



# **ESPN Thematic Report on Progress in the implementation of the 2013 EU Recommendation on “Investing in children: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage”**

**Croatia**

**2017**

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June 2017*



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion  
Directorate C — Social Affairs  
Unit C.2 — Modernisation of social protection systems

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**European Social Policy Network (ESPN)**

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## Summary

Despite a strong legal and institutional framework for promoting children’s rights, investment in children – particularly those at risk of poverty and social exclusion – remains sub-optimal in Croatia. In addition to pronounced regional variations in child well-being, significant equity gaps remain, with disadvantaged children, particularly Roma and children with disabilities, still left behind.

Croatia has a relatively high child poverty and social exclusion risk and, crucially, appears to be one of the EU countries in which child poverty is a static phenomenon, with the same children affected year on year.

Recent reforms to Croatia’s minimum income scheme have provided a small amount of additional income to single-parent households, but not to households with many children. Although the introduction of universal child benefits and the abolition of child tax allowances has been mooted by the Croatian government recently, this is being promoted as a measure for demographic renewal rather than for poverty alleviation. Access to good-quality, community-based services remains a challenge, although, in the light of a decrease in the numbers of children in residential care, some progress appears to have been made.

A crucial issue in Croatia remains low levels of female employment and the absence of pre-school places for all children, but particularly for children in disadvantaged areas and children whose parents are unemployed. Government policies seem powerless to redress this issue given that pre-school provision is the responsibility of local authorities.

The gap between legal rights and implementation on the ground is particularly pronounced in terms of child participation, which remains rather tokenistic and underdeveloped in Croatia, particularly to the detriment of children in difficult circumstances including children leaving the care system.

Investment in children has rarely, if at all, appeared as a priority within the European semester, either for the Croatian authorities or the European Commission. Instead, the focus has been on those programmes that absorb a significant share of public expenditure, notably pensions, and a search for efficiencies in social benefits that would reduce Croatia’s deficit.

Croatia has a generally low capacity to absorb EU funds, which tend to be focused on infrastructure projects or, in the field of social inclusion, on active labour market programmes. Those projects that do focus on children rarely have an ‘investing in children’ approach, being used to meet basic humanitarian needs or duplicating other programmes that focus on systems and indicators. The rare exception seems to be projects that seek to strengthen the network of community-based services: but, even here, the impact of these projects is difficult to assess.

Many of the recommendations from our earlier report, published in 2014,<sup>1</sup> remain equally valid and relevant today, including the need to: promote work-care and work-life balance, particularly for women workers; increase access to affordable and good-quality pre-school provision of diverse kinds; combine cash and care in ways that augment child well-being; and focus on improving the quality of life of Roma children and children with disabilities.

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<sup>1</sup> Stubbs, P. and S. Zrinščak (2014) Investing in Children: Croatia. European Commission Network of Experts on Social Inclusion, CEPS/Instead.

## 1 Overall situation with regard to child poverty and social exclusion

The risk of poverty and social exclusion is faced by a considerable number of Croatian children. Specifically, 28.2% of children aged 0-17 were at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) in 2015, which was above the EU average (26.9%), though many EU countries (12 of them) had an even higher AROPE rate for children.<sup>2</sup> The AROPE rate for children in Croatia was similar to that for the whole population (29.1% in 2015). In the same year, 20.9% of children were at risk of poverty, 12.7% lived in (quasi-)jobless households, and 13.4% were severely materially deprived. According to the specific material deprivation indicator for children aged 0-15, 22% of Croatian children lacked at least three out of 17 essential items. As in many other countries, the highest AROPE rate was found in single-person households with dependent children (43.4%) and in households with two adults and three or more children (43.2%).

Figure 1 shows the changes in basic poverty and social exclusion indicators in the period 2010-2015. The number of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion was 233,000 in 2010, reaching a peak of 280,000 in 2012 and falling to 215,000 in 2015. Other indicators (AROP, SMD and QJ) showed similar trends. A comparison with the evolution of the same indicators for the whole population (Figure 2) reveals that the AROPE and AROP rates were similar for children and the whole population in 2010, but rose more significantly for children in the following two years as a result of the economic crisis. This is because the crisis had a major impact on some types of households: the AROP rate was 34.6% for a single person with dependent children in 2010, but this rose to 40.4% in 2012.<sup>3</sup> Recent research on child poverty,<sup>4</sup> also based on official EU (SILC) data, indicated that among 31 EU/EFTA countries Croatia had, together with Greece, the highest drop in equivalised income for the whole population in the period 2010-2014: among the population at risk of poverty this drop amounted to 17.2%, and for children at risk of poverty it fell by 18.3%.

