



**HELLENIC REPUBLIC**  
Ministry of Social Cohesion  
and Family Affairs



# **1<sup>st</sup> BIENNIAL PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN CHILD GUARANTEE**



**SEPTEMBER 2024**

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## FOREWORD

The Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/1004 establishing the European Child Guarantee was adopted on 14 June 2021 as part of the Action Plan of the European Pillar of Social Rights<sup>1</sup>. Subsequently, the National Action Plan (NAP) for the Child Guarantee regarding Greece was drafted and submitted to the European Commission in September 2022, with the aim of ensuring access to key services for children at risk of poverty or social exclusion. According to point (f) “Reporting to the Commission”, of par. 11 “GOVERNANCE AND REPORTING”, of the Recommendation, Member States are required to report every two years to the Commission on the progress in implementing the Recommendation, in line with their National Action Plan referred to in point (c).

The drafting of this progress report is based on the European Commission document “Note on the content and format of the first round of the biennial reports on implementation of the European Child Guarantee (ECG)”. In particular, regarding the methodology of developing the Report, the following steps were followed:

- 1<sup>st</sup> stage: Dispatching two standard files to the liaisons of the relevant ministries for completion. Specifically: (a) a text file to answer open questions about each Ministry's approach (e.g. legislative, budgetary) regarding the actions for the Child Guarantee by service sector: early childhood education and care, education and extracurricular activities, health care, nutrition and housing (b) an excel sheet file to complete the requested data for each NAP action.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> stage: Holding bilateral meetings with the representatives of the Ministries involved.

On the basis of the proposed thematic sections, according to the European Commission document, the 1<sup>st</sup> progress report is structured in seven (7) sections. Section 1 provides general information on the Child Guarantee and its implementation in the country. Section 2 presents the evolution of the number of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) including its components, as well as the identified target groups that have been reached. Section 3 reports on the progress of policy measures by service sector, while Section 4 describes the indicators, targets and their monitoring. Section 5 reports on the European funds spent so far on the implementation of the Child Guarantee, while Sections 6 & 7 report on the findings and conclusions, respectively.

## 1. CONTEXT

### 1.1. Overall national approach

The NAP for the Child Guarantee includes the current policy measures on access to basic services (early childhood education and care, education and extracurricular activities, health, mental health, nutrition and housing), the planned policy measures to improve access to the aforementioned services and the supporting policy framework.

The National Centre for Social Solidarity (E.K.K.A.), which has been appointed as the National Coordinator for Child Guarantee in Greece, is the main body for coordinating the actions of all competent authorities, services and actors at national, regional and local level. The National Coordinator is responsible for the coordination of the actions, policies and services of all the aforementioned bodies related to the Recommendation, as well as for the collection of the necessary data for the monitoring and evaluation of the progress of its implementation.

From the overall national approach, for the period 2021 to date, there is a reduction in the poverty rate. It is important to point out that the socio-economic situation of each child's immediate family environment feeds

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<sup>1</sup> <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/empl/european-pillar-of-social-rights/en/>

or does not feed into the risk factors that may lead to poverty or social exclusion.

Based on the data of the Household Income and Living Conditions Survey for the year 2023, the population at risk of poverty or social exclusion amounts to 26.1% of the country's population (2,658,400 persons), a decrease of 0.2 percentage points (26.3%) compared to 2022 and a decrease of 2.2 percentage points (28.3%) compared to 2021. The decrease in the at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate (an indicator composed of the sub-indicators of at-risk-of-poverty, material and social deprivation and low labour intensity) is due to a decrease in the proportion of the population with low labour intensity (12.1% in 2021, 9.5% in 2022, 8.3% in 2023). The risk is higher for children under 18 years old, amounting to 28.1%<sup>2</sup>, but registering a decrease of 3.9% compared to 2021 (32%)<sup>3</sup>.

The Centre of Planning and Economic Research's (KEPE) indicator on multidimensional child poverty presents a decrease of 0.4% from school year 2021–2022 to school year 2022–2023<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, the variations in poverty and social exclusion rates per year and per region are large, as for 2023, indicatively Crete has the lowest rate (18.5%) and the Peloponnese the highest (35.7%), while for 2021 Attica has the lowest rate (12.9%) and East Macedonia-Thrace the highest (29.0%)<sup>5</sup>. These findings point to the need for systematic recording of poverty and social exclusion at local level, through common, standardized indicators and tools.

## 1.2. Ongoing or planned budgetary or legislative reforms

This section lists budget changes (ongoing or planned) and legislative reforms that contribute directly or indirectly to combat child poverty and social exclusion.

### 1.2.1. Measures for families' financial support, tax arrangements & access to goods

The fiscal reforms that have taken place during the period under study are as follows:

- The birth allowance was increased for each child born, depending on the number of dependent children in the family (as determined after the birth of the child). The legislation also includes the payment of the increased allowance retroactively for each child born from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.  
2,400 euros for families with one (1) dependent child  
2,700 euros for families with two (2) dependent children  
3,000 euros for families with three (3) dependent children  
3,500 euros for families with four (4) or more dependent children
- For access to nurseries and kindergartens the amount for the years 2024-2025 is 244,700,000 euros (51,500,000 euros, regular budget and 193,200,000 euros, co-financed part of the PIP). From the Ministry of Social Cohesion and the Family (MOSCF) the program is funded with 1,500,000 euros more, compared to the amount for the years 2023-2024. In addition, for access to Creative Activity Centres (CACs) and Creative Activity Centres for People with Disabilities (CACs for People with Disabilities), the amount for the year 2024 is 116,500,000 euros (18,500,000 euros, regular budget and 98,000,000 euros, ROPs-PIP).
- At the same time, with Law 5045/2023, favourable tax and financial regulations were introduced due to dependent children and with Law 5072/2023, regulations were introduced to improve the out-of-court mechanism and the restructuring of the debt of vulnerable debtors.

<sup>2</sup> Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT) -Household Income and Living Conditions Survey (SILC), year 2023, (with reference period of income in 2022).  
<https://www.statistics.gr/documents/20181/20cac507-3a56-a584-effd-8ac6acfec409>

<sup>3</sup> Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT) Household Income and Living Conditions Survey (SILC), year 2021, with income reference period 2020, [A0802\\_SFA10\\_DT\\_AN\\_00\\_2021\\_01\\_F\\_EL \(statistics.gr\)](https://www.statistics.gr/documents/20181/20cac507-3a56-a584-effd-8ac6acfec409)

<sup>4</sup> See. Section 4

<sup>5</sup> Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT) - Survey of Income and Living Conditions of Households (SILC), year 2023, (with income reference period 2022).  
<https://www.statistics.gr/documents/20181/20cac507-3a56-a584-effd-8ac6acfec409>

### *1.2.2. Housing*

Regarding housing policy, a package of measures with a total budget of € 2.2 billion is being implemented through programs already in place such as "My House" and "Coverage", "Housing and Work", "Renovate Rent" and new ones expected to be launched such as "Social Compensation" (Law 5006/2022). In 2024, the budget for the housing allowance has been increased by 4 million euros.

As far as the "Housing and Work for the Homeless" program is concerned, there is an increase in the available budget from €10 to €15 million, aiming on the one hand to include more households in the program, as well as to include persons/households living in precarious housing conditions, and on the other hand to enhance its services. In addition, with Law 5072/2023, an interim program was established to protect the first home of vulnerable debtors in case of auction (see section 3).

### *1.2.3. Fostering - Adoption*

A series of legislative initiatives, i.e. amendments to Law 4538/2018, took place in an effort to complement and continuously improve the existing legislative framework (Laws 4604/2019, 4611/2019, 4704/2020, 4764/2020, 4808/2021, 4837/2021, 4865/2021 and 4997/2022). The most typical amendments to which these provisions refer are listed below:

- With Article 26, of Law 4837/2021 (A 178), the age limits for foster parents were modified, so that now foster parents can be those who have reached the age of 25 and have not exceeded 75 years.
- With par. 1, of Article 43, of Law 4865/2021 (A 238), persons suffering from either HIV infection and undergoing antiretroviral treatment successfully, in which case the viral load is undetectable and under additional conditions, or from Hepatitis B and have successfully received the prescribed drug treatment, making the viral load undetectable and provided that they continue their treatment without fail, may apply for adoption or foster care of a minor.
- Article 58, of Law 4997/2022 (A 219) amended Article 16, of Law 4538/2018, setting the provisions for the implementation of the professional fostering of minors with physical or mental disabilities, including intellectual and developmental disabilities, who are registered in the National Register of Minors. Also, the method of establishing professional foster care was amended so that a court order is not required for the placement of minors with a professional foster carer, but the foster children are placed by the conclusion of a contract between the body protecting the minor and the professional foster carer.

The following two Joint Ministerial Decisions (JMD) are scheduled to be amended in the near future:

- on professional fostering (Articles 10, 11, 8 and 14)
- for the granting of financial support for fostering (the amounts will be increased for children of typical as well as non-typical development)

For each year of the three-year period 2022 - 2023 - 2024, an appropriation of €3,000,000 has been provided for the financial support of fostering and when it is not sufficient, given that the number of active foster children is dynamic and has an increasing trend, it is reinforced.

In addition, in the year 2023, the JMD was issued which sets out all the qualifications, requirements and all other details for the remuneration of instructors of training programs conducted for prospective foster carers, professional foster carers and foster parents, as well as for private social workers of the Hellenic Association of Social Workers, which has strengthened the incentives for the regular planning and conduct of such training programs by the Regional Social Welfare Centres, the Regions and the Municipal Nurseries.

Finally, the recent adoption of Law 5107/2024, includes a number of provisions that aim to:

(a) the substantial upgrading of the "Housing and Work for the Homeless" program; (b) the expansion of the funding program for the creation of new infant care departments; (c) the coverage of the needs of the beneficiaries of the Child Care Center for Boys Papafio Thessalonikis (Law 4109/2013) and the Child

Protection Branches of the Social Welfare Centres, who lack a protective family environment and live in the aforementioned institutions, to provide equal opportunities for the development of their personality and social skills and to support their efforts towards self-determination and social integration, (d) the establishment of a youth empowerment program entitled "National Youth Capital", (e) facilitating the conduct of a social investigation for the approval of applications for fostering, adoption of interested foster or adoptive parents, as well as in any other case where custody of a minor is assigned to a third party, (f) the improvement of the provision of social welfare and child protection services, as well as the transparency and efficiency in the functioning of the bodies active in these areas, with a view to enhancing the protection of beneficiaries. This law completes the administrative, organizational and functional structure and constitution of the MOSCF and the achievement of its objectives and policies concerning the whole of society and especially the most vulnerable groups, such as children, the elderly, people with disabilities, the chronically ill and victims of gender violence.

#### *1.2.4. A healthy meal every school day*

The School Meals Program, implemented by the MOSCF, was extended to 20 more municipalities while increasing the number of meals available to ensure that more students receive school meals every day (see section 3.3). For the school year 2023-2024 the total budget amounts to €102,000,000, while for the school year 2021-2022 the total budget amounted to €92,000,000.

#### *1.2.5. Healthy nutrition*

The draft of a new draft KYA setting out the necessary additional measures for the implementation of the European School Program regarding fruit, vegetable and milk distribution, for the period 2023-2026 has been completed and is being circulated for signature. In application of the Regulations (EU) No. 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 347 of 20-12-2013, p. 671), (EU) No. 2017/39 of the Commission (OJ L 5 of 10-01-2017 p. 1) and (EU) No. 2017/40 of the Commission (OJ L 5 of 10-01-2017, p. 11), European School Program regarding fruit, vegetable and milk distribution is being implemented in the Primary Education Units throughout the country. The Program is designed and implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development and Food in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports, the Payment and Control Agency for Guidance and Guarantee Community Aid and the Ministry of the Interior via the Directorates of Rural Economy and Veterinary of the Regional Units of the country (see Section 3.5).

#### *1.2.6. Protection of unaccompanied children*

In accordance with the provisions of Decree 77/2023, the responsibilities and services of the Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors are transferred to the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Citizens and Institutional Protection of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum (MoMA). Consequently, the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Citizens and Institutional Protection shall, in principle, retain the competences and services of the Special Secretariat. In particular, it is responsible for institutional protection, guardianship, housing, social integration, quality service delivery and generally ensuring the welfare and protection of unaccompanied minors. At the same time, the General Secretariat, under Article 66 of Law 4939/2022, as added by Article 39 of Law 4960/2022, has the competence of the National Emergency Response Mechanism.

By JMD 187634/2023 the Standard Rules for the Operation and Licensing of Accommodation Centres for Unaccompanied Minors (ACUMs) and by the Ministerial Decision (MD) 138529/2023 the Standard Rules for the Operation of Supervised Semi-Autonomous Living Apartments (SSAs) were established.

In January 2024, the National Guardianship System for Unaccompanied Minors (JMD 24578/2024) was launched. The guardianship of unaccompanied minors is an initiative that aims to protect minors and



safeguard their interests and rights when they are not accompanied by a person exercising parental care or custody according to Greek law.

### *1.2.7. Work- Life Balance*

A series of legislative measures (Law 4997/2003 and Law 4808/2021) have regulated the extension and the introduction of new leaves, such as maternity leave, childcare leave and parental leave, as well as the provision of financial support. In addition, the parental leave allowance, provided by the Public Employment Service, helps to reduce the financial burden on parents and facilitate their professional progress. The issuance of the JMD 28843/2024 (2293b/18-4-2024), which concerns the special maternity protection benefit for self-employed, and farmers (Art. 151 of Law 5078/2023) is noteworthy. Finally, important steps have been taken to reconcile work and family life (see section. 3.3).

### *1.3. Institutional framework for the implementation of the European Children's Guarantee*

The National Centre for Social Solidarity (E.K.K.A.), which remains as the National Coordinator of the Child Guarantee, as established by article 53 of Law 4837/2021,<sup>6</sup> is a Legal Entity under Public Law supervised from July 2023 by the newly established Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family (MOSCF). The MOSCF was established in July 2023 and has in its portfolio competences related to child protection and the family, persons with disabilities, homelessness, the fight against poverty, social inclusion and poverty reduction, Roma issues, equality and human rights issues, etc., so the National Coordinator designs and implements most of the measures/actions included in the NAP and has to be monitored by the National Coordinator.

The staff of E.K.K.A.'s competent unit is the human potential of the National Coordinator. The financial resources for the operation of the Office of the National Coordinator come from the regular budget of the E.K.K.A. only.

However, recognizing the obligations to which the National Coordinator must respond in terms of monitoring the implementation of the Recommendation and therefore, in terms of implementing the National Action Plan, the institutional strengthening of the E.K.K.A. has been envisaged, with the reinforcement of the E.K.K.A. with specialized scientific and experienced administrative staff. These staff will be involved in the extraction of the relevant indicators and other statistical analyses, through the functions and tools of the Information System for the Guarantee for Children, providing the necessary documentation and data which, when evaluated, can lead to the improvement of the services provided. This support will be achieved via a relevant project already included in the ESF Operational Program "Human Resources and Social Cohesion".

### *1.4. Existing or planned evaluations of the implementation of the European Guarantee for the Child*

The evaluation of the implemented actions and policies of the NAP for the Child Guarantee will be made possible via the operation of the Information System (IS), which is being developed by the National Coordinator and will be piloted.

It is noted that the NAP also includes actions/measures for which an evaluation is foreseen based on the institutional framework for their implementation and/or funding source, the results of which will be recorded in the aforementioned IS.

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<sup>6</sup><https://ekka.org.gr/index.php/el/rolos-skopos-tou-ekka/apostoli-e-k-k-a> The E.K.K.A. is an independent legal entity under public law, based in Athens and under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Cohesion & Family (Decree 22/2006, Decree 41/2021 and Decree 77/2023). The institutional mission of the E.K.K.A. is the effective response to situations of social need, social exclusion and crises (Article 48 of Law 4554/2018 (OFFICIAL GAZETTE A 130)).



