

**Investing in children:
EU Instruments and funding opportunities**



Human Resources Development
Operational Programme



Workshop on

**Investing in Children in Bulgaria:
EU policy instruments and funding opportunities**

**Europa House Sofia
31th October 2014**



European Institute of Public Administration
Institut européen d'administration publique

Introduction

Target group

This workshop is designed primarily for European Social Fund (ESF) Managing Authorities at both national and regional level.

Description and objectives

In February 2013 the European Commission adopted the Recommendation “Investing in Children-breaking the cycle of disadvantage” (REC) as part of the Social Investment Package. The Recommendation recalls that investment in children is not only a fair but also a cost efficient approach, contributing to long term growth. It invites Member States to step up their efforts and grasp opportunities provided by EU instruments.

The issue is most relevant in Bulgaria: children and families have been particularly hit by the crisis, with about 28.2% of children now at risk of poverty and 46.6% facing material deprivation. In the context of Europe 2020, the EU's growth strategy, the European Commission and the European Council recently called on Bulgaria to “*further improve the accessibility and effectiveness of social services and transfers for children (...) step up efforts to improve access to quality inclusive pre-school and school education of disadvantaged children, and implement strictly the rules linking the payment of child allowance to participation in education*”.

The seminar will discuss ongoing policy developments, such as the National Child Strategy 2008-2018 and the National Strategy for Reducing Poverty and Promoting Social Inclusion 2020. It will discuss lessons from the past and how to move forward in the new programming period 2014-2020.

The 2014 CSRs argue that BG should:

- In order to alleviate poverty, further improve the accessibility and effectiveness of social services and transfers for children and older people.
- Step up efforts to improve access to quality inclusive pre-school and school education of disadvantaged children, in particular Roma, and implement strictly the rules linking the payment of child allowance to participation in education.

ECEC is relatively new topic in the public debate in BG and the seminar will highlight its benefits for the disadvantaged people. ECEC and inclusive education for Roma children as well as the possibility for an income support measures in general, could be other topics. De-institutionalization was already extensively debated and might not bring much added value.

Language

The seminar will be conducted in Bulgarian with English translation

Date

31 October, 2014

Scheduled time

9.30 - 17.30 (9:30 – registration of participants)

Venue

Europe House EC Representation in Sofia



Programme

10.00-10.30 Welcome and introduction

Moderator: Vesela Banova

Petya Evtimova, Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Policy

Representative of the European Commission: Head of the EC Perm Representation

10.30-11.15 Setting the scene: key challenges and policy reforms

The EU's 2014 Recommendations for Bulgaria

Kiril Kiryakov, Team Leader for Bulgaria, European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage: the EU's approach and instruments, Julius op de Beke, DG EMPL, Unit D2

11.15-11.45 Coffee break

11.45-13.00 Policy response and recent reforms in Bulgaria

Spaska Petrova, Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Policy

Yanita Manolova, Deputy Executive Director, Agency for Social Assistance

Educational measures and policies for the improvement of access to education and support of disadvantaged children

Greta Gancheva, Director, Access to Education and Support for Development Directorate, Ministry of Education and Science

An assessment of the key challenges

George Bogdanov, HOTLINE Ltd, the Bulgarian Member of the European Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion

Discussion

13.00-14.00 Lunch

14.00-15.30 Novelties and opportunities for investing in children through EU funding instruments

Overview of available financial instruments

Kiril Kiryakov, Team Leader for Bulgaria, European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020 in Bulgaria

Opportunities for investing in children's future through measures from HRD OP and SESG OP (Science and Education for Smart Growth Operational Programme):

Gergana Koleshanska-Damyanova, Acting Director General of the European Funds, International Programmes and Projects DG and Head of MA of HRD OP 2007-2013, MLSP

Ivan Modev, Director General of the Structural Funds and International Educational Programmes DG, Ministry of Education and Science

Implementing the SIFs in partnership

Milena Harizanova, Director Child Protection, UNICEF

Discussion: Participants will reflect on how the ESF can be mobilised to address challenges in the areas of early childhood education and care, quality alternative care and inclusive education

15.30-16.00 Coffee break

Investing in children: EU Instruments and funding opportunities

16.00-17.00 Presentation of good practice examples

EPIC evidence based best practice : Tripple P Parental Support Programme
Matt Buttery, Parenting Consultant

SOS Children's Villages, Donika Koleva, Head of Programs Development Department

Good practices and examples under Inclusive Education Project, financed by HRD OP 2007-2013

Venka Vuchkova, Project Coordinator, Ministry of Education and Science

New Social Services for Children with Disabilities in Municipality of Burgas

Maya Kazandzhieva, Director, Social Activities, Health Care and Sport Directorate, Municipality of Burgas

17.00-17.30 Wrapping up and Conclusions

