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# Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)



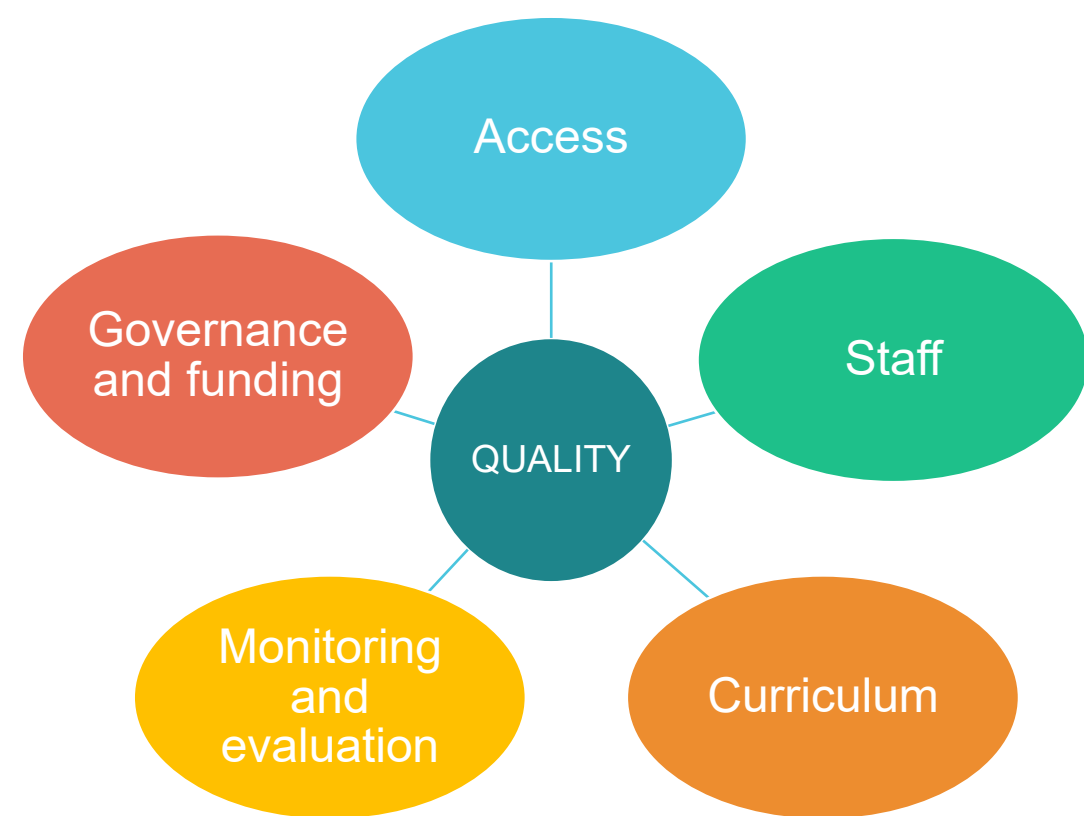
*12 May 2023*

# European priorities for ECEC

# May 2019

Council recommendation on High quality  
ECEC systems is adopted

Includes the European Quality  
Framework for ECEC



*Early childhood education and care refers to any regulated arrangement that provides education and care for children from birth to compulsory primary school age*

# Recent developments

2021-2022

Council Resolution for a **European Education Area**

At least **96%** of children **between 3 years old and the starting age for compulsory primary education** should participate in early childhood education.

Revised **Barcelona targets (Care strategy)**

At least **45%** of children **under 3 years old** should participate in early childhood education and care.

Action Plan for the European Pillar of Social Rights

EU Strategy for the Rights of the Child

Child Guarantee

Free access to ECEC by children in need

# European Child Guarantee

#EUChildGuarantee  
#EUChildRights



**OBJECTIVE:** prevent and combat social exclusion by guaranteeing access of children in need to a set of key services (education, **ECEC**, nutrition, housing, healthcare)

## TARGET GROUP

Children in need, i.e. “persons under the age of 18 years, who are at risk of poverty or social exclusion.”