## 1.5. Arrangements for stakeholder consultation and participation in the implementation and monitoring phase of the NAP

According to Law 4837/2021 the issuance of two regulatory acts is provided regarding: (a) the designation of liaisons with the National Coordinator (which, while issued at the current stage, needs to be re-issued) and (b) the definition of any other matter related to the individual competences and duties of the National Coordinator, the individual competences and duties of the liaisons of the National Coordinator, the more specific competences and duties of national, regional and local authorities, services, bodies and legal entities under public and private law involved in the implementation of the Council Recommendation (EU) regarding European Child Guarantee and the NAP, the establishment of committees and working groups for the implementation of the Recommendation regarding EU Child Guarantee and the NAP, the cooperation with anybody related to the implementation of the tasks of the NAP and any other relevant matter.

On the basis of the JMD, which designated the liaison officers of the relevant Ministries, the National Coordinator had direct and continuous cooperation with the liaison officers of the Ministries, either via the exchange of necessary information and clarifications or via bilateral meetings.

The National Coordinator also developed a network of representatives of local and regional authorities and civil society actors, as well as university institutions.

Regarding the consultation process, online meetings have been held with all network representatives at central, regional and local level on how to monitor the NAP. The process of designating users (more than 1,000 so far) at the level of regions/regional units and municipalities/municipalities/municipalities to participate in the data collection of the ongoing Information System for monitoring and evaluation of the NAP has been launched.

Regarding the monitoring of the actions of the NAP, the relevant data is updated quarterly: the representatives of the ministries, who have been appointed as liaisons, monitor and inform the National Coordinator on the progress of the actions.

Finally, following a request from the Greek government to the EU for technical support in the appliance of the Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/1004 of 14 June 2021 establishing a European Child Guarantee, the DG REFORM, together with the UNICEF office of Greece, concluded an agreement with the aim, inter alia: (a) to examine the governance framework for the implementation of the NAP and to make a proposal based on recommendations for the implementation of a single governance model; and (b) mapping and analyzing data on children and their administrative processes, with a view to developing an effective monitoring and evaluation framework for the EU Child Guarantee.

## 1.6. Amendments to the National Action Plan

No amendment to the NAP has been made so far. However, the NAP is a dynamic document, as it includes measures/actions that are being implemented, that have been completed, that are expected to start their implementation, that were finally decided not to be implemented, that at pilot level did not have the expected response effect, that were not planned and were not included in the NAP when it was submitted to the European Commission. From the monitoring of the NAP so far, the National Coordinator in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities are considering the possibility of modifying it, not in terms of the key service areas and target groups, but in terms of a more targeted monitoring of measures/actions that have a direct and significant impact on improving children's access to basic services, possibly with a graduation of measures/actions that have an additive value to this end.

## 2. TARGET GROUPS

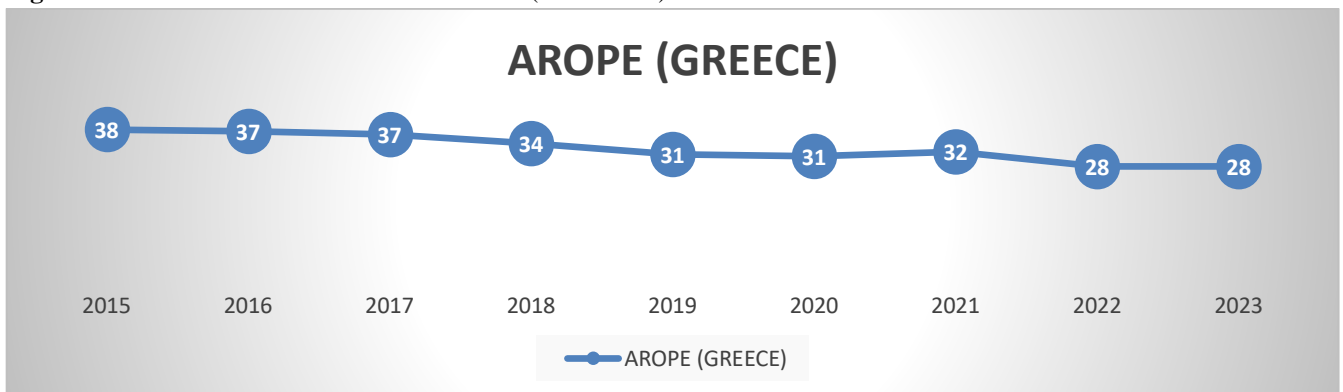
The target groups of the European Children's Guarantee, which have been targeted by the NAP measures in the two years from the submission of the NAP to date, are the following:

- Children in poverty or social exclusion
- Children with disabilities and/or special educational needs
- Roma children
- Children in institutions
- Refugee/migrant children and unaccompanied children
- Adolescents/young people with severe psychosocial disabilities
- Children in precarious conditions
- Children with mental health problems
- Minors in detention

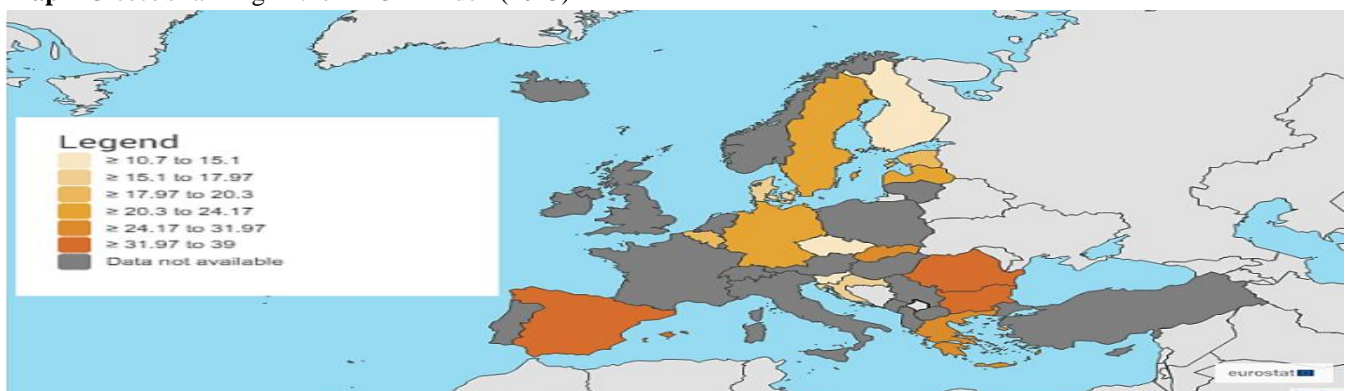
The above target groups are described in detail in the next section.

According to the recent EU-SILC (European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions) survey, the multidimensional poverty indicator AROPE (At risk of poverty or social exclusion) recorded a decrease of 0.2% in the most recent year (2023) compared to the previous year (2022). In the under-18 age group, the same indicator remained stable at 28.1%, in the recent year (2023) compared to the previous year (2022) (Fig. 1 and Map 1). However, if the AROP (At risk of poverty) one-dimensional poverty index is taken into account, then, in total population, this index records an increase of 0.1% in the recent year (2023) compared to the previous year (2022). In under-18s, the same index records a decrease of 0.6% in the recent year (2023) compared to the previous year (2022). The multidimensional poverty indicators are considered more acceptable compared to those of one-dimensional poverty, but the former are more complex to implement than the latter, which are described as more straightforward.

**Fig. 1** Evolution of AROPE in Greece over time (2015–2023)



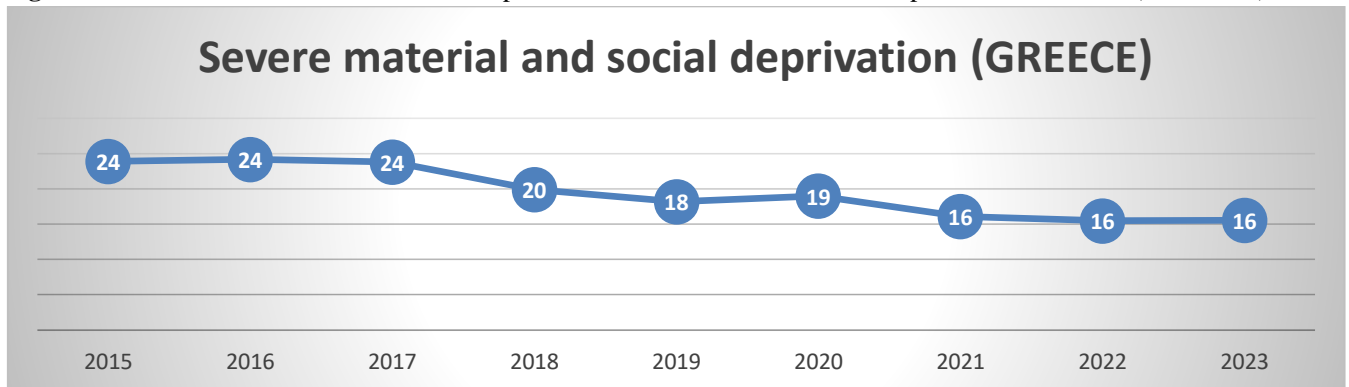
**Map 1** Greece's ranking in the AROPE index (2023)



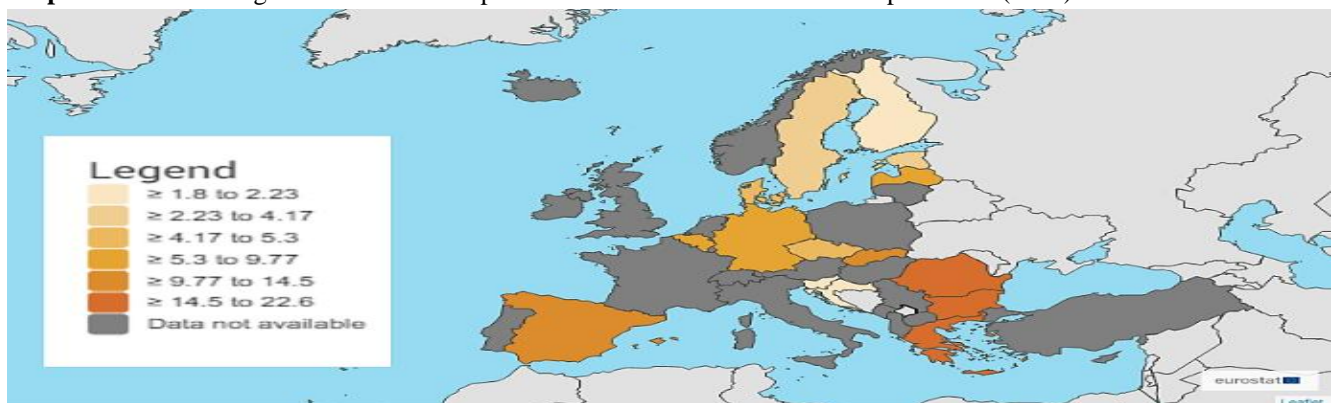
The components of AROPE are:

- (i) "At risk of poverty – AROP", which is mentioned above.
- (ii) "Severe material and social deprivation". More specifically, in Greece, in the most recent year (2023), the percentage in the under-18 age group (15.6%) increased by 0.1% compared to the corresponding percentage (15.5%) in the immediately preceding year (2022) (Fig. 2 and Map 2).

**Fig. 2** Evolution over time of the AROPE component "Severe material and social deprivation" in Greece (2015-2023)

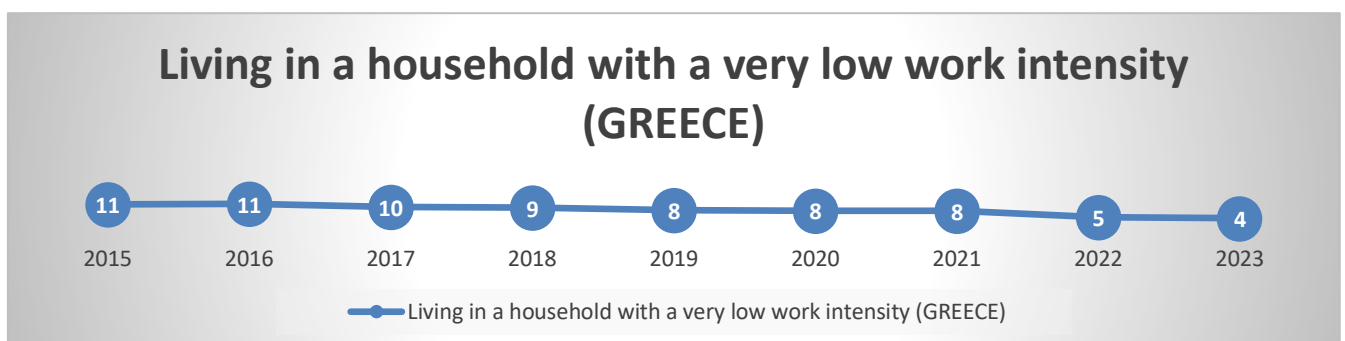


**Map 2** Greece's ranking in the AROPE component "Severe material and social deprivation" (2023)

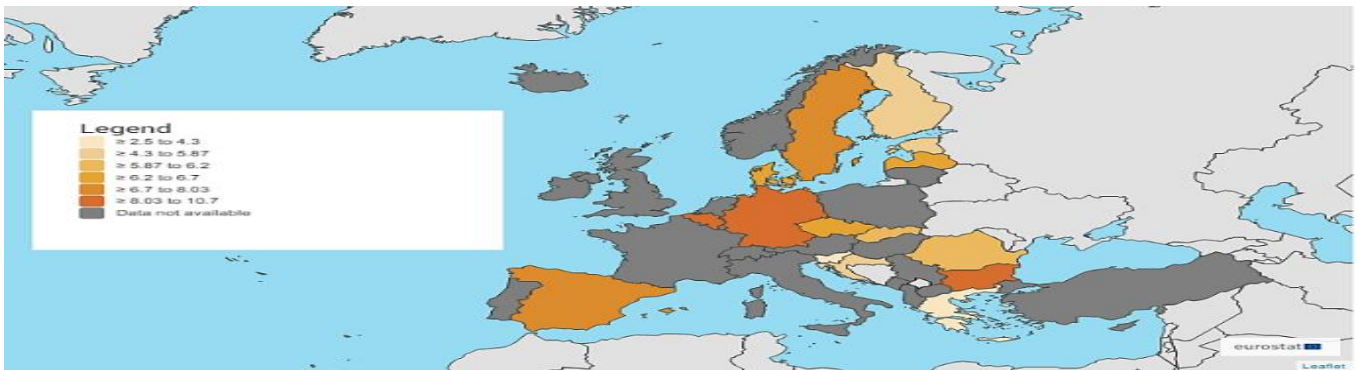


- (iii) "Living in a household with a very low work intensity". Specifically, in Greece, in the most recent year (2023), the percentage in the under-18 age group (4.2%) decreased by 0.5% compared to the corresponding percentage (4.7%) in the immediately preceding year (2022) (Fig. 3). As observed in Fig. 3, Greece's position for 2023 is good compared to the other countries. Note that the target set in Section 7 of the NAP to reduce the relative rate to 7.2% by 2030 has already been achieved.

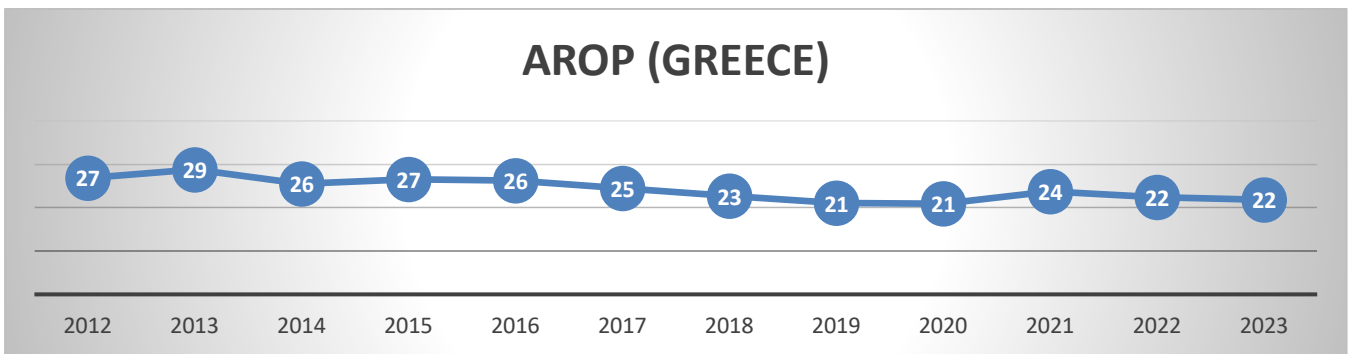
**Fig. 3** Evolution over time of the AROPE component "Living in a household with a very low work intensity" in Greece (2015-2023)



**Map 3** Greece's ranking in the AROPE component "Living in a household with a very low work intensity" (2023)



**Fig. 4** Evolution of AROP in Greece over time (2012-2023)



**Map 4** Greece's position with regard to AROP (2023)



In conclusion, according to the above, Greece has improved its position compared to the previous year in the AROP (Fig. 4 and Map 4). Finally, Greece shows a better position compared to the other countries in the AROPE component "Living in a household with a very low work intensity" (Map 3).