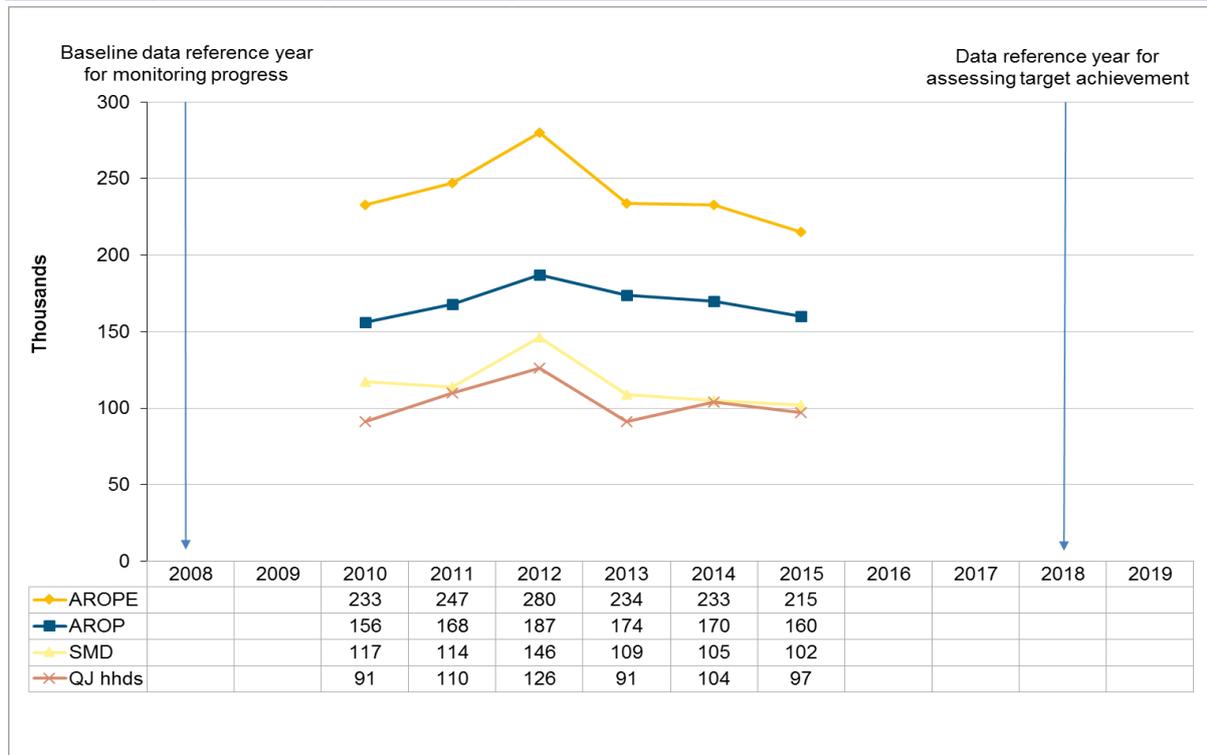
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<sup>2</sup> See statistical annex to Frazer H. and Marlier E. (2017). *Progress in the implementation of the 2013 EU Recommendation on "Investing in children: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage". A study of national policies*. European Social Policy Network (ESPN), Brussels: European Commission.

<sup>3</sup> Croatian Bureau of Statistics, Poverty Indicators, different years, available at: <http://www.dzs.hr/> (accessed 3 May, 2017).