Exact target group to be identified by MS

- homeless children or children experiencing severe housing deprivation
- children with a disability
- children with a migrant background
- children with a minority racial or ethnic background (particularly Roma)
- children being in alternative (especially institutional) care
- children in precarious family situations

# Reforming ECEC systems with the Technical support instrument

EU technical support for structural  
reforms in the Member States

ECEC projects in

- Bulgaria
- Cyprus
- Austria
- Czech Republic

# Recovery and Resilience Facility

The Recovery and Resilience Facility is the key instrument at the heart of NextGenerationEU to help the EU emerge stronger and more resilient from the current crisis.

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility>

## Investments

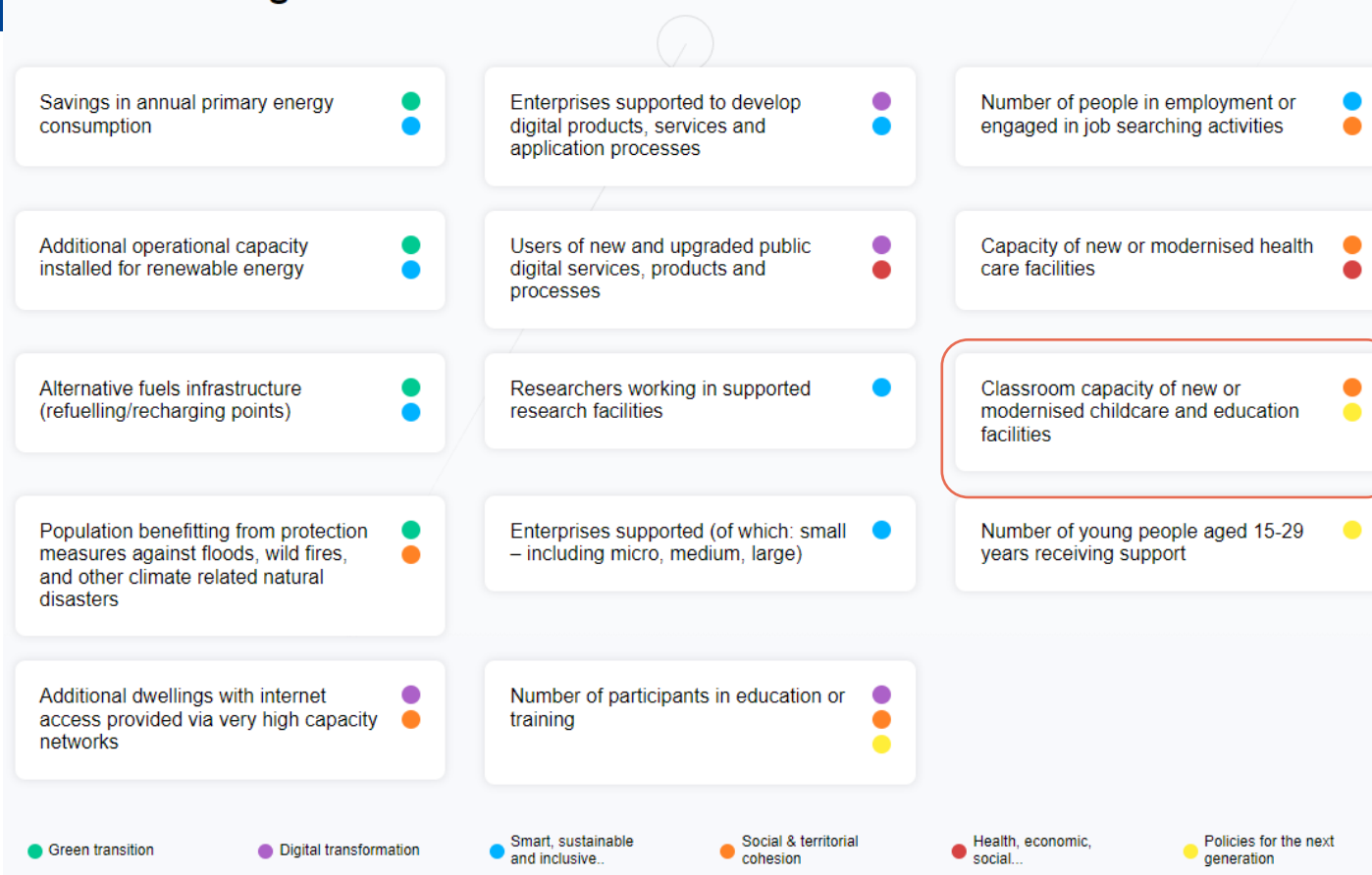
- HR aims to raise the participation rate of the 3+ age group from 76.3% to 90% by 2026
- CZ plans to increase the number of childcare facilities by 40% until the end of 2025
- 90 000 places will be created in DE and 60 000 in ES (for children aged 0-2)