The barriers that hinder children's access to basic services are a priority for the Greek state to solve. As described in detail in section 3 of the NAP, there are barriers to accessing basic services, such as lack of qualified staff and equipment, geographical distance, administrative difficulties, etc. At the same time, for Roma children, within the framework of the *National Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma (2021 - 2030)*,



the *General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and Poverty Alleviation* has established and supervises Regional Task Forces for the empowerment and strengthening of the participation of Roma communities. Within the framework of the Task Force's field visits to Roma settlements, qualitative data on barriers to school attendance of Roma by age group were recorded ([Annex I](#), pp.1-3).

It should be noted that, with regard to barriers to access by service sector and by target group at regional and local level, care has been taken to record and monitor them through the operation of the Child Guarantee Information System, which is in the final phase of development by the *National Coordinator of the Child Guarantee*.

### 3. ROLL-OUT SERVICES

This section includes the key actions by service area and target group. A detailed inventory of current actions is provided in [Annex II](#) (Table, Excel 8.1) and [Annex III](#) (Table, Excel 8.2), and the supporting policy framework in [Annex IV](#) (Table, Excel 9).

#### 3.1. Early childhood care and education

##### 3.1.1. Pre-school care (for children 1-4 years old)

Early childhood education and creative occupation are critical sectors for the development and social inclusion of children, particularly those at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Through a range of initiatives and actions, the state seeks to ensure that all children have access to quality education and care services, while supporting families most in need.

Within the framework of the National Action Plan for the European Child Guarantee, one of the main objectives that Greece has set is to upgrade early childhood education and care services in order to support the multifaceted and holistic development of children up to 4 years of age. In Greece, a uniform and harmonized pedagogical framework has not been established in public and private infant, nursery and childcare centres, hence there are serious variations in the quality of pre-school education and care services provided. At the same time, while the first years of a child's life are the most crucial for their development, a horizontal program for the early detection of developmental disorders has not yet been developed.

The National Recovery and Resilience Plan Greece 2.0, in the context of the implementation of the Action "Strengthening Child Protection 16919", provides for the establishment of an integrated pedagogical framework, aiming at the all-round development of children from three months to four years of age and the parallel development and implementation of a holistic and comprehensive program of screening the development of infants and toddlers through psychometric tools.

In order to achieve the above objective, the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family will contract through two separate programmatic agreements with the International Hellenic University on the one hand and the University of West Attica on the other. The two university institutions have Departments of Early Childhood Education and Care, that specialize in research in the broader scientific field of early childhood education, in the development and application of pedagogical methods aimed at the all-round development of infants and toddlers, as well as in the screening of infant and toddler development through psychometric tools.

In the framework of the two separate programmatic contracts, the International Hellenic University of Greece undertakes the implementation of the project "Pedagogical framework for children up to four years old", aiming at the all-round development of children up to four years old, and the University of Western Attica undertakes the implementation of the project "Early detection, psycho-educational interventions and elements of operation of infant, nursery and childcare centres that promote the development of early childhood children", with the aim of early detection and monitoring of the development of children up to four years of

age and the optimal operation of infant, nursery and childcare centres.

Following the development of the pedagogical framework and the psychometric tools for infant and toddler development screening, the two universities will pilot the program in at least 90 infant, nursery and childcare centres. The implementation will be linked to the training of early childhood educators in the new pedagogical framework and to psycho-educational interventions, including but not limited to coaching educators on early screening and behavioural practices.

Upon completion of the pilot implementation of the program, the relevant pedagogical material that will be produced, as well as the psychometric tools for infant and toddler development screening will be evaluated and then distributed to at least 2,700 infant, nursery and childcare centres, in order to follow the nationwide implementation of the program, as provided for by the National Action Plan for the European Child Guarantee.

At the same time, Article 104 of Law 4941/2022 (A113), as amended by Article 42 of Law 5013/2023 (A 12) and Article 10 of Law 5063/2023 (A 184), the program of financial support for families for access to pre-school education and care services for infants and toddlers was established, as well as a program of financial support for families for access to creative employment services for children, adolescents and persons with disabilities, with the application of modern pedagogical practices and activities, outside school hours.

The Action "*Promotion and support of children for their integration in pre-school education and for the access of school-age children, adolescents and persons with disabilities to creative employment services for the period 2023-2024*" (JMD with Government Gazette 3418 B/2023) is implemented, co-funded by the European Social Fund plus (ESF +) in the framework of the NSRF 2021-2027 and by national resources. The managing authority is the Ministry of Development and the program is implemented by the Hellenic Society for Local Development and Local Government.

In the school year 2023-2024, 177,146 children and persons with disabilities received vouchers to participate in the program, which had a budget of 359,700,000 euros.

Compared to the 2018-2019 school year, the beneficiaries of the program have increased by 49,512 (an increase of 39% ), while the budget of the program has increased by 154,700,000 euros (an increase of 75%).

Vouchers are granted on the basis of a point system for which three main eligibility criteria are taken into account: annual taxable family income, employment status and employment relationship, and marital status. The system favors children in a situation of poverty and social exclusion. Unlike the point system applied for access to municipal nurseries, this one is applied to national level with the same criteria and conditions.

With regard to access to municipal nurseries, the socio-economic criteria for the selection and prioritization of children are further defined by the Municipal Council. When enrolling in the units under the responsibility of the municipalities, priority is given to children of working parents, children with unemployed parents, children of low-income families and children of economically weak families, preferably those who need special care for social reasons (such as children orphaned by one or both parents, children of single-parent families, children of divorced or separated parents, children of women accommodated in the network of structures against violence on women, children from families with physically disabled members). With regard to fees, municipal councils have the right to set monthly charges as a condition for the enrolment of children in nurseries and to determine the categories of children who are fully or partially exempt from these charges. Where a financial contribution is imposed, it must be reasonable and symbolic and must be announced by means of a notice posted before the start of the submission period of applications for registration. For children under 4 years of age, there is no corresponding number of places to the number of applications submitted.

In order to increase the number of places, important initiatives are being taken,<sup>7</sup> such as the program **"Support for the opening/creation of new early childhood care centres or the creation of new places in existing care centres for infants from 2 months to 2.5 years"**. The project involves the creation of 20,000 new places, either by setting up new centres or by supporting existing ones through a 50% subsidy of the total cost.

Private and municipal stations can participate in the project based on the recent legislative intervention (Law 5107/2024). The project has been included in the Recovery and Resilience Fund, the developer is the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family and the implementing agency is the Technical Chamber of Greece.

### *3.1.2. Pre-school education (for children 4-5 years old)*

Children aged 4 and 5 years old (International Standard Classification of Education-ISCED 020) attend kindergartens, both public and private, under the responsibility of the MOERAS. Pre-school education provided in kindergartens (ISCED 020) belongs to primary education, is subject to the same legislation and is presented in detail in section 3.2.

With the action **"Strengthening Preschool Education, 2021-2022"** by the MOERAS, the generalization of two-year compulsory preschool education throughout the country is taking place, which is an important step towards strengthening preschool education and supporting the institution of kindergartens and is addressed to the general population. In addition, in order to facilitate access and systematic attendance of Roma infants in kindergarten and their smooth transition to primary school, supportive actions are being implemented by the MOERAS through the program **"Supportive Actions for Attendance in Two-Year Compulsory Pre-School Education for Roma and Vulnerable Social Groups"**. This initiative is currently being re-evaluated and redesigned and has so far been implemented in 414 school units.

### *3.1.3. Early Intervention (for children 0-6 years old)*

The development of an integrated early intervention system is foreseen in the framework of the National Action Plan for the European Child Guarantee. The National Recovery and Resilience Plan Greece 2.0, in the context of the implementation of the Action "Strengthening Child Protection 16919", provides for the development of an integrated Early Intervention program, in accordance with Article 51 of Law 4997/2022. The program concerns children aged zero (0) to six (6) years old with an identified disability or developmental delay or disorder, or with an increased likelihood of developing such, including, in particular, autism spectrum disorders, Down's syndrome, intellectual disability, hearing or vision impairment, speech or language disorders and motor difficulties, as well as their families.

Within September 2024, the Joint Ministerial Decision will be published, which for the first time in Greece will set the framework for the provision of early intervention services.

The Early Intervention services are a set of individualized services provided based on a family-centered approach. The aim of the program is to enhance the development of the beneficiary children and the parallel support of their family in order to promote the social integration of the child.

In the framework of the pilot project, Early Intervention services are provided by a multidisciplinary team, based on an individualized intervention plan, taking into account the needs of the child and the family, prioritizing the child's natural environment and focusing on daily repetitive activities at home and in the community, with the active participation of the family. A prerequisite for an actor to participate in the Program will be to receive specific training.

The aim of the program is to provide vouchers to at least 2,500 children to receive Early Intervention services from specially trained providers. The total budget of the program amounts to €35,062,820 including VAT and will be financed from the resources of the Recovery and Resilience Fund.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/el/national-education-systems/greece/prosbasi-stin-prosholiki-ekpaideysi-kai-frontida>



## 3.2. Education and school activities

### 3.2.1. Education

Education in public primary and secondary schools is free of charge and does not require tuition fees, and textbooks are provided free of charge. As regards transport costs, these are covered for children carrying heavy instruments and attending secondary music and art schools, children with disabilities attending special primary and secondary schools and children living more than 1.2 km from a primary school and more than 2.5 km for secondary education. However, the responsibility for providing transport to and from school lies with the regional authorities, which must ensure that children are transported free of charge. If transport is not feasible or is deemed cost-prohibitive, a) a monthly allowance of 85 euros may be granted to households with children who move to another area to attend school; b) a partial allowance of 0,35 euros per km, not exceeding 1,500 euros, may be granted in cases where parents transport children to school by their own means (excluding pupils in Special Education and Training Schools); c) are transported by private carriers, as part of a public service, whose means of transport meet the appropriate specifications (safety belts, MOT, etc.), due to the lack of public transport in mountainous, inaccessible or island areas.

In this context, various programs and actions aimed at strengthening secondary and vocational education have been designed and implemented. From Vocational Apprenticeship Schools (VAS) and remedial teaching to psychosocial support for students in Vocational High Schools (VHS), these initiatives ensure that students receive the support and opportunities they need to achieve their educational and vocational goals. Specifically, the "Supportive Teaching in Secondary Education" is a supportive teaching program implemented by the MOERAS, which served 2,879 students during the period 2022-2023. The action "**Support to Primary and Secondary Education Schools by Psychologists and Social Workers**", implemented by the MOERAS, aims at informing, advising and empowering the school community. It covers about 13,000 school units, providing valuable psychological and social support to students and teachers. Finally, "**Digital Care I & II**", completed under the auspices of the MOERAS, aimed to facilitate access to tablets, laptops, desktops and optionally their peripherals (e.g. printers). Vouchers (506,000) were issued under Digital Care I and 166,000 vouchers, worth 200 euros, were issued under Digital Care II, for pupils and students who fulfilled specific income and social criteria (concerning families of specific income category with dependent children or children in guardianship, who are pupils and students aged 4 to 24 years, studying in a state educational institution in Greece, teachers in educational institutions in the country, state and private, families whose minors attend educational institutions in areas affected by the fires during the period 27.07.2021 up to 13.08.2021). The action was carried out in the framework of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan "Greece 2.0" with funding from the European Union – Next Generation EU.

The education of people with disabilities is a priority for the state, with the aim of promoting inclusive education and ensuring equal access for all students. Through various legislative changes and support programs, efforts are focused on improving infrastructure, strengthening support structures and creating appropriate educational tools. These actions contribute to better integration of students with disabilities into the education system.

With regard to the implementation of par. 7 of the Recommendation on strengthening cooperation between the various agencies providing services to children, it is noted that the promotion of inclusive education and the interconnection of all services involved in this direction are key pillars of strategic planning for education. Already, under Law 4823/2021, there are specific provisions for the interconnection of the Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counselling and Support (CIACS), Interdisciplinary Support Committees (ISCs) and Special Education and Inclusive Education Counsellors with schools, municipalities and community services. Updating the legislative framework for primary and secondary education with a focus on inclusive education is underway. The MOERAS is working to ensure that children with disabilities and/or special educational needs have access to equitable and supportive education. At the operational level, the

program “**Strengthening Supportive Education Structures (CIACS, ISCs)**” aims to develop and strengthen multidisciplinary advisory and support structures, such as CIACS and ISCs. The aim is to ensure equitable access and inclusion in education for students with disabilities and/or special educational needs. The program is implemented by the MOERAS and covers 6,786 school units. In addition, the “**Specialized Support Program for Students with Disabilities and/or Special Educational Needs**” concerns the staffing of school units with Special Assistants and Special Education Personnel in order to support the education of students with disabilities and/or special educational needs. The MOERAS is implementing this program, which covered 4,767 school units in 2021-2022 and 6,106 school units in 2022-2023. Finally, the “**Program of Individualized Support Measures for Students with Disabilities and/or Special Educational Needs**” aims to support the uniform systematic attendance and inclusion of students with disabilities and/or special educational needs. Through integration in Special Education and Special Education Units and Inclusion Departments, these pupils receive the necessary support for their education. The program, implemented by the MOERAS, covered 907 school units in the period 2021-2022 and 886 school units in the period 2022-2023.

Promoting inclusive education is one of the central objectives of the education system, particularly for vulnerable social groups such as Roma, refugees, migrants and other people who face difficulties in accessing education. Through a series of actions and programs, the MOERAS and other agencies are working to create an inclusive and supportive educational environment. In the framework of the EU technical assistance program, entitled “Implementation of the European Child Guarantee - Promoting Inclusive Education in Greece (phase 2)”, implemented by UNICEF and the University of Thessaly, an action is being undertaken to develop a roadmap and an ecosystem of inclusive schools for Roma, refugees and migrants based on three axes: a) Development of communities of practice, b) Systematic training and supervision of trainers-counsellors (multiplier model), and c) Development of programs for intercultural Roma mediators and Refugee Education Coordinators. The implementation of the action is foreseen to be completed in June 2024, benefiting 552 teachers and education staff, 45 schools and 261 students.

In order to strengthen the school units with Reception Classes - Priority Education Zones and Refugee Education Reception Facilities (REF), with substitute teachers, with Special Education Personnel and with Special Support Personnel, the MOERAS is implementing the operation “**Reconfiguration and support of Reception Classes and REF**”, which covered 2,300 school units for the period 2021-2023. In addition, the action “**Integration of Refugee Children, up to 15 years of age, into the Educational System/Refugee Reception and Education Facilities (REF)**”, implemented by the MOERAS, aims to integrate children who are refugees and migrants up to 15 years of age into the educational system through REFs and serves 230 school units per year, with 54,133 beneficiary children in the period 2021-2023. The “**Support Program for the Integration of Refugee and Migrant Children**”, under the auspices of the MOERAS, aims to improve the conditions of integration into the education system for refugee and migrant students. During the period 2022-2023, 1,040 school units were integrated. At the same time, initiatives were taken in this field to enhance teachers’ professional competence. Training activities focus on diversity management and teaching in multicultural environments. They are implemented by the MOERAS and involve 4,949 teachers and education staff, as well as 3,152 teachers in shorter-term programs. In addition, the integrated training program in differentiated teaching concerns the support practices for students, tailored to their individual needs. This program was also implemented by the MOERAS, with 17,000 teachers benefiting. These actions are part of an overall strategy to improve inclusive education in Greece, ensuring that all students, regardless of their origin, have access to quality education. Finally, the multi-factor program “**All Children in Education (ACE)**”, implemented by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum and UNICEF, supports the integration of children with refugee or migrant experience into formal education. The beneficiaries were 5,026 in 2021; 8,812 in 2022; and 8,587 in 2023.