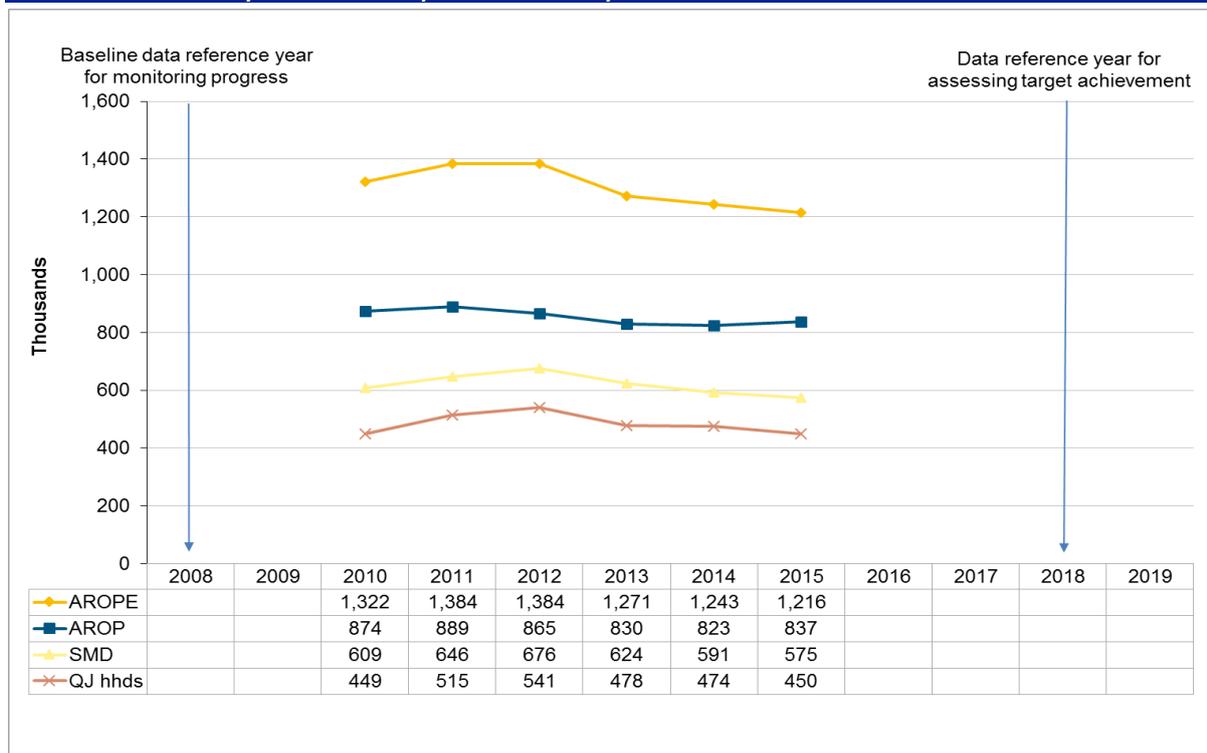
<sup>4</sup> Stubbs, P. et al. (2017) Child Poverty and Household Coping Strategies in Croatia. Zagreb: EIZG, forthcoming.

**Figure 1: Trends in number of children aged 0-17 at risk of poverty or social exclusion, thousands, 2010-2015, Croatia**



Source: EU-SILC, Statistical annex to ESPN Synthesis Report (Frazer, H. and Marlier, E. (2017))

**Figure 2: Trends in number of people (whole population) at risk of poverty or social exclusion, thousands, 2010-2015, Croatia**



Source: EU-SILC, Statistical annex to ESPN Synthesis Report (Frazer, H. and Marlier, E. (2017))

The same research also showed that one of the biggest problems was the long-term risk of poverty, which is higher than the short-term risk. Only 25.3% of children were at risk of poverty in just one among four analysed years (2010-2013), whereas a child who was at risk of poverty in 2010 had a 74% chance of remaining at risk in 2011. This suggests that child poverty in Croatia tends to affect the same group of children year after year.

## 2 Assessment of overall approach and governance

In general terms, there has been very little change in the overall approach to governing Investment in Children since our 2014 report. The key strategic document is now the National Strategy for Child Rights 2014-2020,<sup>5</sup> alongside the Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2014-2020. The child rights strategy includes four strategic goals: strengthening services and systems for children; eliminating all forms of violence against children; securing the rights of vulnerable children; and securing the active participation of children.

