

Haushaltsentwurf: EU darf die Kinder nicht vergessen - Kampf gegen Kinderarmut muss Vorrang haben

Brussels, 3 May 2017. We need an EU budget that invests in every last child: Save the Children statement on the proposed EU Budget

Children around the world and in Europe are being left behind. Time and again, we hear our leaders talk about the 'crises' Europe is facing in the form of migration, security and Brexit. However, the crises children face across the world are very different - poverty, social exclusion and inequality.

Investment in children makes sense

Children are the future of Europe; they deserve an EU budget that delivers a brighter present and future for them. Long-term investment in children, their rights, and sustainable development is critical. We know that the earlier we invest in the upcoming generation, the better returns we get on our investment in the form of social inclusion, societal cohesion and economic growth. If we target the EU budget to support children in vulnerable situations, we will create more stable, secure, fair, and prosperous societies where human rights are respected, in and outside Europe.

The Commission rightly recognises that investing in youth is an investment in the future, and the Commission's plan to double the Erasmus + and to make it more inclusive is a welcome step. Yet Save the Children regrets the failure to mention the importance of investing in children anywhere in the proposal.

Delivering for children in Europe

We see that the EU is proposing to stretch the new European Social Fund+ to invest in new jobs, skills and education, social inclusion and poverty reduction, as well as in migrants' integration in the labour market and health. We need to ensure that there are adequate resources matching all these objectives.

Furthermore, the ESF+ should earmark ambitious resources for social inclusion and poverty reduction to invested in social protection, education, health, not just job creation. Child poverty remains at alarming levels across the EU, with more than 25 million children experiencing poverty or social exclusion, **the EU budget should firmly commit to tackling child poverty as a priority.**

Migration spending should lead to more, not less protection of children

With the children in migration communication, the European Commission made genuine effort to pay heed to the needs of children in migration. This should be translated into budgetary commitments. Children crossing borders still face many dangers, both within and outside of Europe. Focussing only on strengthening and militarising the EU's borders will not meaningfully address migration in the long-run. By sharing responsibilities within the EU and working together on an equitable basis with third countries, we can find sustainable ways to address migration. Robust reception and education systems can prevent migrant and refugee children in the EU from going

missing and facilitate their integration. Externally, the EU should prioritise children in the most vulnerable situations; those fleeing abject poverty, wars and persecution.

Delivering for children in developing countries

Save the Children warmly welcomes a continued separate humanitarian aid fund with an approximately extra 2.8 Billion Euro to meet the needs arising from growing emergency and conflict situations we are facing in the world today. It will be critical that such aid continues to go to those who are suffering most, including children, in line with international humanitarian principles.

EU citizens are proud of the EU's reputation as a leading, principled development aid donor. We are therefore deeply concerned by the merging of many of the tried and tested external instruments into a proposal for a single fund – Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument - with competing objectives. We acknowledge the robust investment in this instrument with a total 89.5 Billion Euro, yet it remains to be seen how much of this will go to development aid. We hope that with this budget the European Commission will not fall victim to a preoccupation with short-term foreign policy and other interests (stemming migration), endangering its reputation and the life-saving work achieved by current development spending.

Efficient, flexible funding for the next generation

The EU needs to ensure efficiency doesn't come at the cost of children's lives. We continue to call for a committed sustainable development fund, based on the Sustainable Development Goals, with priority given to the Least Developed Countries and to human development sectors that impact children such as health, education and social protection.

'We would like to see the EU be more ambitious for children in Europe with priority given to combatting child poverty. We need a dedicated sustainable development instrument, ringfencing health, education and protection, to ensure precious EU aid money goes towards strengthening those basic services that every last child needs to survive, thrive and learn' – Ester Asin, Director of the Save the Children International's EU Advocacy Office.

As the process now moves towards negotiations of this first proposal with Member States and Members of the European Parliament, Save the Children calls on these actors to move away from short-term thinking and invest in a budget that truly delivers for the future.

Notes to the Editor:

You can find a link to the Commission's proposal here: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/communication-modern-budget-may_2018_en.pdf

Link to our statement: <https://www.savethechildren.net/article/we-need-eu-budget-invests-every-last-child-save-children-statement-proposed-eu-budget>

About Save the Children: Save the Children is the leading children rights organisation, we are present in 120 countries across the globe to ensure that every last child survives, thrives and learns.

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Über Save the Children

Save the Children ist als größte unabhängige Kinderrechtsorganisation der Welt in mehr als 120 Ländern tätig. Die Schwerpunkte liegen in den Bereichen Schule und Bildung, Schutz vor Ausbeutung und Gewalt sowie Überleben und Gesundheit – auch in Katastrophensituationen. Save the Children setzt sich ein für eine Welt, die die Rechte der Kinder achtet. Eine Welt, in der alle Kinder gesund und sicher leben und frei und selbstbestimmt aufwachsen können.