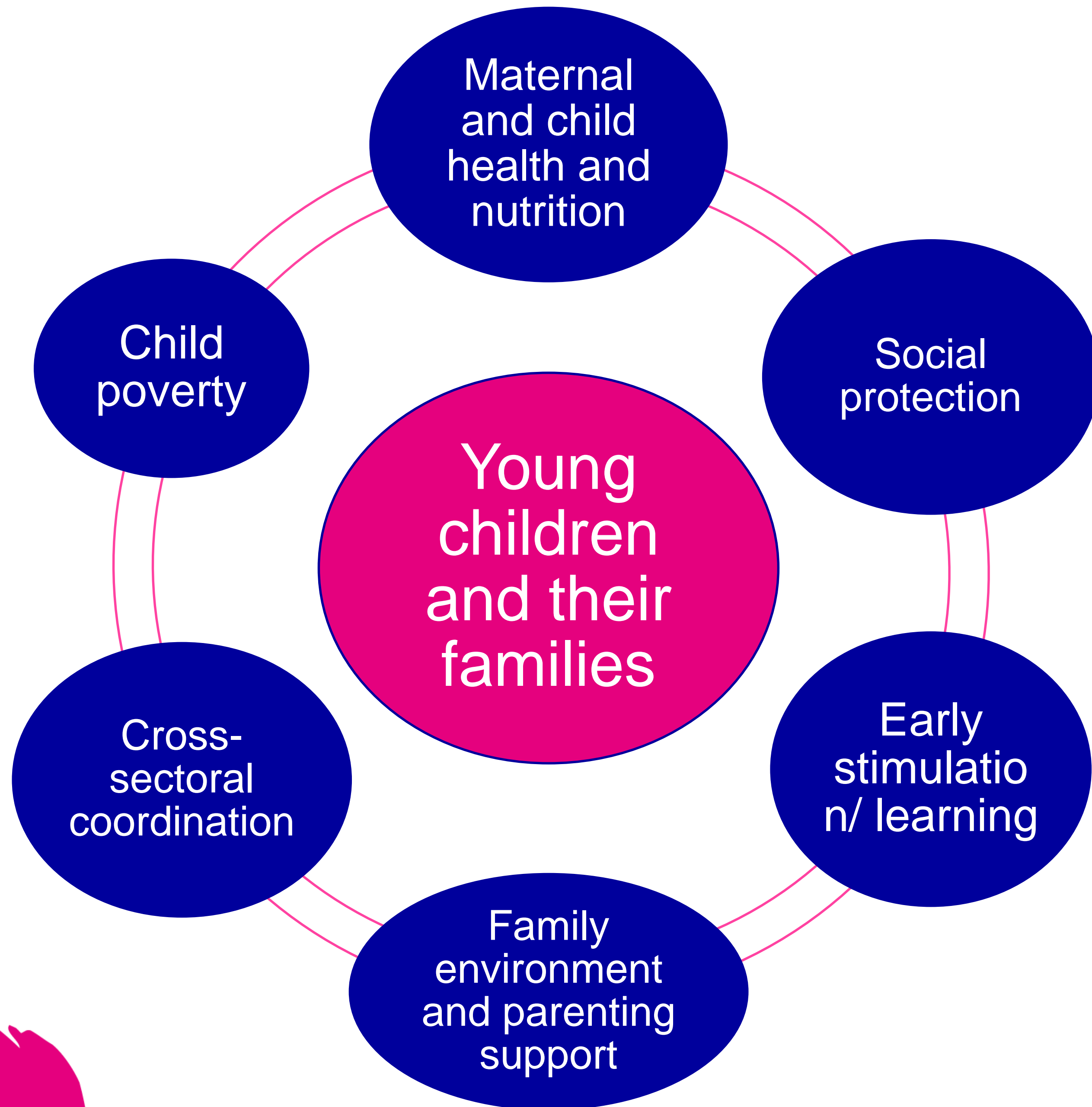


Leveraging EU action

- Action Plan on the Pillar of Social Rights, including the Child Guarantee initiative
- Comprehensive EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child
- Macroeconomic recovery policies (building an 'economy that works for people' - main pressure via the European Semester)
- EU budget 2021-2027, in particular earmarking of funds in ESF+
- Mainstreaming early childhood development in other EU policy areas

COUNTRY PROFILES

Building evidence to advocate for coordinated policies, funding and services around young children and families, especially the most vulnerable



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National partners

- **Bulgaria** - Trust for Social Achievement, For Our Children Foundation
- **Finland** - Central Union for Child Welfare
- **France** - Ensemble pour l'Éducation de la Petite Enfance
- **Hungary** - Family, Child, Youth Association
- **Ireland** - Child Rights Alliance
- **Portugal** - Fundação Nossa Senhora do Bom Sucesso
- **Romania** - Step by Step Center for Education and Professional Development
- **Serbia** - Pomoc Deci
- **Spain** - Plataforma de Infancia