The main ministry responsible for issues relating to children is the newly formed Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy. In addition, Croatia has a Children's Council (*vijeća za djecu*). A key institution is the Ombudsperson for Children (*pravobraniteljica za djecu*), which issues periodical reports based on cases regarding the infringement of children's rights. As noted in a recent Flash Report,<sup>6</sup> the Ombudsperson came under parliamentary criticism in 2016, largely as a result of disagreements over changes to the Family Law. In many ways, the recent resurgence of a conservative interpretation of 'defending the traditional family', combined with a narrow, at times nationalistic, focus on demographic renewal, pose the greatest threat to the governance of children's rights in Croatia.

In terms of evidence-based policies, an important development is the recent launch of indicators on child well-being, which was a key recommendation of the National Strategy and which involved collaboration between the Croatian government, the Children's Council and UNICEF. The indicators were prepared by a multi-disciplinary team led by Marina Ajduković, with external support from Jonathan Bradshaw.<sup>7</sup>

## 3 Pillar 1 – Access to resources

In terms of policies to support parent's participation in the labour market, nothing has significantly changed in the years since our earlier report in 2014.

Croatia has quite well developed leave schemes by which parents can be absent from work until the child turns 1, or even for two months longer if both parents take the leave, which is indeed very rare. After the period of obligatory maternity leave, either parent can take leave on a part-time basis, but the amount of part-time leave taken while the child is aged 6-12 months should not exceed the amount of part-time leave used in the first six months. Extended leave is allowed if the child has particular medical conditions. In the case of twins, other multiple births, and for the third and every subsequent child, parental leave lasts until the child turns 3 (15 months per parent, but fully transferrable between parents, usually to the mother). There is no paternity leave as such. Both maternity and parental leave are paid, provided certain conditions are met (relating to previous employment – i.e. insurance conditions). For both employed and self-employed people, maternity and parental benefits are equivalent to 100% of previous earnings, but with a ceiling of 80% of the budgetary base rate for the six months of parental leave

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<sup>5</sup> [https://vlada.gov.hr/UserDocsImages//ZPPI/Strategije%20-%20OGP/socijalna%20politika//NACIONALNA%20STRATEGIJA%20ZA%20PRAVA%20DJECE%20U%20RHZA%20ORAZDOBLJE%20D%202014.%20DO%202020.%20GODINE\[1\].pdf](https://vlada.gov.hr/UserDocsImages//ZPPI/Strategije%20-%20OGP/socijalna%20politika//NACIONALNA%20STRATEGIJA%20ZA%20PRAVA%20DJECE%20U%20RHZA%20ORAZDOBLJE%20D%202014.%20DO%202020.%20GODINE[1].pdf) (accessed 15 May 2017).

<sup>6</sup> Stubbs, P. (2016) Croatian Parliament Rejects Ombudsperson for Children's Report. ESPN Flash Report 2016/30, June.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.unicef.hr/vijest/hrvatska-uvodi-indikatore-djecie-dobrobiti/> (accessed 15 May 2017).

(2,660 HRK or EUR 354). This ceiling was often criticised as very inadequate, particularly for parents with higher earnings. Consequently, the government prepared a draft law, which was passed by the Croatian Parliament on 8 June 2017, raising this ceiling from 80% to 120% of the budgetary base rate (to 3,991.20 HRK or EUR 532). In case of twins, other multiple births, and for the third and every subsequent child (30 months of parental leave), the ceiling was raised to 70% of the budgetary base rate.<sup>8</sup>

Irrespective of these provisions, women are discriminated against in the labour market, particularly those with young children or who are expecting. Despite being against the law, women are often asked by employers in job interviews whether they plan to have children, and temporary contracts are often not renewed if a woman becomes pregnant. Croatian employment statistics have been improving in recent years, and the government now invests more in active labour market programmes (ALMPs), but the overall employment rate is still low, and in particular for women. The employment rate for men rose from 56.5% in 2013 to 60.1% in 2015, but for women it rose from a very low 48.5% to only 51.5% in the same period.<sup>9</sup>

Unemployment benefit is available in the case of unemployment, depending on previous employment history. Nonetheless, due to high unemployment only a very small share of the unemployed receive unemployment benefit – 16.9% in 2015, with an average benefit of 1,817 HRK (EUR 242).<sup>10</sup>

