

EU instruments and funding opportunities for investing in children, Athens, 8 May

In the context of a technical seminar on the implementation of the Commission Recommendation on “Investing in Children – Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage” taking place in Athens on 8 May, the European Commission is gathering regional and local representatives to discuss Greek policy tools and EU funding opportunities for more investment in children and their families and children.

Children and families have been particularly hit by the crisis in Greece, with about 35,4% of children now at-risk-of-poverty and social exclusion facing severe material deprivation. This figure lies clearly above the EU average. Children from lone parents and jobless families are particularly exposed.

The Commission Recommendation “Investing in Children- breaking the cycle of disadvantage”¹ (REC) adopted in 2013 (as part of the Social Investment Package) recalls that investment in children is not only a fair but also a cost efficient approach, contributing to long term growth. In the context of Europe 2020, the EU’s growth strategy, the European Commission and the European Council called on Greece to step up its investment in families and children.

The seminar will also highlight the main financial instruments which can support Greece in delivering these reforms and present projects from various Member States. It will provide a space for managing authorities to discuss lessons from the past and how to move forward in the new programming period 2014-2020. With a total envelope of €335 million (out of which 20% will be earmarked for social inclusion), the European Social Fund (ESF) can support more and better quality childcare, pre-school services. Also, the recently adopted Fund for European Aid to the Deprived (FEAD) can, among others, tackle children’s material deprivation and complement action under the ESF. The Greek allocation in the FEAD amounts to €249 million.

¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32013H0112:EN:NOT>