## Reforms

- HR and SK will review the financing model
- EL will improve early diagnosis and support for children with disability and special needs
- IT, SK will review the recruitment system and support the professionalisation of ECEC staff
- RO envisages the development of an integrated ECEC framework and a large-scale teacher-training programme

14 indicators

## Pillar coverage



EUR 7.29 billion will be devoted to early childhood education and care

# The main challenge...

**Reach quantity  
without sacrificing quality**

Implement the Council recommendation  
and the European Quality Framework

... in spite of :

- systemic challenges (governance, lack of staff, etc.)
- crisis (pandemic, war, inflation, etc.)





# The European Expert group on ECEC (2018-2020)



Toolkit for inclusive ECEC

Guidelines: How to recruit, train and motivate well-qualified staff

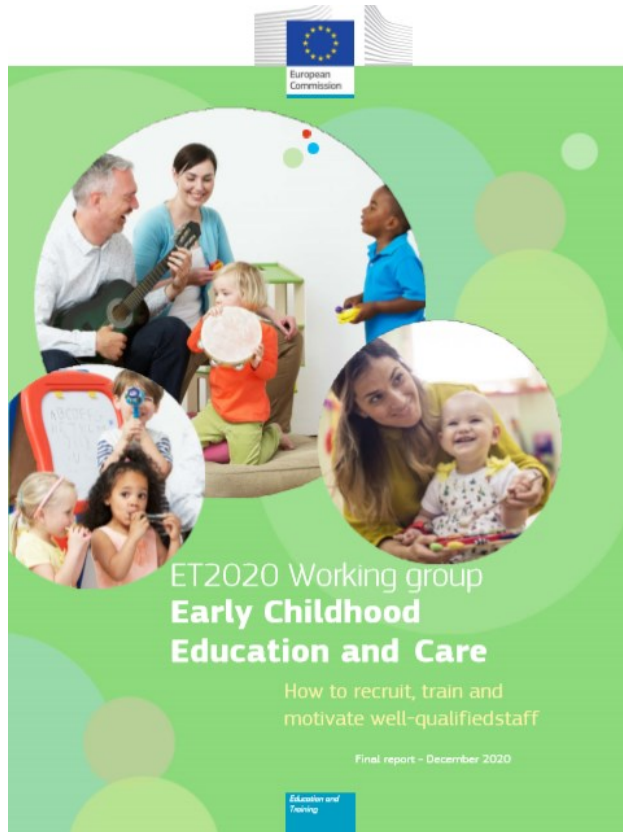
# Toolkit for inclusive ECEC



- Universal policies and practices which benefit ALL children
- Additional, more specific measures for
  - Children with disabilities
  - Children with a migrant background
  - Roma children
  - Other hard to reach children (in jail, in hospital, in lockdown)