The ESPN thematic report on social investment in Croatia for 2015<sup>11</sup> described in detail the introduction of the guaranteed minimum income scheme in 2014, which replaced the previous social assistance benefit as well as two other benefits. The report noted that, under the new scheme, the total benefit was lower for households with two or more children. Nothing has subsequently changed in this respect, though it should be noted that the guaranteed minimum income covers only between 32% and 46% of the most basic needs of households receiving it.<sup>12</sup>

Child benefits and tax allowances are important sources of income for parents. Child benefits are important for families with low household disposable income: but the amount of child benefits is very low, as the amount was not adjusted for inflation for more than 10 years. This represents an effective loss of benefit between 2007 and 2017 of around 17%. Had child benefit been indexed in a similar way to pensions, namely using a formula combining increases in wages and prices, child benefits would be around 20% higher than they are currently. Monthly benefits are dependent on household income, and vary from HRK 199.56 (EUR 26) up to HRK 543.14 (EUR 71). In December 2016, child benefits were received in respect of only 321,785 children.<sup>13</sup> The current system of tax allowances favours those on higher incomes. The new tax system introduced on 1 January 2017 ignored expert suggestions for introducing different tax credits for families of different size and income, which would result in higher benefits for poorer families and lower benefits for richer families.<sup>14</sup> The government has plans for a comprehensive Demographic Programme that would introduce changes in child benefits and tax allowances; but details are not yet available. It is possible that some form of universal child benefits will be introduced to replace the existing targeted child benefits and tax allowances. This has been touted as a measure to promote demographic renewal

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<sup>8</sup> Web: <https://esavjetovanja.gov.hr/ECon/MainScreen?entityId=5050> (accessed 5 May 2017).

<sup>9</sup> Croatian Bureau of Statistics (2016) Statistical Reports. Labour Force Survey Results Croatia 2015 – Europe 2015. Available at: <http://www.dzs.hr/> (accessed 8 May 2017).

<sup>10</sup> Croatian Institute for Employment (2016) Yearbook 2015. Available at: [http://www.hzz.hr/UserDocsImages/HZZ\\_Godisnjak\\_2015.pdf](http://www.hzz.hr/UserDocsImages/HZZ_Godisnjak_2015.pdf) (accessed 8 May 2017).

<sup>11</sup> Stubbs, P. and Zrinščak, S. (2015) ESPN Thematic Report on Social Investment – Croatia. Web: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/keyDocuments.jsp?advSearchKey=ESPNSocInv&mode=advancedSubmit&langId=en&search.x=15&search.y=8> (accessed 15 May 2017).

<sup>12</sup> Stubbs, P. and Zrinščak, S. (2015) ESPN Thematic Report on minimum income schemes – Croatia.

<sup>13</sup> See also Stubbs, P., Vukorepa, I. and Zrinščak, S. (2017) ESPN Country Profile 2016-2017.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

rather than to reduce the risk of child poverty. In addition, the city of Zagreb has introduced a form of payment for mothers who stay at home to look after their children, again touted as a measure for demographic renewal and, of course, limiting the possibility of participating in the formal labour market.

#### **4 Pillar 2 – Access to affordable quality services**

Croatia has significant problems in relation to access to affordable quality services, and nothing has substantially changed in this regard since our 2014 report.

In relation to early child education and care (ECEC) there has been slow progress, but Croatia is still among those countries with the lowest rate of participation of children in ECEC.<sup>15</sup> An analysis for 2014, based on national data, suggests that only 19.4% of children aged 0-3, and 56.1% of those aged 3-6, were enrolled in kindergartens.<sup>16</sup> Recent Eurostat data show that the percentage of children in Croatia under 3 cared for by formal arrangements other than by the family was only 11.0% in 2013 and 11.8% in 2015, compared with EU-28 figures of 28.0% and 30.3%.<sup>17</sup> For children aged 4 the participation rate in formal ECEC was 59.6% in 2015.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to the low participation rate, other problems include: very significant regional differences; shortage of staff (including professional specialists, such as psychologists or speech therapists); inflexible working hours not consistent with the working hours of parents; and high costs for parents, which vary from 7% of net average salary per child in Zagreb to 15.8% in Krapina-Zagorje county.<sup>19</sup> As kindergartens are the responsibility of local authorities, there is no national policy that would address these problems, particularly regional differences. The ECEC participation rate is extremely low in less developed and poorer counties, which are at the same time counties with very low female employment rates. Current enrolment policies favour employed parents, which means that those who are unemployed or seeking work are in a disadvantaged position, which is also reflected in employment possibilities. Without adopting the national plan with clear and measurable indicators, and with support from the national level, nothing will change in the future. At the moment, it is unclear whether the draft Demographic Programme on which the government is currently working will bring any substantial change in this respect.