### 3.2.2. School and extracurricular activities

Inclusive education and social participation are crucial pillars for creating a fair and equitable education system. The aim is to support children and young people from vulnerable social groups to have access to education and actively participate in social life. Under current institutional provisions, all pupils are entitled to equal participation in school activities and excursions for a fee. A special committee is currently examining this issue in detail and the final findings of this investigation are expected in the near future. The main actions being implemented by the relevant ministries and organizations to achieve these objectives are set out below.

#### **Creating Creative Activity Centres through Technology (CACs- STEM Centres) for Children:**

The purpose of this action is to provide children with access to activities related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The program is a pilot project and is in the first stage of implementation, i.e. the development of the institutional framework for the establishment and operation of CACs-STEM.

**Camping program:** The subsidy program for the stay of children aged 6 to 16 in children's camps is implemented by the MOLSS and DYPA. Vouchers (61,777) were issued in 2023, compared to 58,844 in 2022 and 43,888 in 2021.

With 31856/2024 JMD (2757 B), the camping program for children, elderly and disabled persons has been expanded, significantly increasing the number of beneficiaries and the number of individual camping periods. The amount to be allocated by the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family has been increased to €4,000,000 from €3,650,000 budgeted last year and will cover both the operation of 14 children's holiday camps that will operate from 1 June to 30 September 2024.

**Book Purchase Voucher Scheme:** The subsidy for beneficiaries and their beneficiary members for the purchase of books is implemented by the MOLSS and the DYPA, with 38,131 beneficiaries in 2022 and 85,617 in 2023.

**Free theatre tickets:** The allocation of theatre vouchers is also being implemented by the MOLSS, with 24,078 beneficiaries for the period 2022-2023 and 19,770 for 2023-2024.

### 3.3. A healthy meal every school day

In accordance with the national legislation (Law 4455/2017, as amended and in force), the "School Meals" program is implemented. The program serves the needs of feeding students of primary public education school units. Before the beginning of the school year, annually, the relevant JMD is issued, in which the school units that will participate in the program are defined.

The School Meals program is implemented in pre-selected primary schools, selected according to the following criteria:

1. housing in neighbourhoods with significant economic and social problems,
2. concentration of a significant number of pupils living in households at increased risk of poverty,
3. concentration of a significant number of students living in conditions of severe material deprivation,
4. concentration of a significant number of pupils from vulnerable social groups. Through the program the feeding needs during school days are served. The number of pupils receiving school meals cannot be determined in relation to the number of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion, since school meals are provided to all pupils in each school unit, irrespective of the economic situation of the households of which the pupils are members.

In the 2023-2024 school year, 1,658 schools participated and 217,267 school meals were distributed. Similarly, for the 2022-2023 school year, the program was implemented in 1,629 schools where 207,514 school meals were distributed to an equal number of students. Finally, for the 2021-2022 school year, 1,620 elementary schools across the country participated in the program and 224,335 school meals were distributed

daily to an equal number of students.

### 3.4. Health care

All children in Greece have free access to the vaccines included in the national vaccination program and are entitled to free access to public health facilities. As regards pharmaceutical coverage, a contribution of 25% of the total cost of pharmaceutical products is usually applicable. Certain categories of patients, such as refugees, unaccompanied minors and people with a disability rate of over 67%, receive free medicines on prescription. Individuals and their family members who meet a specific set of eligibility conditions, which apply to income and property, are entitled to free medicine coverage, while the same applies to certain categories of children for whom no income or property test is required.

For the needs of health care, access to health services and social security, applicants for international protection are assigned a Temporary Foreigner's Insurance and Health Care Number (TFIHCN). The TFIHCN number is deactivated when the application for international protection is rejected or filed following a waiver, and reactivated in the event of an appeal and if an International Protection Applicant Card has been re-issued. Regarding the access of unaccompanied minors to health services, (especially for unaccompanied minors seeking international protection), the TFIHCN remains active even after the issuance or service of a primary or secondary decision rejecting the application for international protection until they reach adulthood. In this case, the Asylum Service shall issue and grant to the unaccompanied minor a certificate of maintenance of the TFIHCN valid until the date of his/her majority. Also, following the adoption of the Framework of Standard Rules for the Operation and Licensing of Accommodation Centres for Unaccompanied Minors and the Standard Rules for the Operation and Licensing of Supervised Semi-Autonomous Living Apartments, the bodies operating accommodation facilities for unaccompanied minors shall ensure that minors have access to dental, ophthalmological or other specialized medical services which are not covered by the national health system. Finally, special arrangements are provided for in the Internal Regulations of the Accommodation Centres for Unaccompanied Minors with special medical needs and the corresponding individualized provisions are made in their Individual Action Plan.

In addition, the policy measures described in section 8.1 of the NAP are implemented both at the level of primary prevention (prevention and information actions in the context of education, the National Vaccination Program, the operation of Family Planning Health Units and the Mother and Child Care Units) and secondary prevention (National Program for the Preventive Screening of Newborns). In addition, the following measures are being implemented or planned:

- **PLEIADES:** The aim is to raise awareness and inform children with disabilities about their equal access to Primary Health Care Services. The Ministry of Health is implementing this initiative, focusing on children with disabilities.
- **DIONI:** The initiative offers support to children living in remote areas by facilitating their examination by teams of doctors and health professionals. The Ministry of Health is implementing this initiative, targeting children living in inaccessible and/or remote areas.
- **Dentist pass:** The "Dentist pass" is a support measure for preventive dental care for children aged 6-12 years. This initiative was successfully completed by the Ministry of Health, providing essential assistance to the general population by ensuring that vulnerable children have equal access to free dental care.
- **Health support programs for vulnerable population groups:** These programs, implemented by the Ministry of Health, aim to provide health support to Roma children, refugees, migrants and other members of vulnerable social groups. Implementation is expected.
- **Mobile Primary Health Care Units:** Two mobile units will operate in Attica and Central Macedonia, offering support to unaccompanied children. Two mobile units will provide two mobile health care

centres and two mobile homes. The JMD draft has been submitted for signature by the Minister of Health.

In the mental health sector, there are child and adolescent support structures, as reflected in section 8.2 of the NAP, aimed at ensuring access to mental health services for children living in precarious conditions, children with disabilities, and children living in remote and/or inaccessible areas. The availability of mental health services is expected to be enhanced through the development of community-based structures: four (4) Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Centres (CCCs), five (5) shelters, four (4) housing units and six (6) Mobile Units for the provision of psychosocial support services for children and adolescents.

Furthermore, the development of mental health services is planned for both the general population and population groups in need of specialized care. Specifically, the plan envisages (a) enhancing access to mental health services for children and adolescents living in areas with limited availability, (b) the development of specialized structures for people with severe mental disabilities, aiming to further reduce the number of institutional units, (c) specialized primary mental health services and community structures for people with Autism Spectrum Disorders, and d) the promotion of the mental health of unaccompanied minors and the empowerment of frontline professionals, aiming at the development of skills, adequate training and awareness-raising of all professionals working in Accommodation Centres for Unaccompanied Minors, with the ultimate aim of promoting mental health and preventing mental disorders in the population of unaccompanied minors.

### 3.5. Healthy nutrition

In order to protect and promote the health of the student population and to create a supportive school environment that contributes to the proper nutritional choices of students, the Ministry of Health has adopted health provisions regarding the recommendations for the formulation of nutritional criteria for the selection of food provided in pre-school and school education facilities, as well as for the conditions for the operation of school canteens, and catering facilities in primary and secondary schools. At the same time, the list of products authorized for sale has been modernized, providing for monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the measures, as well as the drawing up of annual circulars for the correct application of the legislation. In addition, in order to raise awareness among the student population and parents on the correct choice of food for school lunches, tools have been developed (publication of informational material) and information on healthy eating habits is also provided in the context of certain courses.

At the same time, given the low levels of breastfeeding, a package of measures aimed at promoting breastfeeding and supporting the breastfeeding process is being implemented, which are described in detail in section 8.1. of the NAP, while additional measures to promote breastfeeding are being developed (section 8.2. of the NAP). In addition, nutrition policy has focused on the prevention and treatment of childhood obesity, developing a coherent grid of interventions based on two operational programs, one targeting the general population and the other targeting children in need.

With regard to childhood obesity, the "Childhood Obesity Program" includes actions covering primary, secondary and tertiary prevention of childhood obesity. It is implemented by the Ministry of Health and UNICEF, targeting the general population. At the same time, under the auspices of MOSCF, research is to be conducted and a National Action Plan on Childhood Obesity with a focus on children in need is to be developed.

Finally, the "**European School Fruit, Vegetable and Milk Distribution Program**", implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development and Food in cooperation with the MOERAS, aims to distribute fruit, vegetables and milk to primary school pupils, accompanied by educational measures. In the school year 2021-2022, 149,362 students benefited from a total of 589,470, while in the school year 2022-2023, 145,510 students benefited from a total of 575,395. In particular, in the school year 2021-2022, 149,479 students from



899 primary education units (primary schools) in the country benefited. In the school year 2022-2023, 145,509 pupils from 888 primary school units benefited. The National Strategy for the period 2017/2018 to 2022/2023 was completed, achieving the targets of a 5% increase in the proportion of children consuming 1-2 fruits per day and a 4% increase in the proportion of children consuming vegetables once a day.

### 3.6. Adequate housing

In the area of access to adequate housing, measures are structured around four main pillars: a) addressing homelessness, housing cost overburden and housing insecurity; b) ensuring adequate accommodation and housing for vulnerable groups of the population (Roma, unaccompanied children); and c) promoting de-institutionalization and the transition of children from institutional care to other alternative accommodation and care settings.

#### 3.6.1. Addressing homelessness, housing cost overburden and housing insecurity

By improving living conditions and providing support to vulnerable groups, the government has implemented several programs and interventions. In this context, emphasis has been placed on addressing homelessness, housing cost overburden and housing insecurity.

The **housing allowance** varies from 70 to 210 euros depending on the composition of the household. This initiative, which focuses on children living in poverty, is implemented by the Organization for Provident Allowances and Social Solidarity (OPEKA) and is yielding significant results, with a reduction in the number of beneficiaries from 243,170 children (in December 2021) to 216,287 children (in January 2024).

The "**Housing and Work for the Homeless**" action aims to support the social reintegration of people and families living in homelessness by providing a 24-month rent subsidy and other complementary benefits. The program, undertaken by MOSCF, has already achieved the participation of 230 children, representing 24% of the beneficiaries, in the call for the year 2021. The "**COVERAGE**" program provides housing assistance to vulnerable young people aged 25 to 39, covering three years of housing rental costs and other related housing costs. The program is implemented by MOSCF and has served 125 underage beneficiaries of the Minimum Guaranteed Income. As part of the actions to support vulnerable social groups, pilot projects are being developed to create networks of social and affordable housing in major cities such as Athens and Thessaloniki.

The project "**Creation of a Network of Social and Affordable Housing (Municipality of Athens and Thessaloniki)**" aims to integrate part of the dormant private and public housing stock into a scheme of affordable rental housing. The implementation of the program is expected to be carried out by MOSCF, with the aim of supporting vulnerable groups of the population, which will be identified during the development of the program.

The **Social Compensation** program involves the construction of housing at the expense of the developer and the leasing of the property to beneficiaries according to predefined criteria. This action, which is also expected to be implemented by MOSCF, aims to provide affordable housing to vulnerable groups of the population to be identified during the implementation phase of the program.

These programs aim to address the housing crisis and improve living conditions for vulnerable groups by providing affordable and decent housing conditions.

#### 3.6.2. Ensuring appropriate accommodation and housing for vulnerable groups of the population (Roma, unaccompanied children, refugee and migrant children)

Ensuring adequate accommodation and housing for vulnerable groups of the population is a critical issue for social inclusion and well-being. In particular, a variety of programs and actions have been developed to support people with disabilities, refugees, asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors and women victims of violence, with a focus on children belonging to these categories.

**Roma children:** The "**Organized Temporary Relocation Places**" program provides for the temporary relocation of specific social groups living in temporary or irregular accommodation to suitable organized places. This action, which is expected to be implemented, concerns Roma children and is coordinated by MOSCF.

**Children asylum seekers:** the housing program "**ESTIA 2021**" was completed under the auspices of the MoMA. The average number of children benefiting was 8,119 for the year 2021 and 2,588 for the year 2022.

**Refugee children and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection:** the **HELIOS program** supports the integration of refugee children and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection from the reception stage to the integration process. The implementation of the program is expected to continue until 30/6/2024, with plans for its inclusion in the ROPs.

**Unaccompanied children:** Policy measures concerning the housing of unaccompanied minors, with the priority of ensuring their best interests, have contributed to ensuring an appropriate accommodation framework for all unaccompanied children via the establishment of the "Framework of Standard Rules for the Operation and Licensing of Accommodation Centres for Unaccompanied Minors" and the "Standard Rules for the Operation of Supervised Semi-Autonomous Living Apartments". This was achieved through the creation and provision of an adequate framework of accommodation, protection and support, as well as the development of self-determination and independence skills in preparation for the transition of minors to another accommodation setting, taking into account their age and personal circumstances (foster care, semi-autonomous living, adult institutions, etc.). The monitoring of the operation and quality of the services provided by all accommodation facilities has been made possible by the establishment of standard monitoring and evaluation procedures. The development and use of specialized tools in the monitoring and evaluation process has contributed to the effective monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the services provided, through on-site inspections carried out by the Unit for Monitoring and Evaluation of Accommodation Facilities for Unaccompanied Minors. The Long-Term Accommodation System for Unaccompanied Minors includes 69 adequately staffed accommodation centres and 78 Supervised Semi-autonomous Living Apartments for unaccompanied children aged 16 to 18, benefiting thousands of children from 2021 to 2023. Specifically, in 2021, the Accommodation Centres for Unaccompanied Minors (ACUMs) housed 2,604 children, the Supervised Semi-Autonomous Living Apartments (SSAs) housed 480 children. In 2022, ACUMs housed 3,922 children and SSAs housed 500 children. In 2023, ACUMs housed 3,011 children and SSAs housed 418 children. The National Emergency Response Mechanism for Unaccompanied Minors in Precarious Living Conditions is implemented by the MoMA and includes the direct provision of care through a telephone line and two Information Offices in Athens and Thessaloniki. Specifically, in 2021 there were 1,974 contacts with 960 children supported by the Office in Athens and 445 children supported by the Office in Thessaloniki. In 2022, there were 5,376 contacts with 1,815 children supported by the Athens Office and 992 children supported by the Thessaloniki Office. In 2023, there were 2,218 contacts with 902 children supported by the Office and the Mobile Unit in Athens and 2,573 children supported by the Office and the Mobile Unit in Thessaloniki. The Creation and Operation of Emergency Accommodation Structures for Unaccompanied Minors includes the creation and operation of emergency accommodation structures for unaccompanied children identified through the National Emergency Response Mechanism and has accommodated thousands of children from 2021 to 2023. Specifically, 801 children were accommodated in 2021, 1,904 children were accommodated in 2022, and 1,334 children were accommodated in 2023. Through the Supervision and Evaluation of Accommodation Centres program, it is envisaged to develop an evaluation mechanism for accommodation centres for unaccompanied minors, in order to supervise their operation and support the improvement of their weaknesses, implemented by the MoMA.

**Child victims of domestic violence:** The MOSCF has taken initiatives to improve the services provided to



children living in shelters for women victims of violence and multiple discrimination. Following an inventory of the specific needs of children, an Action Plan is being developed to make the shelters more child-friendly. At the same time, the updating of the Operating Regulations of the Network of Structures will be carried out, which includes the adaptation and upgrading of the services and procedures provided in accordance with the recent legislation.

### *3.6.3. De-institutionalization*

The promotion of de-institutionalization and the transition of children from institutional care to other alternative accommodation and care settings are important initiatives undertaken to improve the protection and well-being of children. Specifically, actions taken include fiscal and legislative reforms (kindly refer to Section 1.2.3<sup>8</sup>).

In the NAP for the European Child Guarantee, it was found that children in institutional care spend a long time living in institutions with harmful consequences and unacceptable cutbacks in the protection of their rights and best interests in general.

