

Eurochild Child Guarantee Taskforce Advocacy Toolkit



Eurochild
Putting children at
the heart of Europe

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Eurochild Child Guarantee Taskforce Advocacy Tools for Taskforce Members

Introduction

On 14 June 2021, Member States unanimously adopted the Council Recommendation establishing the European Child Guarantee, [now available in all EU languages](#). As you well know, the Child Guarantee aims to prevent and combat social exclusion by guaranteeing the access of children in need to a set of key services, thereby also contributing to upholding the rights of the child by tackling child poverty and fostering equal opportunities.

This booklet provides a set of practical advocacy activities and tools for Taskforce members to help build momentum to influence the development, implementation and monitoring of the Child Guarantee National Action Plans. They are meant to support the development of creative and critical thinking around the advocacy that is needed to influence the development of the National Action Plans and going forward – the implementation and monitoring of those plans. We would like to develop and add to this booklet over the next 10 months. We hope that these tools will support and enhance your advocacy efforts during the Taskforce programme and beyond.

List of Advocacy Activity

1. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis
2. Identifying, Collecting and Using Evidence
3. Undertaking a Gap Analysis on what is needed to achieve the Child Guarantee
4. The Elevator Pitch
5. Communicating with National Authorities
6. Risk Register
7. Influence Tree
8. Opposition Matrix
9. Theory of Change
10. Developing advocacy messages at national level on the Child Guarantee
11. Plan for Success

Many of the activities in the Toolkit are the work of [Jonathan Ellis](#), who is a campaigner, teacher and catalyst - working independently to help charities and not for profits to campaign for change around the world.

Advocacy Activity 1: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

Carrying out a SWOT analysis allows you to consider your Taskforce Team’s Strengths and Weaknesses, possible Opportunities and potential Threats, to influencing the Child Guarantee National Action Plans.

- **Strengths** - What do you do well?
- **Weakness** – What could you improve? you can identify and start to address the gaps you may have in your knowledge/skills/network;
- **Opportunities** – What opportunities can you create to you to influence the national action plans?
- **Threats** – what may be a barrier to your advocacy work?

Strengths	Weakness
Opportunities	Threats

This activity can be carried out as often as is needed. You may want to review your SWOT every few weeks add anything new and move items such as an opportunity that has now become a strength.

Advocacy Activity 2: Identifying, Collecting and Using Evidence

Evidence based advocacy will be key in the development of your advocacy. The set of questions below will help you consider and understand the best approach to ensuring that you have the evidence you need to support your advocacy. Remember that evidence is the fuel for your advocacy.

- What evidence do you have to support your advocacy messages?
- Ask yourself 'but why' are the recommendations in the Child Guarantee not already in place? Why is this evidence needed? In your view, which 'evidence gap' would be most important to fill to support your goals?

Reflect on what the Child Guarantee could achieve in your country:

- who are the most vulnerable children that should be targeted;
 - what are the most urgent measures that should be implemented;
 - what are the existing structures and policies that should be strengthened;
 - what needs to be set up from scratch;
 - what funds will governments allocate to investing in children;
 - what are the best practices the Child Guarantee should be based on;
 - what are the actors that should be involved;
 - what are the best ways to ensure transparency?
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- Does this evidence already exist elsewhere? Where and how you can find it?
 - Which missing evidence can you produce rapidly without too much delay? Which evidence might take more time, but would still be very much needed?
 - Can you use a macro/ micro or a big picture/ small picture approach including both statistics and individual human stories? Which type of evidence (between the two) do you consider to be more impactful, for whom? And how do you know?
 - Is your evidence helping us make the case for national/strategic policy reforms to achieve the Child Guarantee?
 - Finally, who in your Taskforce is going to do it and what is the ideal timeline to do it?

Advocacy Activity 3: Undertaking a Gap Analysis on what is needed to achieve the Child Guarantee

Member States are recommended to build an integrated and enabling policy framework that addresses the social exclusion of children, focusing on breaking intergenerational cycles of poverty and disadvantage and reducing the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Carrying out a gap analysis will provide you with evidence to share with your government, stakeholders and allies on what should be included in the national action plan from you and your organisation's perspective.

Civil society organisations can benefit from preparing to engage with their governments by identifying information that the governments will need. You do not need to analyse all the information suggested below. You may want to only focus on those topics that are relevant in your context and for your work. This could include:

- Identifying any current integrated national, regional and local policies or framework on social, education, health, nutrition or housing that currently supports children, and how can they be improved;
- Identifying the most vulnerable groups of children in need that the Child Guarantee should target in your country;
- Exploring what would make the most significant impact to ensure such services as education, adequate housing, and social protection systems effectively addresses the needs of children in need and their families;
- In your experience, what are the barriers that prevent children in need from accessing quality early childhood education and care, education and school-based activities, a healthy meal every day and healthcare, ensuring you provide evidence such as case studies.

Share your analysis widely with your network, on your website, with children and through social media. When presenting your analysis to the government, ensure that it is concise and focuses on clear, action-based recommendations to achieve the Child Guarantee.

As the national action plans are being developed, policymakers may welcome ideas. Hence, a practical set of responses is most likely to be read and could lead to you and your organisation being invited to work with them on the national action plan. Also, be alert for opportunities to present your analysis at different events organised by the government and other stakeholders. The more opportunities you get to share your analysis, the more likely your analysis will be seen or heard by decision-makers. The online [website](#) of the Conference on the Future of Europe could represent an excellent platform to organise and promote your events and share such analysis alongside the main conclusions reached from such an event.