Schools rarely provide after-school activities, which is an important issue for young children whose parents work.

In terms of other services, there is a significant shortage of services aimed at strengthening parental skills. Regional differences are noted here as well, which is critical because of the higher share of poor people and children found in less developed regions. Existing programmes are mostly short term, provided by non-government organisations (NGOs), and thus based on insecure financing. The same applies to programmes for parents with children with disabilities, children with behavioural problems and Roma children.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Matković, T. (2016) Unpublished analysis. It should be noted here that national data and those presented on the Eurostat webpage are not fully consistent.

<sup>17</sup> Eurostat data:

[http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tepsr\\_sp210&plugin=1](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tepsr_sp210&plugin=1) (accessed 8 May 2017).

<sup>18</sup> Eurostat data: [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=educ\\_uoe\\_enra19&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=educ_uoe_enra19&lang=en) (accessed 8 May 2017).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

In terms of housing, the percentage of children living in overcrowded households in 2015 in Croatia was 53.8%, compared with 23% in the EU-28.<sup>20</sup> This may be as a result of the fact that, although there is high owner-occupation in Croatia, even middle-class families tend not to be able to afford adequate housing and find it hard to upscale when children are born. In a recent survey of households receiving the guaranteed minimum income (social assistance), two-thirds of those surveyed had faced problems in paying heating bills for three or more months in the previous year, and one-quarter had faced a disconnection of one service or other. Over 30% reported that they could not afford a room for their children to study and over 50% could not afford a computer. Children from poor households also seemed particularly disadvantaged in relation to school trips.<sup>21</sup>

## 5 Pillar 3 – Children’s right to participate

There has been some improvement in children’s right to participate since our report in 2015.

A recently published UNICEF study<sup>22</sup> suggests that, although children’s rights to participate are well developed in Croatian laws and strategic documents, this is not a cause for complacency. Indeed, the sheer volume of legislation and documents relating to children leads to an over-legalistic approach, and a gap between what is enshrined in law and the reality in practice. Crucially, strategic commitments to participation are not always carefully monitored and evaluated, and any failure to implement commitments goes, more or less, unsanctioned. There is also a lack of materials relating to children’s rights, including the rights of disadvantaged children, that are written in child-friendly language and accessible to the majority of the child population.

Although the UNICEF report does not focus specifically on the areas of play, recreation, sport and culture, we can again say that although children formally have a strong right to participate, this is not always realised in practice. A UNICEF survey from 2014 suggests that children would like to be more included in decision-making regarding sports playgrounds and the reconstruction of parks and recreational facilities.<sup>23</sup> There are examples of good practice at the level of individual cities, where children have been included in decision-making regarding play facilities. Opatija, for example, has a children’s council and a children’s mayor.<sup>24</sup>

In terms of overall governance, a key mechanism is the network of young advisors to the children’s ombudsperson, a standing advisory group of 20 young people aged 12-17. Selection is based on an open application process, and made by the existing council members and a team of professionals. There are specific challenges mitigating against the participation of specific groups of children in Croatia. Roma children face difficulties in terms of systematic disadvantage and discrimination, with the result that they are under-represented at higher levels of the education system. Children who have been in institutional care receive too little support in order to integrate into the wider community on leaving care. Children with developmental difficulties and children with serious and/or

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<sup>20</sup>

Source:

<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=tessi177&language=en> (accessed 15 May 2017).