<https://op.europa.eu/s/yEMJ>

# How to recruit, train and motivate well-qualified ECEC staff?



*The quality of ECEC provision increases when...*

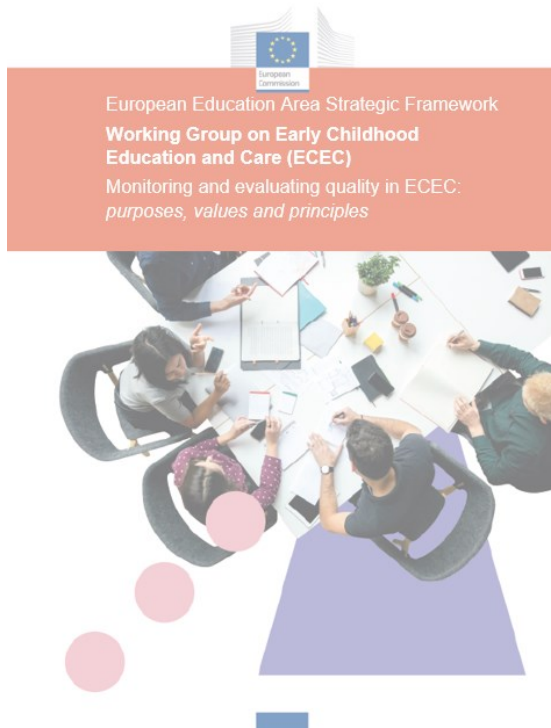
- *staff are available in sufficient numbers,*
- *they are well qualified, educated*
- *and motivated to stay in the profession.*

<https://op.europa.eu/s/yEMG>

# The European Expert group on ECEC (2021-2025)



# Monitoring and evaluation



1. Purposes, values and principles of monitoring and evaluating quality in ECEC
2. *Cooperation between different governance levels and stakeholders*
3. *Involving children, staff and families in monitoring and evaluation*
4. *Using monitoring and evaluation to make ECEC more inclusive*

<https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/expert-groups/consult?lang=en&groupID=3811>

# Facing crisis together

# Covid-19 pandemic



<https://op.europa.eu/s/sJTg>



<https://nesetweb.eu/>

# Ukrainian refugees



Supporting the inclusion of displaced children from Ukraine in education  
(incl. chapter on ECEC)

<https://school-education.ec.europa.eu/en/insights/news/education-support-ukrainian-refugees>

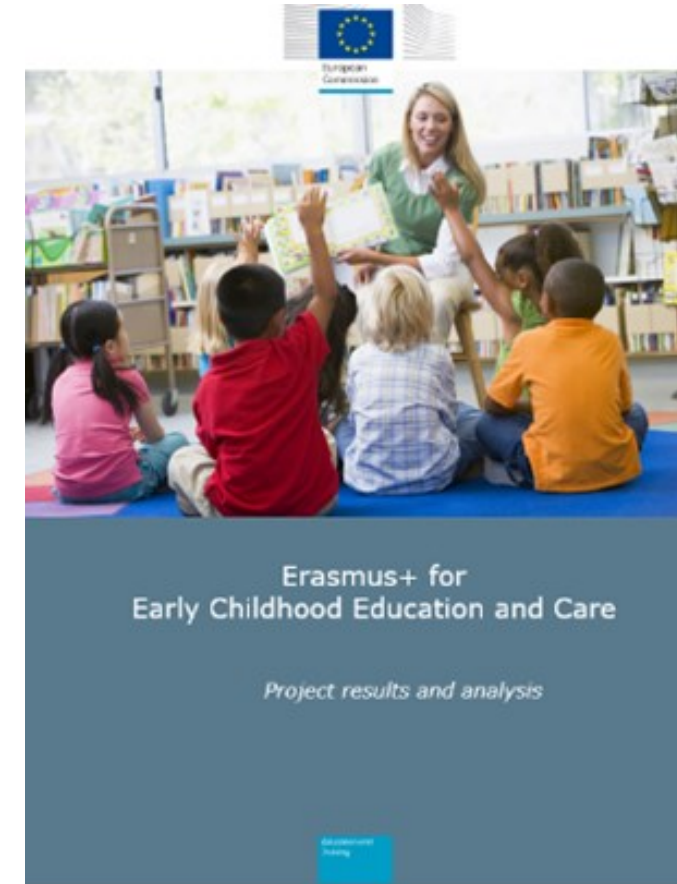


# Erasmus+

# European funding for ECEC staff professionalisation



<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/>



<https://op.europa.eu/s/vdvR>



[ec.europa.eu/education/policies/early-childhood-education-and-care\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/early-childhood-education-and-care_en)



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# Thank you



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- Approaches, strategies, examples and resources
- Based on research findings and policy recommendations

For

- National and local decision-makers
- Employers
- ECEC staff
- Trade unions and other social partners
- Education and training providers