It was therefore proposed to develop the professional foster care institution specifically for children with disabilities and also alternative forms of living outside the institution, for older children with no chance of rehabilitation through fostering and adoption.

By means of 19333/22.10.2023 Joint Ministerial Decision "Placement of minors with disabilities in professional foster care and regulation of relevant issues for the implementation of professional foster care." (B 1085), the terms of professional fostering of children with disabilities were specialized.

The professional foster care program involves the fostering, by specially trained professional foster carers, of children living in institutions with an overall disability rate of more than 67% or a mental disability rate of more than 50%. Professional foster parents will receive a monthly allowance of €1,850 gross, without interrupting the payment of the foster care allowance or other welfare benefits received by disabled persons.

The Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family signed in July 2024 a Program Agreement with the University of West Attica for the implementation of special training and continuing education programs for professional foster parent candidates. The aim of the training is to enable professional foster parents to respond competently to the demands of increased care of children with a high rate of disability, understanding their specific needs and contributing to the removal of barriers to their social integration.

The objects of the program contract are:

1) the development of educational material on the provision of specialized services to children with a high level of disability by professional foster parents in order to ensure and enhance the child's development and promote his/her social integration.

2) the in-person training of foster care supervisors in all 13 regions of the country.

3) the continuous training and support of professional foster parents to enable them to meet the increased needs of fostering children with a high rate of disability and to avoid the return of children to institutions.

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<sup>8</sup> In particular, the financial support for fostering has been increased to 3,000,000 euro (for 2023) (regular budget) from 1,500,000 euro (for 2022). Law 4538/2018 with the provisions of Laws 4604/2019, 4611/2019, 4704/2020, 4764/2020, 4808/2021, 4837/2021, 4865/2021 and 4997/2022. The majority of these amendments were aimed at further promoting and upgrading the institution of fostering and more specifically:

- The age limits for foster parents have been increased, so that foster parents can now be those who have reached the age of 25 and have not exceeded 75 years (Article 26 of Law 4837/2021 (A 178)).

- Child Protection Units have been given the possibility to assign minors in their care and custody to a foster parent by signing a foster care contract (Article 27 of Law 4837/2021 (A 178)). Since the launch of the electronic procedures for proposals to link minors with prospective parents (July 2020) until December 2023, 623 foster placements have been recorded.

- Persons suffering from either HIV infection, who have been successfully treated with antiretroviral therapy or from Hepatitis B, with undetectable viral load, under other additional conditions and who have successfully received the prescribed drug treatment and provided that they continue their treatment without interruption, may apply for adoption or foster care of a minor (paragraph 1 of Article 43 of Law 4865/2021 (A 238)).

- Problems regarding the payment of the remuneration of trainers teaching in the training programs of prospective foster carers, professional foster carers or foster parents (Article 58 of Law 4997/2022 (A 219)).

The training of prospective parent sponsors began in September 2024. The goal of the program is to connect 100 children with disabilities who reside in institutions with professional foster parents by the end of 2025. The total budget of the program is 4,173,928 euros including VAT and will be financed from the resources of the Recovery and Resilience Fund.

Regarding Semi-Autonomous Living, pursuant to the application of 1316/13.08.2024 Joint Ministerial Decision "Semi-Autonomous Living in apartments for persons fifteen years old and above living in Child Protection and Care Units" (B 4763) in August 2024 the call for funding for the establishment and operation of semi-autonomous living apartments was published.

The beneficiaries of the Semi-Autonomous Living program are children and young people over 15 years old, who either live in institutions or live temporarily, for protection reasons, in a hospital. A child can join a semi-independent living apartment from the age of 15 and can remain in the program until the age of 26.

The program ensures the safe and comfortable accommodation of the beneficiaries, their daily care, their psychosocial support and interconnection with complementary benefits and services, such as extracurricular activities for minor children, while adult youth are provided with vocational guidance and job counselling services.

The aim of the Semi-Autonomous Living program is to provide all the necessary tools to achieve the gradual and smooth autonomy of children and young people who have previously lived in institutions through their full school, academic and professional integration. In each apartment a team of scientists, including social workers, psychologists and teachers, works in order to provide each child with the appropriate framework of personalized care and support.

The program covers all the costs of accommodation of the beneficiaries in the apartments, the operating costs of the apartments, costs for education, training and vocational training of the beneficiaries. At the same time, all beneficiaries are provided with a monthly financial benefit of €375 to cover their personal expenses.

By the end of 2025, at least 200 children and young people will join the Semi-Autonomous Living program. The total budget of the program amounts to 12,655,080 euros including VAT and will be financed from the resources of the Recovery and Resilience Fund.

In addition, there is provision for strengthening the mechanisms for post-monitoring and supervising the progress of sponsorship adoptions, through the universal application of uniform tools by all professionals involved and the provision of a mechanism for timely notification of the digital sponsorship system of any delays in the submission of the relevant monitoring reports. At the same time, education and training programs for human resources involved in the implementation of de-institutionalization are being implemented and efforts are being made to further systematically implement training programs, adapting the new social protection policies. In 2022, 1,393 children remained in a closed-type care facility and in 2023 1,265 children, respectively.

It is noted that the pilot, three-year program " Child Guarantee ", which was implemented in Greece on the initiative of the European Commission and implemented by UNICEF, in cooperation with the Greek authorities, has been completed. In the framework of this program, training actions were carried out for professionals working in the field of welfare, aiming, inter alia, at supporting and providing them with scientific guidance at local level and developing guidelines for professionals in the field, while protocols and tools were developed in order to be used to avoid institutionalization and to achieve de-institutionalization (protocol for the assessment of children at risk at community level, protocol for intensive intervention in dysfunctional families, where a minor's temporary removal has been decided, etc. The protocols and tools are currently being developed and evaluated by the MOSCF, with the relevant bodies, in order to be finalized and subsequently institutionalized.

The planned policy focuses on the following pillars: (a) prevention, with the creation of a system to avoid institutionalization and support the biological family, (b) de-institutionalization, through the activation of a system of transition to services in the community and via the strengthening of the institution of foster care, including professional foster care, with particular emphasis on supporting the foster family in order to integrate the foster child into the new family environment and (c) the implementation of alternative forms of living.

It is noted that with the participation of the E.K.K.A., awareness raising actions at local level were implemented in various regions. For the years 2022-2023, twenty-two (22) training programs for social workers of municipalities were carried out, which resulted in an increase in direct (emergency) foster care and the prevention of the admission of children into institutional care. In addition, upgrading of the digital system for the implementation of foster care and adoption procedures was carried out in order to (a) provide additional numerical data, (b) generate proposals for linking children with prospective parents, with increased chances of positive outcomes, and (c) formulate an application for expressing interest in professional foster care.

Crucial in the effort to move from institutional care to a community approach will be the implementation of service transformation plans to de-institutionalize children. A key element of this transition is the development of a comprehensive methodology that will support both children and staff of the institutions in this transition. In addition, procedures have been designed for the transfer of adolescents and young adults from institutions to semi-autonomous living apartments, and there are plans to operate additional semi-autonomous living apartments for adolescents in order to achieve their smooth integration into more autonomous forms of living. At the same time, the development of support services at municipal level is envisaged, with a view to preventing institutionalization and the operation of family support and child protection units at community level, strengthening the child protection service delivery system. Integrated counselling and social integration actions are also planned for children in child protection institutions, aiming at their housing rehabilitation and strengthening their social integration.

Based on the above, an intensive and systematic cooperation has been developed between the National Coordinator, the MOSCF, the Executive Structure of the MOSCF and the Executive Structure of the Ministry of Economy and Finance, in order to implement the actions/measures included in the NAP for the " Child Guarantee ", concerning the prevention of institutionalization and de-institutionalization.

Finally, it is worth mentioning the report which presents the main priorities of the National Strategy for the Social Integration of Roma 2021-2030, as well as implementation actions with direct or indirect targeting of Roma children, ([Annex I](#), pp.4-8).

### 3.7. Supporting policy framework

Measures/actions to address child poverty and social exclusion are still being implemented in a supporting policy framework, as outlined below.

#### 3.7.1. Measures supporting parents/guardians' access to adequate resources

Regarding the **Minimum Guaranteed Income Scheme**, in 2021 the beneficiaries were 91,797 minors, in 2022, 69,744 minors and in 2023, 59,463 minors respectively.

Regarding **income support policies/programs for families with children**, it is noted that the birth allowance of €2,000 was increased retroactively, as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, to €2,400 for the first child, €2,700 for the second, €3,000 for the third and €3,500 for the fourth and above. The current cost of the birth allowance is €150 million and concerns about 75,000 new births per year. The cost of this increase is estimated at €45 million per year and €90 million for 2024 (due to the payment of the 2023 retroactive amounts). In addition, the child allowance amounts to €1,020 million (regular budget). A new measure is the provision of financial assistance for applicants for international protection (year 2021: 1470 children; year 2022: 5763 children; and year 2023: 5158 children).

With regard to access to favourable tax and budgetary arrangements, the Article 43 of Law 5045/2023 and effective from tax year 2024, the tax reduction amounts due to dependent children were adjusted and are as follows: €900 for a taxpayer with 1 dependent child, €1,120 for 2 dependent children, €1,340 for 3 dependent children, €1,580 for 4 dependent children and €1,780 for 5 dependent children. Based on par. 2 of Article 1 of Law 3454/2006 the three-parent families are also exempted from the passenger car registration tax.

According to par. 26 and 49 of Annex III of Law 2859/2000, being in force, the reduced VAT rate of par. 1 of Article 21, applies to items for infant and child nutrition and to items for infant safety and protection, namely absorbent nappies for infants and child car seats. A reduced rate of 13% cost was established against 24% (on the consumption of ELSTAT for the year 2021, increased by 15% for the year 2022). In addition, support measures (allowances) were introduced: to address the increase in market cost (Market pass), to subsidize fuel (Fuel pass) and to provide financial support for electricity bills of domestic consumers (Power pass).

### *3.7.2. Measures reconciling work and family life*

The operation of a single type of full-day primary school in 7,505 school units across Greece and the "**Neighbourhood Nannies**" program to promote labour market integration, as well as labour integration and reintegration programs, vocational training for the unemployed, with emphasis on the long-term unemployed, women and vulnerable groups, were established. In addition, a number of child protection leaves have been provided for in the Civil Servants Code (Law 3528/2007) and the leaves to facilitate persons with family obligations have been extended, in accordance with the provisions of Law 4674/2020, which are intertwined with the protection of the workers' health and their children.

It is worth mentioning the favourable regime introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic to protect children. A series of circulars were issued so that all ministries could continue their activities, while ensuring the civil servants' health and consequently their families and relatives, as well as the citizens' health, served by public services and local government departments. Finally, favourable provisions are included in the corresponding legislation on the teleworking scheme. To support working parents in the private sector, during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, special-purpose leaves were established during the period of suspension of school and day-care facilities (leaves of parents due to children's illness from COVID-19). The adoption of teleworking during the pandemic contributed substantially to its introduction on a permanent basis in the public sector by Law 4807/2021. In addition, with Law 4808/2021 measures were promoted to incorporate the provisions of Directive (EU) 2019/1158 in order to balance work and family life and the current framework was updated by codifying and extending existing authorizations and introducing new ones. Essentially, the regulations on the new leaves to which parents and caregivers are entitled take important steps towards reconciling professional and family life (during the leave, a special maternity protection benefit is paid monthly by the DYPA, in line with the minimum wage, and insurance coverage is provided). More specifically, the following were codified: maternity leave (17 weeks), childcare leave (as reduced working hours or equal leave), leave for prenatal check-ups, leave for child sickness, leave for child hospitalization, leave for serious illnesses of children, leave for single-parent families, leave to check upon children's school performance, reduced working hours for parents of disabled children. In addition, leave for medically assisted reproduction (7 days) was introduced. With Article 43 of Law 4997/2022, the special maternity protection leave was increased from 6 to 9 months and by Article 150 of Law 5078/2023, this leave was extended to all e-EFKA policy-holders and to the paid mandate. According to MD 28843/2024, the special maternity protection benefit was extended for freelancers, self-employed and farmers under Article 151 of Law 5078/2023. Furthermore, under Article 6 of Law 5089/2024 the rights to maternity leave, paternity leave and special maternity leave to same-sex couples having a child together, as well as to natural and adoptive parents, were extended.

In addition, as regards parental leave, in accordance with the requirements of Directive (EU) 2019/1158,

the payment of an allowance by the DYPA was established, enhancing the ability of parents to make use of this leave, especially fathers, in order to support the employment and professional development of mothers. In particular, the DYPA will pay a parental leave allowance, for the first two months, to each parent, per month, in an amount equal to the minimum statutory wage, as determined each time, as well as a proportion of holiday benefit and leave allowance based on the above-mentioned amount.

### *3.7.3. Policy measures on quality services for children*

Implementation of the "**Children's Homes**" in four cities, in accordance with the principles of Child Friendly Justice and training of new recruits in the Protocol for the forensic examination of juvenile victims of sexual offences during criminal proceedings. The "**Just Closer**" program, aimed at protecting children of suspects/defendants is underway, as is the upgrading of the Juvenile and Social Welfare Services. The above actions are the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice.

### *3.7.4. Policies to modernize social protection systems*

These policies include the following actions:

- (a) the development of an information system of the National System of Recording & Monitoring of Reports of Incidents of Child Abuse, based on the Law 4837/2021, which operates at the E.K.K.A.
- (b) the creation of a National Digital Platform for the collection and uniform recording of administrative data, necessary for monitoring the implementation of the Recommendation and the progress of actions and work under this NAP.

### *3.7.5. Measures for building infrastructure*

Special development programs are implemented at the level of local government (**Special Program: FILODIMOS II, Special Development Program "Antonis Tritsis"**), for the creation, repair and maintenance of school buildings, municipal sports facilities, and playgrounds, as well as for the construction and maintenance of infrastructure accessible to people with disabilities.

### *3.7.6. Staff training actions*

Indicatively, a number of training courses are held for the staff of the Reception and Identification Service of the MoMA, who are employed in structures in the field and at the central level, as well as for the Hellenic Police. Training activities are also foreseen on methods of dealing with violence against women with disabilities, staff working in shelters for victims of domestic violence and public officials in dealing with sexual abuse of children.

### *3.7.7. Measures to ensure that services are provided in an equal and inclusive way*

The operation of local centres (Social Support Centres, Community Centres, Roma Branches of Community Centres and Migrant Integration Centres) continues, as well as the implementation of the program to strengthen intercultural mediation in Community Centres/Migrant Integration Centres, with the broader objective of providing information and facilitating access to services for vulnerable people. For unaccompanied children, the National Guardianship System for Unaccompanied Minors, the national certification program for conducting the best interests of the child assessment was implemented and the project "**Building the Future: sharing good practices on the transition of migrant children to adulthood**" was completed.

To prevent and combat gender-based violence, information and awareness-raising activities are carried out in schools on intimate partner violence for women and girls with disabilities and their guardians. The design and implementation of large-scale training programs on interculturalism, the removal of stereotypes and



discrimination, social integration and inclusion of Roma is also planned in cooperation with Roma organizations. Finally, for people with disabilities, the pilot implementation of the two-year program "**Personal Assistant for People with Disabilities**" was launched, which enables people with disabilities to be supported in their daily life by a Personal Assistant or Personal Assistants of their choice, according to their needs.

### *3.7.8. Addressing energy poverty*

Addressing energy poverty until 2030 was a priority as well as a major challenge, in order to reverse the impact on Greek society. The National Action Plan (NAP) includes the development of a specific monitoring and evaluation process of the mitigation progress up to 2030. The specification of the planned policy measures is based on three different dimensions: (a) Dimension I: The first dimension aims at protecting affected consumers from energy poverty. More specifically, three policy measures will be implemented, combining both support for affected households in extreme and exceptional energy poverty conditions and protection through regulatory and policy measures. (b) Dimension II: The second dimension aims at combating energy poverty in the long term through the implementation of financial programs for the coordinated improvement of energy efficiency and the promotion of the use of Renewable Energy Sources (RES) in residential buildings of affected households. Four different policy measures will be implemented in full alignment with the key design principles outlined in the National Energy and Climate Plan, both for the case of financing schemes and for specific market mechanisms, such as, but not limited to, Energy Performance Obligation Enforcement Schemes. (c) Dimension III: Finally, the third dimension concerns the implementation of information and education actions in households, which will be carried out through the Energy Performance Obligation Enforcement Regimes for the period 2021-2030, as well as via centrally planned information and awareness-raising actions for affected consumers and energy saving professionals. Specifically, in November 2023, a package of measures was announced that includes new low-voltage electricity invoices and emergency support for energy vulnerable people, based on their heating needs for electricity. This support concerns the heating period from 01.01.2024 to 31.03.2024. More specifically, beneficiaries will be able to receive the allowance, for bills of the specific consumption period, issued until 15.9.2024. The amount of the allowance is calculated on the basis of the climatic conditions (rating days) of each settlement or neighbourhood. In addition, the basic amount of the allowance will be increased by 20% for each dependent child. Finally, it is noted that the Social Invoice and Social Electricity Invoice for Large-Families will continue to be subsidized.