<sup>21</sup> Stubbs, P. et al. (2017) Child Poverty and Household Coping Strategies in Croatia. Zagreb: EIZG, forthcoming.

<sup>22</sup> UNICEF (2017) 'Postujmo, uključimo, uvažimo – analiza stanja dječje participacije u Hrvatskoj' (Respect, include, recognise – an analysis of the state of child participation in Croatia' (in Croatian only), web: <http://www.unicef.hr/publikacije/> (accessed 15 May 2017).

<sup>23</sup> IPSOS-Puls survey (2014) web: <http://www.unicef.hr/en/convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child/> (accessed 15 May 2017).

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.dnd-opatija.hr/en/children-s-participation/children-s-city-council> (accessed 15 May 2017).

chronic health issues are also not sufficiently consulted on matters of importance regarding their lives and treatment options.

Croatia has special juvenile courts, juvenile divisions and family departments, which are meant to facilitate a child's right to be heard in civil and criminal proceedings. There is something of a gap between this broad right, however, and practice on the ground, although improvements have occurred in recent years.<sup>25</sup>

The UNICEF report recommends more training and awareness-raising for stakeholders regarding the meaning of child participation; improved co-ordination of laws, strategies and relevant bodies; readily available child-friendly information on child participation; more action research involving children on their well-being; in-service training on child participation for relevant professions; and a focus on the participation of children from disadvantaged groups.

## **6 Addressing child poverty and social exclusion and child well-being in the European Semester**

There has been very little emphasis on child well-being, poverty and exclusion within the European semester in Croatia. There was no mention of issues relating to children in the five country-specific recommendations (CSRs) from July 2016,<sup>26</sup> nor in the six CSRs from May 2015.<sup>27</sup> Given the themes discussed in the Croatia Country Report of 2017,<sup>28</sup> it seems extremely unlikely that issues relating to children will feature in this year's CSRs.

Croatia's 2016 National Reform Programme (NRP)<sup>29</sup> contains very few references to children. Indeed, some proposed measures, including tightening the asset and means tests in relation to child benefits, would have, if implemented, actually led to fewer beneficiaries. Apart from noting increases in benefits to single-parent households, the introduction of IT systems, and vague references to strengthening professional social work, there appears to be a lack of concrete proposals to reduce child poverty and exclusion. Croatia's second National Social Report,<sup>30</sup> completed in June 2015, despite having a section devoted to 'Investment in Children', fared little better, with few specific measures outside of those covered in the National Strategy for Children 2014-2020. Although a separate section covered access to pre-school education, the commitments made there were rather vague. Almost nothing relating to vulnerable children was discussed in any of Croatia's European Semester documents (such as Roma children, other minority children, children with disabilities, children in institutional care, or children in conflict with the law).

## **7 Mobilising relevant EU financial instruments**

Although much more detailed research would need to be undertaken, Croatia arguably still has a relatively low absorption capacity in relation to EU financial instruments, and projects relating to recommendations linked to Investing in Children are not particularly prioritised (other than indirectly, through those programmes targeting female employment and ALMPs for disadvantaged groups).

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<sup>25</sup> Croatian Law Centre (2012) Child Participation in Justice Report, and European Commission (2013) Study on Child Involvement in Judicial Proceedings.

<sup>26</sup> European Commission (2016) Council Recommendation, June, COM(2016) 331, web: [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2016/csr2016\\_croatia\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2016/csr2016_croatia_en.pdf) (accessed 15 May 2017).

<sup>27</sup> European Commission (2015) Council Recommendation, July (2015/C 272/15), web: [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/csr2015\\_council\\_croatia\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/csr2015_council_croatia_en.pdf) (accessed 15 May 2017).

<sup>28</sup> European Commission (2017) Country Report – Croatia, web: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/2017-european-semester-country-report-croatia\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/2017-european-semester-country-report-croatia_en) (accessed 15 May 2017).

<sup>29</sup> Republic of Croatia (2016) National Reform Programme, April, web: [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2016/nrp2016\\_croatia\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2016/nrp2016_croatia_en.pdf) (accessed 15 May 2017).

<sup>30</sup> Republic of Croatia, Ministry of Social Policy and Youth (2015) National Social Report, June.