NATIONAL COORDINATORS



BULGARIA

Key recommendations:

- Improve the cross-sectoral approach to planning central policies with a direct impact on child well-being
- Develop a National Strategy for ECD policies, services & interventions
- Improve mechanisms for the participation of CSOs in the policy planning & implementation process at national, district, local and community levels
- Invest in ECD workforce

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FINLAND



LASTENSUOJELUN KESKUSLIITTO
CENTRAL UNION FOR CHILD WELFARE

Key recommendations:

- Conduct child impact assessments on each decision concerning children
- Improve the coordination of all ECD services & family support
- Ensure that Finnish Roma children & other children in vulnerable situations attend ECEC services
- Strengthen and develop support in ECEC

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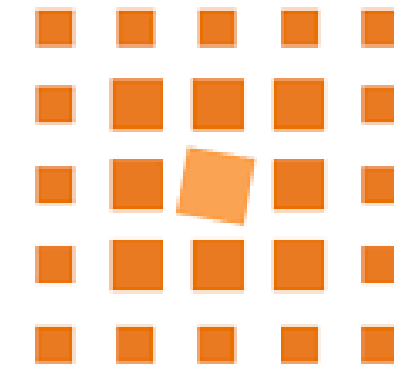
FRANCE



Key recommendations:

- Address ECD as a national priority
- Channel targeted funds for children & families in vulnerable situations
- Set up a long-term evidence-based French national Child Guarantee, with proven impact on child development, to improve support of parents and professionals
- Consolidate all actions towards children across all sectors – health, education, social protection, cultural, social policies & private business

HUNGARY



CSALÁD, GYERMEK, IFJÚSÁG
KIEMELKEDŐEN KÖZHASZNÚ EGYESÜLET
FAMILY CHILD YOUTH ASSOCIATION

Key recommendations:

- Improve the coordination between different government structures to ensure coherent & effective ECD policies
- Increase the capacity of high quality, flexible ECD-related services, including childcare, healthcare & education
- Ensure equal access to healthcare and other essential services for children from marginalised groups, such as children with disabilities, Roma children, and others

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IRELAND

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ALLIANCE

Key recommendations:

- Develop an affordable, high-quality ECEC system that is accessible to all
- Fully implement the First Five to improve the lives of babies, young children, and their families
- Address food poverty and reduce childhood obesity
- Create a dedicated Child Health workforce that can provide an integrated approach to service planning & delivery

PORTUGAL

FUNDAÇÃO
Nossa Senhora
do Bom Sucesso

Key recommendations:

- Take action to reduce child health inequalities, through early detection & intervention
- Improve the timely access to high quality health services for all children, especially those most in need
- Take steps to improve the transition of institutionalised children to family-based care
- Increase the coverage of community-based ECEC. ECEC services should be integrated in the education system

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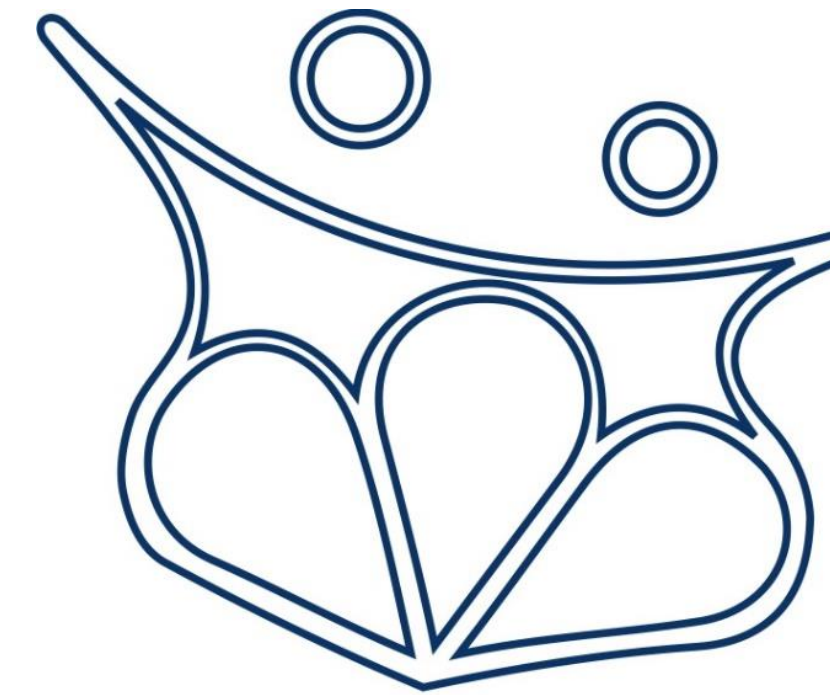
ROMANIA



Key recommendations:

- Develop national strategies on ECD
- Secure per capita financing for ECD initiatives
- Make it easier for local communities to finance new ECD services
- Increase availability & capacity of day care services and kindergartens

SERBIA



POMOĆ DECI

Key recommendations:

- Develop a coherent cross-sectoral approach to ECD, supported by legal and strategic documents
- Strengthen social dialogue with various stakeholders, inc CSOs and parents
- Include children-specific priorities in the documents of the Economic and Financial Dialogue
- Give special attention & support to families near the poverty line

SPAIN



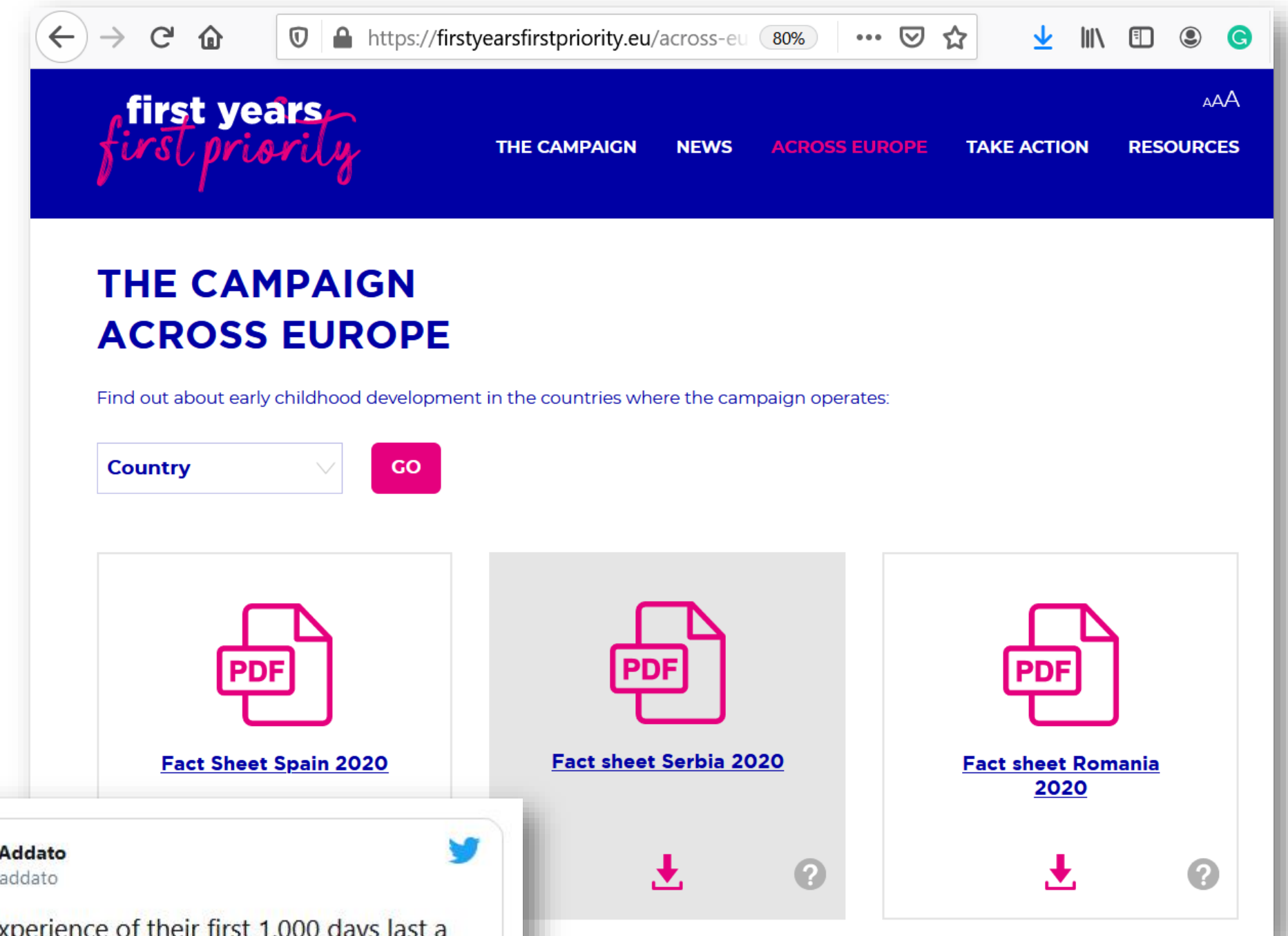
Key recommendations:

- Ensure universal access to quality ECEC
- Develop better family support mechanisms to reach more families in vulnerable situations, and from different poverty thresholds
- Aim to decrease regional disparities in terms of education & healthcare
- Develop public policies to promote work-life balance & early intervention

Learn, engage, share



- Visit the website: FirstYearsFirstPriority.eu
- Vision flyer
- Country sheets
- Case studies
- Take action



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