

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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Social policies' ultimate goal is to reach a fairer and more cohesive society while fostering individual wellbeing. To this end, it is crucial not to reduce their support in difficult times, but to introduce and develop new initiatives, as needed.

Families –infants in particular– continue to face major challenges: as we enter the post-Covid era, new threats are looming. The General State Budget, and its wide array of initiatives, emerges as the rock on which our families, children and adolescents can rely and support their own plans, through measures which are, in effect, investments in our shared future.

The 2020-2021 biennium cornerstone policy was to lessen the economic and social crisis posed by the Covid-19 pandemics, achieved through a "Social Shield". The strategy has now shifted to implementing the Recovery and Resilience Plan, as well as furthering new initiatives, such as Spain's Child Guarantee National Action Plan, within EU's framework, and the Child and Adolescent State Council.

The Recovery and Resilience Plan seeks bettering Spain's economic and social framework by investing in strategic sectors. The Plan adds new initiatives for Families and Children to ancillary social policies. Among them education and training in digital competences, education targeting vulnerable groups or with special needs, and reinforcement of connectivity and cybersecurity in SMEs.

In addition, Spain's Action Plan for implementing Europe's Child Guarantee was enacted of July 5th, 2022. This Plan will be the main tool to implement that Guarantee, based on a Council of the EU initiative to break poverty in childhood vicious circle. The Plan is set to entitle all EU children, in particular those at risk of poverty and exclusion, access to six basic goods: education and childcare, education and extracurricular activities, at least a healthy meal on schooldays, healthcare, decent housing and healthy food. No less than 5 percent of the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) transfers received by Spain will be spent in this Plan.

The Child and Adolescent State Council held its first meeting on May 14th, 2022. This Council opens new ways to enable active participation of Children and Adolescents in policies affecting them, while giving them intellectual and social skills. Public policies can also integrate in their formulation processes views and opinions from these age groups.

Chapter III (diagnostic) illustrates how, in spite of progress made on issues such as education, healthcare, safety or justice, a good number of families are hampered to benefit from opportunities opened to the population-at-large. Children and adolescents raised in such environments will require specific support not to lag behind in their development as a full citizen.

Another worrying trend, reflected in social media, is the increase in peer violence and intimidation, particularly in schools. This violence has very negative impact on health, rights and opportunities of involved children and adolescents. Social networks add to the difficulties by introducing new and additional risks. Current strategies for emotional and sex education of adolescents are not capable of coping with current threats, resulting in an increase in gender violence cases among youth and biased views as to what is "normal" in a relationship.

Violence against children and adolescents is a perennial curse, which started a downward trend in 2012, broken in 2016. Child violence persists within family settings, including children who become victims themselves of gender violence among adults.

Significant progress has been made in a number of issues, such as the reduction of households without any income or the downward trend of penal rulings on minors as reflected in the report. However, improvement remains necessary in many other issues. It is then with high hopes that the strategies, initiatives and resources set forth by Government and reflected in this report, will demonstrate to be fit-for-purpose. It is expected that these policies will assist our Families, Children and Adolescents in coping with their needs, in particular for those, more vulnerable, population groups.

This version of the report improves on its analytic approach by differentiating whether program impact is direct or indirect in its target population. It also expands its coverage by adding a significant number of budgetary programs into the analysis.

Transparency and access to this Report's results are enhanced through an interactive web, specifically designed for this purpose, in addition to the customary paper-based presentation of the report itself.