In the NRP for 2016, specific projects were mentioned that have a link to child well-being. Some of these relate to humanitarian aid to the most deprived rather than being sustainable investments. In addition, it is clear that child poverty and exclusion are not priorities in terms of the European Social Fund or the European Regional Development Fund for Croatia, with the exception of a focus on the educational opportunities of disadvantaged children and the move from institutional to community-based care. Although the NRP makes some reference to poverty alleviation, the focus tends to be on large-scale infrastructure programmes and on reforms meant to reduce Croatia’s budget deficit.

As can be seen from Table A.1 in the Annex, Croatia’s capacity to absorb EU funds, with the exception of funds for self-employment and tertiary education, is extremely low, with funds actually spent only in those two areas. This suggests that there is a general problem with the absorption of EU funds in Croatia rather than a specific problem with funds that focus on children. At the same time, we can note that there has been less absorption of funds for social inclusion compared with employment; and that there has been little absorption, or no funds released, in areas that are crucial to investment in children, notably investment priorities 9-I, 9-iii, 9-iv and 9-vi.

Although not mentioned in European Semester Reports, a recently commenced EU Twinning project ‘Strengthening institutional capacity in the social welfare system to improve social welfare targeting and reduce poverty’ (CRO REDPOV) – scheduled to last 18 months at a total cost of EUR 1.1m – does address issues around child poverty directly. The project document does not provide a clear account of the value added of the project, not least as many activities appear to be related to social welfare information and management systems, and to developing indicators that have been the focus of many other projects. Hence, the risk of duplication and even confusion is quite high. There appear to be some activities related to direct interventions, although these are described rather vaguely as involving ‘increasing cultural capital’.

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**Annex 1: Summary Table – Progress since February 2013**

Policy area or approach	Overall have policies/ approaches been strengthened, stayed much the same or been weakened since February 2013 (in the light of the EU Recommendation)?		
	Stronger	Little Change	Weaker
<b>Governance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-dimensional strategy with synergies between policies</li> <li>Children's rights approach &amp; effective mainstreaming of children's policy and rights</li> <li>Evidence-based approach</li> <li>Involvement of relevant stakeholders (including children)</li> </ul>	X	X X X	
<b>Access to resources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents' participation in the labour market</li> <li>Child &amp; family income support</li> </ul>		X X	
<b>Access to services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ECEC</li> <li>Education</li> <li>Health</li> <li>Housing &amp; living environment</li> <li>Family support &amp; alternative care</li> </ul>		X X X X	
<b>Children's right to participate</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in play, recreation, sport &amp; cultural activities</li> <li>in decision making</li> </ul>	X X		
<b>Addressing child poverty and social exclusion in the European Semester</b>		X	
<b>Mobilising relevant EU financial instruments</b>		X	

## Annex 2

**Table A.1 – Funds allocated, committed and declared expenditure regarding thematic objectives 8, 9 and 10 and respective investment priorities, Croatia**

	Total amount of EU money in the programme budget for 2014-2020 €m.	Total Committed-Absorbed €m.	%	Total Spent €m.	%
<b>TO8 – Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility</b>					
<b>8i Access to employment for job-seekers and inactive people, including the long-term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility</b>	250.01	37.81	15.12%	0	0
<b>8ii – Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people, in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee</b>	201.01	105.23	52.35%	10.48	5.21%
<b>8vii – Modernisation of labour market institutions, such as public and private employment services, and improving the matching of labour market needs, including through actions that enhance transnational labour mobility as well as through mobility schemes and better cooperation between institutions and relevant stakeholders</b>	81.84	1.61	1.97%	0	0
<b>TO9 – Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination</b>					
<b>9i – Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability</b>	116.00	10.27	8.85%	0	0
<b>9iv – Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality services, including healthcare and social services of general</b>	180.00	3.40	1.89%	0	0

<b>interest</b>					
<b>TO10 – Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and life-long learning</b>					
<b>10ii – Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups</b>	205.00	45.86	22.37%	6.18	3.01%
<b>10iii – Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences</b>	160.00	1.29	0.81	0	0
<b>Grand total Sum (including TO11+TA)</b>	1,582.21	260.85	16.49%	18.66	1.18%