Finally, there follows a summary of the actions, which:

- (a) have been completed,
- (b) have not been implemented,
- (c) are under planning/review,
- (d) constitute new actions which were not already in the NAP.

The detailed data of the actions are listed in the respective Tables Excel 8.1., ([Annex II](#), Excel 8.2., ([Annex III](#)) & Excel 9 ([Annex IV](#)). In particular, the new actions are highlighted (*in purple shading*) in the Tables.

#### **a) ACTIONS COMPLETED**

- 1) Provision of care and accommodation for infants, toddlers and children in structures (infant, nursery and integrated care nurseries), see. See also Table 9, Excel 8.1.1, line 4.
- 2) Promotion of mental health and prevention of mental disorders in the population of unaccompanied minors, Excel 8.1.4b, line 25
- 3) ESTIA 2021: Housing program for applicants for international protection, Excel 8.1.6, line 22
- 4) Program "Work – Life Balance, Excel 9.1.3, line 18

- 5) Digital Care I & Digital Care II, Excel 9.2.3, line 90
- 6) Training of teachers in differentiated teaching, Excel 9.2.4, line 117
- 7) Introductory training for newly appointed teachers, Excel 9.2.4, line119
- 8) "Building the Future. Exchanging good practices on the transition of migrant children to adulthood", NAP 9.4, Excel 9.4, line147
- 9) Addressing multiple discrimination of people belonging to vulnerable social groups, Excel 9.4, line148
- 10) Operation of a pilot program for functional disability assessment, Excel 9.5, line 157
- 11) Ensuring the presence of sign language interpreters during the examination of deaf people by the Disability Certification Centres, Excel 9.5, line158
- 12) Supply of the Educational and Counselling Support Centres with logistical equipment and psychometric tools, Excel 9.5, line165
- 13) Incorporation of Directive 882/2019 on accessibility requirements for people with disabilities to goods and services (European Accessibility Act - EAA), Excel 9.5, line 16

#### b) ACTIONS NOT IMPLEMENTED

- 1) Temporary relocation of a settlement in the area of Peleka, Municipality of Katerini, Excel 8.1.6, line 19 - *not implemented due to the unsuitability of the proposed relocation site*
- 2) Greek language learning, employability and counselling program, Excel 8.2.9, line 57 - *the action was not approved*
- 3) Establishment by the Ministry of Justice of a toll-free telephone number for mobile and fixed telephones for the provision of information Infodesk, Excel 9.2.1, line 55 - *the project has not been implemented and has been abandoned. It has not been included in the Ministry of Justice's 2024 Annual Action Plan*
- 4) Actions for the Strengthening of Juvenile Facilities, Excel 9.2.1, line 56 - *the project has been cancelled, but efforts are being made, it will be included in the new NSRF*
- 5) Development of an assessment tool to evaluate the knowledge and skills of Unaccompanied Minors over 15 years old Excel 9.4, line149 - *the funding was not approved*

#### c) ACTIONS UNDER PLANNING/REVIEW

- 1) Integration and Education of Roma Children "Supportive interventions in Roma communities to increase access and reduce drop-outs from education for children and adolescents", Excel 8.1.2, line 13 - *This action is currently being reassessed and redesigned. In addition, it is mentioned that actions related to Roma education have already been carried out in the framework of the Child Guarantee III project implemented by UNICEF and specifically in the Pillar "Inclusive Education".*
- 2) Training of teachers employed in schools attended by children of migrants/refugees, Roma, VSG pupils, etc., Excel 8.1.2, line 16
- 3) Teacher training, Excel 8.1.2, line 17
- 4) Development of an integrated curriculum aimed at the cognitive development of infants and toddlers (3 months to 4 years) (Project "Kipseli"), Excel 8.2.1, line 7
- 5) Development of interventions to support infants, school-age children/ Roma adolescents in experiential workshops and children's camps (in Western Macedonia, Thessaly, Central Greece, Peloponnese, Attica), Excel 8.2.9, line 53 - *The action has not yet been specified. This action has been included in the ROPs, which have not specified their actions; they are at the planning stage. In particular, specialization specifications have been sent in the framework of the preparation of the Local Action Plans (LAPs). Feedback will be sent in the near future. Further specialization instructions to the Regions will be planned by the Executive Structure.*



- 6) Creation of Childcare Centres within large companies, Excel 9.1.3, line 20 - *The project needs to be reviewed due to zero interest from businesses to join the program*
- 7) Education - Training of Human Resources involved in institutional - operational strengthening, reorganization actions in the field of welfare / social inclusion (Pillar 1.1 gr.3 Table CG DI), Excel 9.2.4, line 92 - *expected to be included in the Human Resources and Social Cohesion Program, under call 3831/3.8.2023*
- 8) Digital training for welfare service providers - Excel 9.2.4, line 93 - *has been submitted to the EU review and has been approved*
- 9) Integrated actions of counselling and social integration - housing rehabilitation for young people from vulnerable groups, former juveniles in child protection institutions aged 15 to 24 years (Pillar 1.2. line 20, Table CG DI), Excel 9.4, line137 - *the action is at an early stage - under discussion in order to decide on its specificity*
- 10) Establishment of additional mobile units for Community Centres with Roma branches, Excel 9.4, line139 - *new action proposed by the National Coordinator of the Child Guarantee*
- 11) Implementation of large-scale training programs on interculturalism, stereotyping and discrimination for Roma, Excel 9.4, line140 - *the action is part of the Memorandum of Cooperation between the National Centre for Public Administration and the General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and Poverty Alleviation, which is awaiting activation*
- 12) Information activities for women and girls with disabilities on prevention, identification and reporting of gender-based violence and existing support services and conducting seminars for parents/guardians of girls with disabilities on their reproductive and sexual rights in cooperation with the KETHI and the National Confederation of People with Disability (ESAMEA), Excel 9.4, line144 - *regarding the implementation stage of the action, a technical meeting was held in March 2024 between relevant stakeholders and representatives of the General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights (GSEHR), KETHI and ESAMEA in order to find the areas of cooperation in the context of the renewal of the cooperation protocol between the General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights and ESAMEA which was signed on 28.09.2021 with a two-year duration and has therefore expired. At the same time, the roles and responsibilities of the institutions were discussed in view of the planning of these projects in order to seek funding through the new NSRF 2021 - 2025.*

#### d) NEW ACTIONS

- 1) PLEIADES, Excel 8.1.4a, line15
- 2) DIONI, Excel 8.1.4a, line16
- 3) Creation of six (6) Mobile Units by Legal Persons Governed by Private Law for the provision of psychosocial support services for children and adolescents, Excel 8.1.4b, line11
- 4) Creation of 8 boarding schools for adults, adolescents, children with Autism Spectrum Disorders
- 5) Friendly Communities in the Promotion of Breastfeeding - AMALTHIA, Excel 8.1.5, line 5
- 6) Childhood Obesity Program, Excel 8.1.5, line 8
- 7) Support field actors in planning and prioritizing child-friendly services/actions, Excel 8.1.6, line 24
- 8) Preparation of an Action Plan for the Enhancement of the Friendliness of the Hostels of the GSEHR Network of Structures after the completion of the inventory of the specific needs of children hosted in the Hostels - witnesses of domestic violence and the creation of a relevant Tool, Excel 8.1.6, line 34
- 9) Program "KALIPSI", Excel 8.1.6, line 38
- 10) Financial assistance for applicants for international protection, Excel 9.1.2, line 16
- 11) Maternity protection, support for female employment for private sector workers, Excel 9.1.3, line 24

- 12) Protecting motherhood, fatherhood and the family, supporting employment. Improving the legislative framework for facilities for working parents in the private sector, Excel 9.1.3, line 25
- 13) Supporting private sector working parents during the COVID pandemic -19, Excel 9.1.3, line 26
- 14) Program of subsidies to enterprises for the employment of 10,000 long-term unemployed aged 45 and over in areas of high unemployment, Excel 9.1.3, line 31
- 15) Program of subsidies to enterprises for the employment of unemployed people aged 30 and over in the Regions in Transition, with emphasis on women, Excel 9.1.3, line 32
- 16) Program of subsidies to enterprises for the employment of unemployed people aged 30 years and over in the less developed regions of the country with emphasis on long-term unemployed and older unemployed, Excel 9.1.3, line 33
- 17) Grant scheme for businesses to recruit 1,000 disadvantaged and particularly disadvantaged people, Excel 9.1.3, line 34
- 18) Program of subsidies to enterprises for the employment of: A. 3.000 unemployed persons belonging to special and vulnerable social groups and B. 7.000 unemployed persons facing obstacles to their integration or reintegration into the labour market, Excel 9.1.3, lines 36, 37
- 19) Work experience program for 35 graduates of the training programs, in the framework of the European Program "Child Guarantee", Excel 9.1.3, line 44
- 20) Grant program for business initiatives for the employment of young freelancers aged 20 to 44, belonging to marginalized social groups such as the Roma", Excel 9.1.3, line 45
- 21) Training program for 10,000 unemployed beneficiaries of the Minimum Guaranteed Income and homelessness and subsidies to enterprises for their employment in the framework of the project "Social reintegration of the most vulnerable groups: Beneficiaries of Minimum Guaranteed Income and homelessness", Excel 9.1.3, line 47
- 22) Subsidized training and employment program for unemployed Roma, Excel 9.1.3, line 48
- 23) Updating of the operating regulations of the Network of Structures and creation of protocols for cooperation between relevant bodies for the management of gender and domestic violence, Excel 9.2.2, line 69
- 24) Special Development Program for first and second degree Local Authorities, associations of municipalities and legal entities / Development and Solidarity Program for Local Government "Antonis Tritsis" Call AT06 "Urban Revitalization", includes, among others, creation and upgrading of municipal open and closed sports facilities, schools etc., Excel 9.2.3.1, line 76
- 25) Special Development Program for Local Authorities, Associations of Municipalities and Legal Entities / Development and Solidarity Program for Local Authorities "Antonis Tritsis" Call AT11 "Earthquake Protection of Buildings", includes mainly studies and projects of earthquake protection in school buildings, Excel 9.2.3.1, line 77
- 26) Upgrading and interoperability of the Child Guarantee Information System, Excel 9.2.3.2, line 89
- 27) Training of staff of the Reception and Identification Centres & Closed Controlled Structures and CAFTAAS, Excel 9.2.3.2, line 89-113
- 28) Training of residents in Reception and Identification Centres & Closed Controlled Structures and CAFTAASs on child sexual abuse issues, Excel 9.2.3.2, line 114
- 29) Creation of an independent disability assessment body, Excel 9.5, line 161
- 30) Codification of Insurance Legislation (Phase B), Excel 9.5, line 168
- 31) Uniform insurance and benefits regulation for all e-EFKA-integrated institutions, Excel 9.5, line 169

## 4. INDICATORS, TARGETS AND MONITORING

Sections 7 and 11 of the National Action Plan (2022) include Targets and Monitoring Indicators. The most important of all is AROPE as concluded from Section 2 herein. The recorded changes to the other indicators are included in the attached file "Monitoring Indicators and Recorded Changes" ([Annex V](#)). Some of these recorded changes have already been reported in Section 2 herein.

In particular, regarding the European Commission's observations on the implementation of the NAP in Greece, it is worth noting that:

- According to Section 2 herein and the attached "Monitoring Indicators and Recorded Changes", **child poverty has decreased from 2022 to 2023 (AROP)**, while child poverty and social exclusion (AROPE) has held steady. **Notably, a decrease also appears in the AROPE component "Living in a household with a very low work intensity"**, while the component "Severe material and social deprivation" shows a slight increase.
- In addition, **the participation of all children in pre-school education** (Children aged less than 3 years in formal childcare - EUROSTAT) **has increased**. In Greece in particular, in the recent year (2023), the percentage of children under 3 years old in pre-school education (29.6%) increased by 0.5% compared to the corresponding percentage (29.1%) in the previous year (2022). The share of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion receiving formal pre-school education and care (Children in formal childcare or education by age group, duration and risk of poverty or social exclusion - EU-SILC survey) is 20.3% for the most recent year (2023). The percentage of Roma children receiving formal pre-school education and care at ages up to 3 years is 9.0%, while according to the "Monitoring Indicators and Recorded Changes" file, at ages above 3 years, it approaches 32.0%.
- In addition, the percentage of 15-year-olds who are low achieving in reading, mathematics or science (EUROSTAT) has increased. In Greece, in the most recent year (2022), the percentage (37.6%) increased by 7.1% compared to the corresponding percentage (30.5%) in the previous reference year (2018). Therefore, school performance has not improved.
- According to the Fundamental Rights Agency, as recorded in the "Monitoring Indicators and Recorded Changes" file, **81% of Roma children aged 5 to 17 attended compulsory education** in 2021. At the end of 2023, **15,134 (8,527 boys and 6,607 girls) refugee and migrant children, including 1,289 children** from Ukraine, were enrolled in schools.
- Furthermore, as recorded in the attached file "Monitoring Indicators and Recorded Changes", in Greece in the most recent year (2021), the percentage of children at risk of poverty with unmet dental needs (6.2%) increased by 0.2% compared to the corresponding percentage (6.0%) in the immediately preceding reference year (2017). Furthermore, in Greece in the recent year (2021), **the percentage of children with unmet medical needs (3.3%) shows a decrease of 1.2%** compared to the corresponding percentage (4.5%) in the immediately preceding reference year (2017).
- The percentage of children in Greece who are overweight or obese (35.0%) at ages 10-19 years is the highest in the European Union for 2022, according to the World Health Organization.
- The percentage of new mothers who breastfed for 6 months or more reached 36.6% in 2019, according to ELSTAT, while there is no corresponding reference value more recently.