- Universal policies and practices which benefit ALL children
- Additional, more specific measures for
  - Children with disabilities
  - Children with a migrant background
  - Roma children
  - Other hard to reach children (in jail, in hospital, in lockdown)

<https://op.europa.eu/s/oMFk>

# Universal policies for the benefit of all children

Designing global strategies

Monitoring inclusiveness

Improving availability, accessibility and affordability

Efficient governance

Tiered systems

Child/staff ratio

Working with / supporting settings

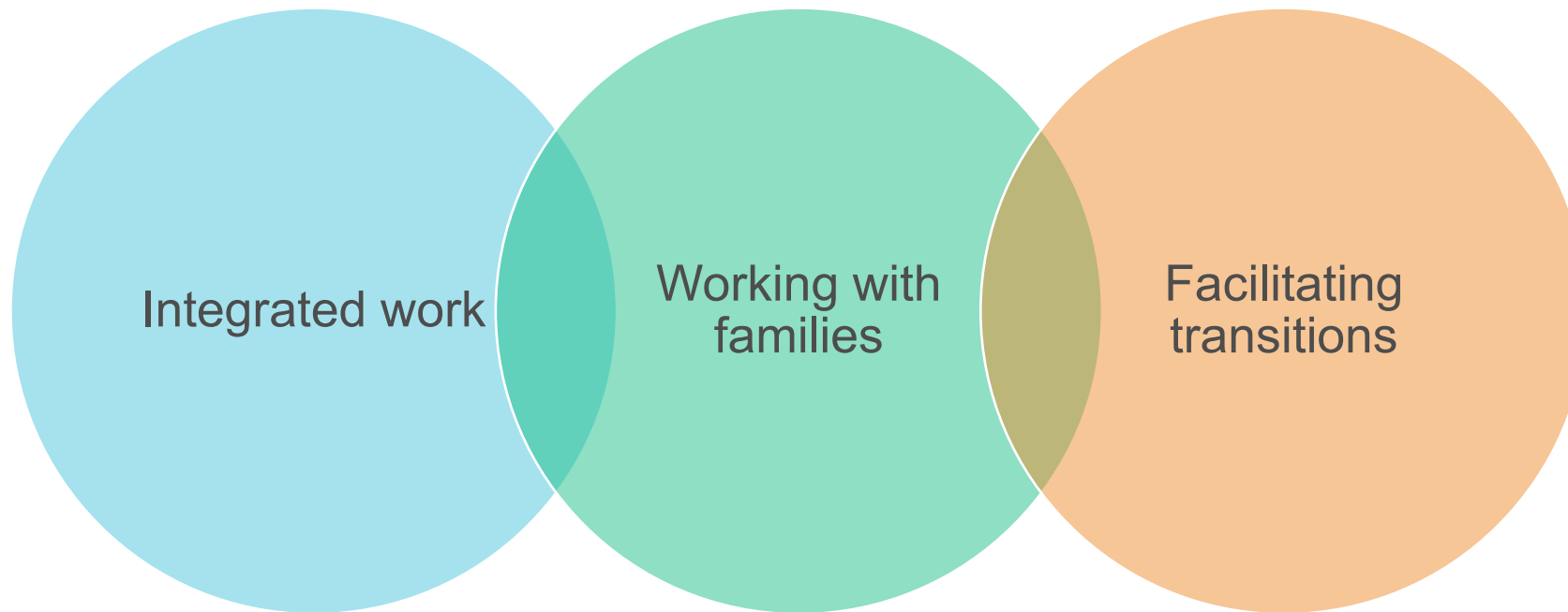
Supporting early intervention

Staff training

Inclusive curricula

Compulsory education?

# Universal practices for the benefit of all children



# Working with specific groups of children or families



Children with disabilities or special learning needs

Children with a migrant background

Roma children

Hard to reach children (children in jail, with lasting health problems, in lockdown)



## Who works in the ECEC sector?

Assistants

Core practitioners

Leaders

## How to make the professions more attractive?

Why do we need to work on it?

Valuing the profession

Recruitment strategies

Career opportunities

Working conditions

## Staff training: a key factor for quality

Mapping of competences

A professional journey

The initial journey

Continuing professional development