According to the attached [KEPE's News Analysis \(Annex A\)](#) and KEPE's proposed Multidimensional Child Poverty Monitoring Tool, for the **period 2022–2024, in Greece**, regarding the Simple Indicator "Heating Method" of the Dimension "Home Conditions" of Economic Child Poverty ( $\chi^2_{[1, N=4,247]} = 7.302$ ,  $p=0.007$ ), **a lower percentage of children (11.2%) did not have adequate or safe heating during the current school year 2023–2024, a percentage that decreased by 2.8%** compared to the corresponding

percentage (14.0%) of the immediately preceding school year (2022–2023). Similarly, in the Simple Indicator "Housing" of the Dimension "Home Conditions" of Economic Child Poverty ( $\chi^2_{[1, N=3.970]} = 27.590, p < 0.001$ ), **a lower percentage of children (10.8%) were placed in shelters or were homeless during the current school year 2023–2024, a rate that decreased by 5.8% compared to the corresponding rate (16.6%) in the immediately preceding school year (2022–2023).** In addition, according to the same indicator, **for the period 2018–2023, in Attica, which represents the country in total,** (Table 3.3.1 of the attached [Section 3.3 of Issue 54 of the KEPE Scientific Journal "Greek Economic Outlook"](#)), (**Annex B**) the Simple Indicator "Internet" of the Dimension "Home Conditions" of Economic Child Poverty depends on the school year ( $\chi^2_{[4, N=6.286]} = 37.397, p < 0.001$ ). More specifically, a higher share of children below the threshold (5.8%) is found in the 2019–2020 school year (Table 2, of the attached [KEPE's News Analysis](#)), **while in the most recent school year (2022–2023), the share of children below the threshold decreased by 0.7%** compared to the immediately preceding school year (2021–2022). In addition, the Simple Indicator "Supply of electricity" of the Dimension "Home Conditions" of Economic, Child Poverty is dependent on the school year ( $\chi^2_{[4, N=6.111]} = 22.905, p < 0.001$ ). Specifically, a higher share of children (9.8%) experienced prolonged power cuts in their home, lasting more than a week, in the 2020–2021 school year, **while in the most recent school year, the share of children (5.5%) reduced by 1.5% compared to the corresponding share (7.0%) in the immediately preceding school year.** Moreover, the Simple Indicator "Housing" of the Dimension "Home Conditions" of Economic Child Poverty depends on the school year ( $\chi^2_{[4, N=5.962]} = 68.037, p < 0.001$ ). In particular, a higher share of children (14.4%) were placed in shelters or homelessness situations in the 2020–2021 school year, **while in the most recent school year, the share of children (12.3%) decreased by 0.9% compared to the corresponding share (13.2%) in the immediately preceding school year.** In addition, [child energy poverty](#) has been significantly reduced, according to the [KEPE's](#) proposed multidimensional child poverty tool. In particular, the Dimension of Energy has improved significantly in recent school years (2021–2022 and 2022–2023). Specifically, a lower share of children (10.3%) are poor in terms of the energy parameter in school year 2022–2023 compared to previous school years, falling within the time period during and after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic ( $\chi^2_{[4, N = 6.459]} = 43.773, p < 0.001$ ). This seems to be the case because more and more people have received energy-related benefits in Greece in recent years. **In light of the above, this is the central patterning of several aspects of child deprivation regarding the home.**

- As far as the number of children living in institutional care for 2022, MOSCF recorded 3,356 children in institutional care. Of these, 1,346 resided in child protection institutions under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family, while there were also 2,010 unaccompanied minors residing in shelters under the supervision of the Ministry of Immigration and Asylum.

More specifically, according to Section 7 of the National Action Plan of Greece (2022), Monitoring Indicators have been included, which are listed in detail in the attached Excel file of the NAP entitled "Indicators for Monitoring the Implementation of the NAP". In the relevant sheet of this file on poverty and social exclusion, the multidimensional poverty of children is mentioned, as is the need for child-focused research allowing for micro-data analysis. On the other hand, the European Commission invites us to take into account the indicators referred to by the [European Social Policy Analysis Network](#), [Unicef](#), [Eurofound](#), and [Eurochild](#)<sup>9</sup>. The only one of these indexes that is also in line with the above-mentioned call for multidimensional child poverty and the need for child-focused research that allows for micro-data analysis is the one mentioned by Eurochild. The same Index of Leriou is also used by KEPE in accordance with the attached News Analysis. This analysis presents the findings of the KEPE's proposed Multidimensional Child Poverty Index from 2010 to 2024.

<sup>9</sup> Eurochild 2022 report on children in need across Europe, (2022). <https://eurochild.org/uploads/2022/12/Invisible-children-Eurochild-2022-report-on-children-in-need-across-Europe.pdf>, (Accessed on 13/03/2024).

Eurochild 2023 report on children in need across Europe, (2023). <https://eurochild.org/uploads/2023/11/Childrens-Rights-Political-will-or-wont.pdf>, (Accessed on 13/03/2024).

More specifically, according to the above index, the sum of Economic and Non-Economic Child Poverty constitutes the General (total) Child Poverty. Economic Child Poverty consists of three dimensions: Home Conditions (D.1), Nutrition (D.2), and Unemployment of the Guardians (D.3). Non-Economic Child Poverty also consists of three Dimensions: Free Healthcare (D.4), Moral Education (D.5), and Leisure (D.6). Each of these Dimensions consists of Simple Indicators.

The results of KEPE's proposed [Total Index](#) regarding Dimension 1 "Living conditions at home" have already been mentioned above.

Also, for the period 2018–2023, in Attica, which represents the whole country, the Simple Indicator "Milk", of the dimension "Nutrition" of Economic Child Poverty depends on the school year ( $\chi^2_{[4, N=5.948]} = 9.544, p = 0.049$ ). More specifically, a higher share of children (18.1%) were deprived of milk on a daily basis in the school year 2019–2020, while in the most recent school year, the share of children (15.7%) decreased by 1.1% compared to the corresponding share (16.7%) in the immediately preceding school year. In addition, the Simple Indicator "Meat - Fish – Pulses" of the Dimension "Nutrition" of Economic Child Poverty depends on the school year ( $\chi^2_{[4, N=5.743]} = 10.726, p = 0.030$ ). In particular, a higher share of children (11.5%) were deprived of meat, fish or pulses at least once a week in the 2020–2021 school year, while in the most recent school year, the share of children (9.8%) increased by 1.5% compared to the corresponding share (8.3%) in the immediately preceding school year.

In the overall Dimension of Unemployment of the Guardians (D.3) of Economic Child Poverty ( $\chi^2_{[3, N=5.362]} = 70.633, p < 0.001$ ), a higher share of children below the threshold (15.3%) is found in the 2020–2021 school year (Fig. 3 of the attached [KEPE's News Analysis](#)), while in the most recent school year (2022–2023) the share of children below the threshold (5.2%) decreased by 3.5% compared to the immediately preceding school year (2021–2022).

According to Table 2, of the attached [KEPE's News Analysis](#) for the period 2018–2023, in Attica, in the Simple Indicator "Leisure Time" of the overall dimension of Leisure (D.6) of Non-Economic Child Poverty ( $\chi^2_{[4, N=6.371]} = 9.979, p = 0.041$ ), a higher percentage of children below the threshold (23.6%) is found in the school year 2020–2021, while in the recent school year (2022–2023), the percentage of children below the threshold (19.6%) reduced by 0.8% compared to the immediately preceding, school year (2021–2022). In the Simple Indicator "Vacation" of the overall dimension "Leisure" (D.6) of Non-Economic Child Poverty ( $\chi^2_{[4, N=6.388]} = 101.023, p < 0.001$ ), a higher share of children below the threshold (25.3%) is found in the 2020–2021 school year, while in the most recent school year (2022–2023) the share of children below the threshold (12.2%) reduced by 2.1% compared to the immediately preceding school year (2021–2022). In addition, the overall Dimension "Leisure" (D.6) of Non-Economic Child Poverty, depends on the school year ( $\chi^2_{[4, N=6.496]} = 53.131, p < 0.001$ ). More specifically, a higher share of children (23.4%) is found in the 2020–2021 school year (Fig. 3), while in the most recent school year (2022–2023), the share of children below the threshold decreased by 0.1% compared to the immediately preceding school year (2021–2022).

Regarding Table 2 of [KEPE'S News Analysis](#), for the period 2018–2023, in Attica, Economic Child Poverty depends on the school year ( $\chi^2_{[4, N=6.494]} = 55.823, p < 0.001$ ). More specifically, a higher share of children (14.6%) experienced economic poverty in the school year 2020–2021, **while in the most recent school year, the share of children in economic poverty (7.0%) decreased** by 1.2% compared to the corresponding share (8.2%) in the immediately preceding school year.

In conclusion, according to Table 2 of [KEPE's News Analysis](#), for the period 2018–2023, in Attica, which represents the whole country of Greece, **KEPE's Total Index of General Child Poverty** depends on the school year ( $\chi^2_{[4, N=6.502]} = 66.070, p < 0.001$ ). More specifically, a higher share of children (9.4%) experienced general poverty in the 2020–2021 school year, while in the most recent school year, the share of children in general poverty (3.1%) **decreased by 0.4%** compared to the corresponding share (3.5%) in the immediately preceding school year.

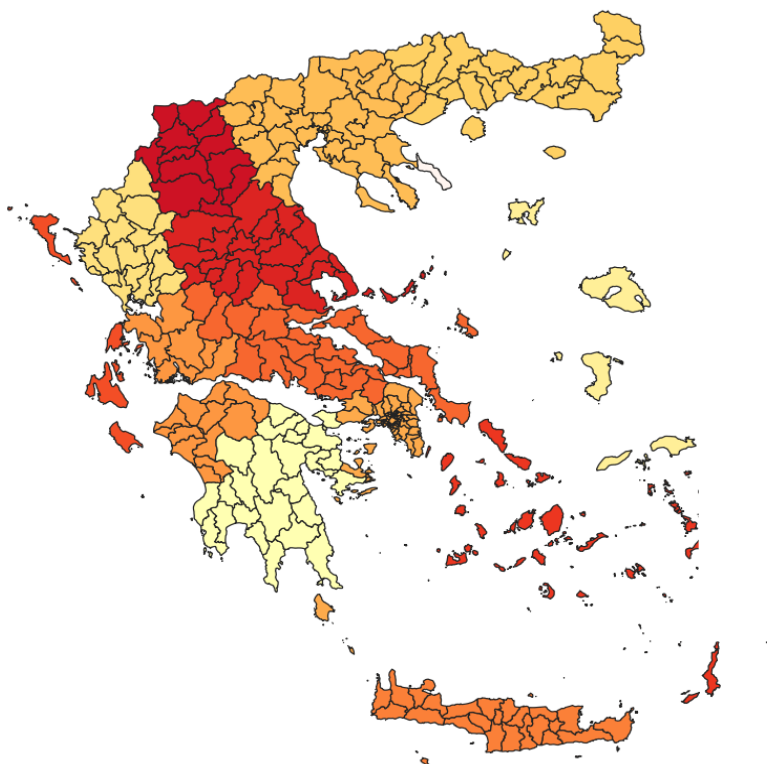


**In conclusion, according to KEPE’s proposed Index, multidimensional, child poverty is reduced by 0.4%.**

In the time period 2022–2024, at a national level ([KEPE’s News Analysis](#)), there is no statistical significance in the evolution over time of the proposed KEPE’s Total Index (General Child Poverty), and therefore, we cannot make a judgement on this change. However, it is possible to **assess regional disparities in terms of Economic Child Poverty**. More specifically, considering Map 5, Economic Child Poverty in Greece for the school year 2023–2024 ( $\chi^2_{[12, N=2.042]} = 40.551, p < 0.001$ ) is highest in the regions of Western Macedonia (19.6%), Thessaly (12.8%) and the South Aegean (10.6%). This finding indicates that natural disasters have had a strong impact on child poverty for the regions affected by them.

However, it is worth noting that for the period 2018–2023, in Attica, according to KEPE's Child Poverty Monitoring Tool, as presented in the attached KEPE's News Analysis, almost **everywhere there have been increases in the recent year in child poverty, these are either without statistical significance or the values formed in the recent year are below the average of all years**. At the national level, for the time period 2022–2024, more years should be included in the analysis.

**Map 5** Geographical Distribution of Economic Child Poverty in Greece during the School Year 2023–2024 (N=2.042, p-value <0,001)



*Source:* Attached News Analysis of the KEPE

The implementation of the Information System (IS) for the Child Guarantee is expected to include:

- (a) the recording of all the elements that make up each policy measure at the level of design and monitoring of its implementation,
- (b) the mapping of poverty and social exclusion at central, regional and local levels,
- (c) the creation of an appropriate database of data not included in (a) and (b), to collect all the data on poverty and social exclusion,
- (d) the business intelligence system for the extraction of indicators and other statistical analyses.

This IS will serve as a precursor to the implementation of a coordinating mechanism for governance, monitoring and evaluation of progress in the implementation of the relevant measures of the NAP, in the framework of the European Commission's Technical Support Instrument (TSI) project and the UNICEF technical study.

## 5. FINANCING

### **ESF+ for the Child Guarantee contribution to the NSRF 2021-2027**

In order to secure the necessary resources from the European budget for the 2021-2027 programming period, the ESF+ Regulation includes a requirement for the thematic concentration of at least 5% of ESF+ resources on child poverty for those K-M with an average percentage of children aged up to 18 years at risk of poverty or social exclusion higher than the Union average for the period 2017-2019, including Greece. In the new NSRF 2021-2027, ESF+ resources for the implementation of the NAP "Guarantee for Children" amount to approximately €900 million in terms of public expenditure. In terms of thematic concentration (Specific Objectives of ESF+), the relevant resources amount to 12.8% of the total ESF+ resources, which corresponds to approximately €684 million in terms of EU support and is distributed as follows:

Actions for (Specific Objectives ESF+) :	BUDGET (EU support in € million)		
	in the 13 Regional Programs	in the Human Resources Program Dynamic and Social Cohesion"	Total in NSRF 2021-2027
education	223	104	327
active inclusion	4.7	-	4.7
refugee children / migrants	0.4	0.4	0.8
Roma children	3.7	-	3.7
social protection and care	312	1.2	313.2
child poverty	34.1	-	34.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>577.9</b>	<b>105.6</b>	<b>683.5</b>

The above resources are earmarked for the implementation of interventions targeted at children in need, which are included in the NAP "Child Guarantee". Among other actions, they include:

- ✓ promoting and supporting children's integration into pre-school education and to provide access to creative employment services for school-age children, adolescents and people with disabilities;
- ✓ deinstitutionalizing of children living in institutions, such as supporting the transformation of institutions into open service structures in the community, strengthening the institution of fostering and adoption, semi-autonomous living arrangements for adolescents, and shelters for children in foster care;
- ✓ ensuring equal access to education for children from disadvantaged groups, such as children with disabilities and special learning difficulties, refugees, Roma, etc. (inclusive education);
- ✓ facilitating the participation of children from disadvantaged groups in sport, culture and active social life;



- ✓ supporting infants, school-age children/ Roma adolescents through experiential workshops and children's camps;
- ✓ facilitating health, such as mobile units for the provision of child psychiatric services, Medical and Educational Centres, Mental Health Units for children and adolescents;
- ✓ addressing the risk of poverty and social exclusion by supporting adolescents in deprived areas and implementing integrated local action plans to tackle child poverty, which are synergistic with the objectives of other national policies, strategies or action plans, such as:
  - the National Strategy for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction
  - the National Action Plan for Children's Rights
  - the National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
  - the Strategy for De-institutionalization
  - the National Strategy and Action Plan for the Social Integration of Roma 2021-2030
  - the National Action Plan for Public Health 2021-2025
  - the National Strategy for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors
  - the National Strategy for the social inclusion of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection.

The actions that have been activated so far in the ESF+ Programs, as well as those planned to be implemented in the next period, are listed in the Table ([Annex VI](#)). It should be noted that for the sectoral Program “Developmental Coordination Disorder”, where there are no budgets for actions, these will be finalized during the specification, once they are activated.

Regarding the actions of the Recovery and Resilience Fund, kindly refer to [Annex II](#), [Annex III](#), [Annex IV](#).

## 6. LESSONS LEARNED AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

The preparation of the NAP has contributed significantly to the uniform recording, monitoring and evaluation of evidence-based actions needed to combat child poverty and social exclusion. Bringing all policies and actions together in a single document has reduced fragmentation and facilitated the linking and systematization of measures. The European Commission's Recommendation and the NAPs developed in response to it, represent a positive initiative for a single record of all actions and for tackling child poverty and social exclusion.

However, given that the institution is being implemented for the first time, it is particularly difficult to gather the actions and data needed to draw conclusions based on the relevant indicators in the short period of time between the submission of the NAP and the submission of this report, and it is not possible to comprehensively assess the impact of the actions on the AROPE population.

Children in a situation of poverty or social exclusion are not a distinct target group for the majority of actions targeted at the general population, while there are actions that are not targeted at children but at their families, in which case children are indirect beneficiaries.

The scope of some actions includes children in extreme poverty. In many actions, socio-economic criteria are an eligibility criterion, with the consequence that children are indirect beneficiaries through the family. In this way it cannot be said with certainty that the actions focus on children at risk of relative poverty.

It is therefore necessary - among other things - to carry out focused field surveys in disadvantaged areas (mountainous/difficult, island and remote areas) in order to accurately capture child poverty and social exclusion on an individual basis.

It is also observed that the main funding sources are ESF+ and the Recovery and Resilience Fund (RRF)

and as the RRF projects are of a pilot nature, their results will be used and in their evolution will be funded from other sources (e.g. regular budget etc.)

It should be noted that the reporting period of this report coincides with the period of finalization of the actions to be included in the NSRF and the start of implementation of the actions included in the RRF, therefore several actions have not yet been fully activated and/or identified.

Finally, following on from the above, the following is noted by sector:

**Poverty and social exclusion:** as noted, over the reference period there was a decrease in the percentage of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion, which reached 28.1% in 2023, remaining stable compared to 2022, down 3.9 percentage points compared to 2021 (32.0%). However, this decrease is due to a reduction in the proportion of the population at low work intensity, to 8.3% in 2023 from 9.5% in 2022 and 12.1% in 2021. The data shows an increase in material and social deprivation for children aged 0- 17 years, which is 0.1 percentage points in 2023 (15.6%) compared to 2022 (15.5%), but remains at a lower level than in 2021 (16.1%).<sup>10</sup>

**Access to early childhood care:** Initiatives are being taken to ensure that all children under 4 years of age are provided with places in pre-school care. Access for pre-school children, infants and toddlers to pre-school education and care services is ensured through the implementation of a program of financial support for families by covering the cost of participation through vouchers, based on a system of preferential rates for children in a situation of poverty and social exclusion at national level. For access to municipal nurseries, priority is given to children in need.

**Education:** The promotion of inclusive education is a key objective and a number of actions that are being implemented, advocate in this direction. Particularly with regard to pupils with disabilities, the promotion of inclusive education and the strengthening of the human resources of special education professionals has been included in the NAP on the rights of persons with disabilities.

Moreover, while an integrated policy approach is in place to support students at risk of poverty or social exclusion, statistics show that more coherent efforts are needed to enhance Roma children's access to education and promote inclusive education: according to the data of the National Roma Settlements and Population Census (2021),<sup>11</sup> in a sample of the Roma population, which covers 46.5% (54,735) of the total registered Roma population (117,495), that 66% of Roma children (ages 4 to 15) attend compulsory education, while the rate of attendance in settlements (type I, II, III) is even lower (64%) compared to scattered houses/apartments, i.e. living outside settlements. In relation to the transport of Roma pupils to school, 15 settlements reported problems in transporting pupils. Also, only 16% of Roma children complete upper secondary education, compared to 95.7% of the total population. The data, as well as field visits to settlements of the Regional Task Forces show that a large percentage of underage youth do not have a primary school leaving certificate, which means that they cannot continue their education/training or find a job. While by law, pupils up to 15 years of age can enroll in primary school, the Roma themselves are not attracted to this option, one of the reasons being the age gap with other pupils attending primary school, and there is an urgent need for Roma children to be properly prepared for their smooth integration and acceptance by the school environment, so that they can keep up with their peers in terms of social and learning skills.

Regarding access to education and school activities for unaccompanied minors, according to Article 18, par. 8 of the Law 5038/2023 it is noted that:

*"For the enrolment of minors of third country nationals in Greek schools of all levels, the corresponding documents provided for nationals are required. Exceptionally, children of third-country nationals may be enrolled in public schools with incomplete supporting documents if:*

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<sup>10</sup> [ELSTAT, Household Income and Living Conditions Survey: Year 2023, 3 April 2024.](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and Poverty Alleviation, National Inventory of Roma Settlements and Population \(year 2021\).](#)

- a. are protected by the Greek state as beneficiaries of international protection,
- b. are citizens of third countries entitled to temporary protection in accordance with Articles 119 to 146 of Law 4939/2022 (A 111),
- c. have applied for international protection,
- d. are citizens of third countries residing in Greece, even if their legal residence in Greece has not been regulated".

However, despite the high rate of enrolment in formal education, as a result of the coordinated efforts of the MoMA and the MOERAS, the educational profile of unaccompanied minors (*who often either had not attended school at all or have insufficient education in their country of origin*), their increased educational needs and their poor understanding of the Greek language raise difficulties with regard to systematic attendance. In addition, as the majority of children are over 15 years old, the difficulty of attendance increases as they enroll in Lyceum (General and Vocational), while finding a job seems to be a priority.

**Health care:** First, it should be noted that some services included in the health benefit package are not practically available, not only for low-income children but for all children (e.g. dental care, mental health services), despite efforts to reform the primary care sector in recent years. In addition, there is inequality in the provision of healthcare services, which is mainly due to the geographically unequal distribution of healthcare infrastructure and services, with the majority of healthcare providers (both public and private) located in urban areas of the country (mainly Athens and Thessaloniki). Children in remote and island areas of regions, municipalities and municipal units face low accessibility to healthcare due to distance and geographical/territorial barriers.<sup>12</sup>

Equality of access to services for children is "compromised" either due to lack of specific medical specialties or due to lack of access<sup>13</sup>. Although citizens have access to a wide range of publicly funded services, this access is often limited either by a lack of medical specialties or by the limited capacity of health centres. More specifically, and in the context of dental care for children, the Dentist Pass program, as a measure to support preventive dental care, has provided a partial temporary cover for needs. Finally, there are no readily available data to quantify the children who have free access to prescription drugs and no estimate can be provided as to the overlap between the groups of children who have free access to prescription drugs and AROPE children, although there are probably some children who fall into both categories.

**Housing:** the design and implementation of housing policy is considered positive and in the right direction. For the first time, a national, coherent, housing strategy is being developed, which includes a multitude of programs, with different criteria, but with the most vulnerable groups and minors as beneficiaries, such as 000 young people and young couples; (b) the "**Coverage**" program, prioritizing households with minor beneficiaries, single parents, three-parent families and large families; (c) the "**Housing and Work**" program, which is being expanded by a legislative provision in 2024 and its budget increased to €15 million from €10 million per biennium; and (d) the "**Renovate-Renovate**" program to expand the housing stock; and (e) the "**Renovate-Rent**" program to expand the housing stock. At the same time, within the year 2024 the institutional framework will be ready in order to launch the calls for social counterpart, i.e. the reconstruction of public properties or the change of use of structured public properties, in order to provide these apartments for social housing, as a support to the poorest and most vulnerable groups, but also as an effort to approach the demographic problem.

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<sup>12</sup> [Greece, Health Profile 2023](#).

<sup>13</sup> ESPAN Thematic Report on Access for children in need to the key services covered by the EU Child Guarantee - Greece (2023).

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

It follows from the above that Greece is planning, elaborating, programming and implementing a significant number of measures/actions to combat child poverty and social exclusion.

The **Child Guarantee** is a new institution in our country, while a number of measures/actions were already being implemented and planned, aiming at reducing child poverty and social exclusion. The implementation of the Recommendation has revealed inherent difficulties that highlight the need to create the necessary structures and operating mechanisms to support the Child Guarantee.

The particular geomorphology of Greece, with many remote, mountainous and island regions, as well as the multidimensional nature of the phenomenon of poverty and social exclusion, requires, in addition to the measurement of child poverty, based on general statistical studies, its study and reflection at the local level and per target group. Therefore, focused field research will be included and specialized in the call "Institutional & Operational Strengthening of the MOSCF, in the framework of the Child Guarantee, through the **Human Resources & Social Cohesion** Program".

The EU Recommendation regarding Child Guarantee is the trigger for establishing a permanent and systematic cooperation between central public administration bodies and especially for further cooperation with actors at local and regional level. Coordination between the Ministries has been successfully carried out. The extension of similar practice with local actors for the effective implementation of measures/actions and their adaptation to local needs and conditions is the next challenge for the National Coordinator. Effective monitoring and evaluation of these actions, at regional and local level, will be facilitated by the operation of the Information System for the Child Guarantee.

In addition, the specification of monitoring and administrative coordination procedures at all levels of the administrative structure, both at central and regional level, will help even more. This will be achieved through the recommendations and proposals that UNICEF will submit in the context of the project funded by the European Commission's Technical Support Instrument (TSI). Finally, a multidimensional indicator, which will incorporate more detail as to the components of child poverty and thus more faithfully capture the impact of subsidy policies on them, such as, for example, electricity, housing and other<sup>14</sup>, is important to be taken into account.

The Greek Government will continue its efforts to combat poverty and social exclusion of children by taking and implementing appropriate measures/actions. The E.K.K.A., as National Coordinator, will continue to play its central role in strengthening the governance of the NAP, both at the level of coordination, monitoring and evaluation.

### 7.1. Good practices

[Preparation of an Action Plan for the Enhancement of the Friendliness of the Shelters of the GSEHR Network of Structures after the completion of the inventory of the specific needs of children hosted in the Shelters - witnesses of domestic violence and the creation of a relevant Tool<sup>15</sup>](#) : Included in the National Action Plan for Gender Equality (2021-2025), prepared by the UNICEF Office in Greece. It aims to integrate the child's perspective in the Shelters of the GSEHR. Furthermore, it is proposed the redesign of the operation of the shelters, not only in terms of financial and human resources, but also in terms of their philosophy, which should be child-centred, as the 20 shelters of the GSEHR's network of structures also host children that are

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<sup>14</sup> See in detail section 4 "Indicators, Targets and Monitoring"

<sup>15</sup> MOSCF

witnesses or victims of domestic violence, together with their mothers.

[All Children in Education" - All Children in Education \(ACE\)<sup>16</sup>](#) : The MoMA, in cooperation with UNICEF and with the support of the European Commission, are implementing the educational program of Non-formal Education "**All Children in Education**" - **All Children in Education (ACE)** to ensure access to quality, inclusive and digital education for children under the responsibility of the MoMA. During the implementation of the program, a common reference framework for non-formal education of refugee and migrant children was introduced for the first time in Greece, which sets standards and indicators for the quality and content of the education provided to children of refugees and migrants. At the same time, within the framework of the project, quality educational material was created, as well as a common framework for the evaluation of the performance of pupils in non-formal education. The measure aims at the smooth integration of children into the public education system, via actions such as: provision of interpretation, intercultural mediation and support for enrolment in public school, Greek and English language, mathematics and science courses, accelerated learning and help with homework.

[National Emergency Response Mechanism<sup>17</sup>](#) : The aim is to locate and identify all unaccompanied minors who are third country nationals and stateless children, so that each child is visible within the protection system, and to provide immediate care. It is based on two main pillars of operation. This mechanism has been designated as the competent authority for the reception of separated and unaccompanied children from Ukraine. It has received the European Crime Prevention Award and was recently, for the second time, recognized as a good practice, earning a highly honoured place for Greece on the Interreg Europe 2021-2027 website.

[Funding for accessibility infrastructure for people with disabilities in school buildings \(construction of ramps and sanitary facilities for access and service of people with disabilities in school units\)<sup>18</sup>](#) : Within the framework of the Ministry of Interior's Funding Programs, municipalities in the country are invited to submit a proposal for funding for the construction or prefabrication and installation of access ramps for people with disabilities, as well as for the construction of sanitary facilities for the service of people with disabilities, in school units under their territorial jurisdiction.

[Funding for fire protection and seismic protection of school buildings, as part of their protection against natural disasters<sup>19</sup>](#) : Fire protection includes (a) the preparation of new fire protection studies, floor plans and technical descriptions of permanent fire protection systems, (b) the updating of old studies, (c) the preparation and delivery of tender documents for the implementation of the fire protection measures and means provided for in the study, and (d) the implementation and maintenance of measures and means of an approved fire protection study. 'Earthquake protection of buildings' mainly includes studies and projects of earthquake protection in school buildings.

[Meals for Music and Artistic Schools<sup>20</sup>](#) : The aim is to cover the costs of feeding the pupils of music and artistic secondary schools of the country, as they are of an inter-municipal nature. This is a permanent action of the Ministry of the Interior and in the 2022-2023 biennium € 7,887,510 were allocated.

[Training of public officials to address child sexual abuse<sup>21</sup>](#) : Currently, within the framework of the Training Institute of the National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government, and in particular in the thematic cycle "Human Rights and Social Policy", the following seminars are being implemented: (a) "Violation of the rights of the child. Phenomenology and the child protection framework"; (b) "Recognition and management of cases of child abuse and neglect" and ; (c) "The minor victim in criminal justice".

[Primary Pediatric Health Care Center for Children's Health Care in Kaisariani<sup>22</sup>](#) : Its operation is a role model

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<sup>16</sup> MoMA

<sup>17</sup> MoMA

<sup>18</sup> Ministry of the Interior

<sup>19</sup> Ministry of the Interior

<sup>20</sup> Ministry of the Interior

<sup>21</sup> Ministry of the Interior

<sup>22</sup> Ministry of Health



in primary pediatric care and its services are provided free of charge.

[Development of the intervention "Friendly Communities for the Promotion of Breastfeeding - AMALTHEA" in the framework of the ALKYONI: National Initiative for the Promotion of Breastfeeding<sup>23</sup>](#) : It is being piloted in ten (10) municipalities in the country.

[Psychosocial Intervention Program for Adolescents and Youth of the "Ploes" organization EPSYME<sup>24</sup>](#) : It is addressed to adolescents and young people, without serious psychiatric or developmental disorders, who face psychosocial difficulties, as well as their families. It includes: [Adolescent and Youth Day Centre](#), [Adolescent Boys' Shelter](#), [Adolescent Girls' Shelter](#) and [Sheltered Apartments](#).

[Lifelong trainings for frontline police officers on juvenile issues<sup>25</sup>](#) : The trainings aim at increasing the awareness of the Greek Police personnel during the performance of their pre-trial duties and have been integrated into the training and retraining programs of the Corps.

[Large -Families invoice<sup>26</sup>](#) : A discount of ten euro cents per kilowatt-hour of electricity is granted, which may be increased if and when electricity savings are achieved.

The National Coordinator  
of the Child Guarantee

Dr. Artemis Anagnostou- Dedouli  
President E.K.K.A

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<sup>23</sup> Ministry of Health

<sup>24</sup> Ministry of Health

<sup>25</sup> Ministry of Civil Protection

<sup>26</sup> Ministry of Environment and Energy

## ANNEXES

[ANNEX A](#) (in Greek)

[ANNEX B](#) (in English)

[ANNEX I](#) (in Greek)

[ANNEX II](#) xlsx Excel Table 8.1 (in Greek)

[ANNEX III](#) xlsx Excel Table 8.2 (in Greek)

[ANNEX IV](#) xlsx Excel Table 9 (in Greek)

[ANNEX V](#) xlsx (in Greek)

[ANNEX VI](#) xlsx (in Greek)

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACE - All Children in Education

ACUMs - Accommodation Centres for Unaccompanied Minors

AMKA - Social Security Number

AROP - At risk of poverty

AROPE - At-Risk-of-Poverty or Social Exclusion Rate

ASOA - Individual Family Rehabilitation Plan

CACs - Creative Activity Centres (CACs)

CAFTAAS- Controlled Access Facility for Temporary Accommodation Facility for Asylum Seekers

CCCs - Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Centres

CGDI - Child Guarantee Deinstitutionalization

CIACS - Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counselling & Support

COVID - Corona Virus Disease

DCD - Developmental Motor Coordination Disorder

DG - REFORM- Directorate General for Structural Reform Support

DYPA - Public Employment Service

ECG - EU Child Guarantee

e-EFKA - Electronic National Social Security Institution

E.K.K.A. - National Centre for Social Solidarity

ELSTAT - Hellenic Statistical Authority

ESF+ - European Social Fund+

ESPAN - European Social Policy Analysis Network

EU - European Union

EUROSTAT - the statistical office of the European Union

EU-SILC - European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions  
GREVIO - Council of Europe Expert Group on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence  
GSEHR - General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights  
IS - Information System  
ISCs - Interdisciplinary Support Committees  
KEPE - Centre of Planning and Economic Research  
KETHI - Research Center for Equality Issues  
JMD - Joint Ministerial Decision  
LAPs - Local Action Plans  
MD - Ministerial Decision  
MOERAS- Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sport  
MoMA - Ministry of Migration and Asylum  
MOLSS - Ministry of Labour and Social Security  
MOSCF - Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family  
NAP - National Action Plan  
NSRF - Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework  
NERM - National Emergency Response Mechanism  
No. – number  
OPEKA - Organization for Provident Allowances and Social Solidarity  
PIP - Public Investment Program  
REF - Refugee Education Reception Facilities  
RES - Renewable Energy Sources  
ROPs - Regional Operational Programs  
RRF - Recovery and Resilience Fund  
ESAMEA - National Confederation of People with Disabilities  
SSAs - Supervised Semi-Autonomous Living Apartments  
TFIHCN - Temporary Foreigner's Insurance and Health Care Number  
VAS- Vocational Apprenticeship Schools  
VHS- Vocational High Schools  
VSG - Vulnerable Social Groups