Advocacy Activity 4: The Elevator Pitch

What is the key advocacy message in your country?

How are you going to pass the TEA Test with your campaign? The TEA test involves three points to consider.

1. How is your message going to **Touch** your target audience? How are you going to make a connection and get them interested?
2. How will you **Enthuse** them with what change is possible?
3. How will you get them to take **Action**?

Imagine that you enter an elevator

The one politician that you have been waiting months to speak to steps into the elevator with you...

How do you use the next 15-30 secs?

Can you develop your elevator pitch for your campaign to last just 15-30 seconds?

Think about how you will:

- Introduce yourself
- Outline your problem
- Set out your solution
- Ask for a specific action

This is simple but not easy! It will be helpful to write it down so that you can more easily share it and get back to it. Once you have your pitch, test it with colleagues, partners, other Taskforce members and possibly, even better, people with no contact with your advocacy work. Do people understand you? Is your message clear? Is there an absence of ambiguity?

Once you are happy with your general advocacy pitch, you can then modify it for different audiences.

But when you have your pitch, keep practicing your pitch and be always open to ways that you can improve it.

Advocacy Activity 5: Communicating with National Authorities

{YOUR LOGO}



Address of recipient

Place, Date

Subject: Implementing the European Child Guarantee

Dear (add the name of the recipient),

I am writing to congratulate you on the adoption of the **EU Council Recommendation on the European Child Guarantee**. On behalf of (your organisation) and Eurochild, the pan-European network promoting children's rights and well-being, we commend you and other EU governments on this landmark and urgently needed initiative to **tackle child poverty and social exclusion in the EU**.

We want to take this occasion to reiterate the important contribution that the Council Recommendation will make to improving children's lives, and we hope that the Child Guarantee will **catalyse more support for and public investment in children**.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, **nearly 1 in 4 children grew up at risk of poverty and social exclusion** in the EU. Although the EU is one of the most prosperous regions globally, families are struggling to make ends meet, and children are among the first to suffer. In particular, Eurostat reports that (percentage – can be found [here](#)) % of children in (name of the country) are at risk of poverty and social exclusion. The COVID-19 outbreak is now having far-reaching effects on Europe's economic and social fabric and, consequently, on children's well-being. Child poverty levels are expected to dramatically escalate as the full economic impact of the pandemic becomes apparent, making it even more urgent to act. The Child Guarantee represents a monumental step forward in the EU fight against this social crisis.

To ensure that the Child Guarantee will not remain an ambitious instrument only on paper and that it will deliver real change at the national, regional and local level, we would like to underline the following points:

1. The full and meaningful participation of children, families and civil society organisations in the development and monitoring of the Child Guarantee National Action Plans

As stated in the Council Recommendation, children, families, civil society organisations and institutions working on social inclusion, non-discrimination and children's rights should be able to participate in developing national action plans for the implementation of the Child Guarantee. To enable this, we urge you to ensure transparency and access to timely information on the development of national action plans and transparent processes for the participation of key stakeholders at national, local and regional levels.

(Your organisation) and Eurochild are ready to work with and support the national Child Guarantee Coordinator and all the different authorities involved. We urge you to ensure that the mandate of the National Coordinator includes outreach to and consultation with children, families and civil society organisations in the spirit of constructive engagement.

2. Specific attention should be paid to the following groups of children

[You can indicate which groups should be prioritised and why].

3. Specific attention should be paid to the following measures

[You can indicate which measures / issues should be prioritised and why]

The Child Guarantee is a historic opportunity to develop an integrated, cross-government approach to fight child poverty and social exclusion, with coordination across the education, health, social protection, housing, culture and welfare sectors, and between different levels of government. (Your organisation) and Eurochild are eager to support national, regional and local authorities to ensure the Child Guarantee will deliver on its promises and leave no child behind.

I hope you will take these proposals into consideration and we remain at your disposal to discuss these issues further.

Yours sincerely,

(signature)

Advocacy Activity 6: Risk Register

How do you plan to manage the key risks associated with your campaign? Remember that all activities of daily life have risks, and advocating and campaigning is no different. The key thing is to be open about possible risks and what you can do to reduce them.

To use this risk register template, list all of the possible risks to your campaign. You may want to do this exercise for both internal and external risks.

You may want to use the weaknesses and threats section of your SWOT analysis (from activity 1) as a starting point for this exercise. So, for example: if a weakness is little public relations capacity, then a risk could be the campaign will not have a lot of media exposure at first.

You could also organise the risks in a logical framework that works best for you. So, for example: in order of magnitude, or ordered of the timeline or the sequence that you plan to carry them out, etc.

Then think about the likelihood of each risk happening and give it a score: where 1 is a low likelihood and 4 a high likelihood. And then think about the possible impact should this risk happen: where 1 is low impact and 4 is high impact.

Then think about what action you can take to reduce this risk.

Shortly after carrying out the actions, you may want to reflect on your successes and what you can learn from them, alongside what was unsuccessful.

Risk	Likelihood (1 low–4 high)	Impact (1 low–4 high)	Action to reduce Risk	Reflections Future Learning Points
1.				
2.				

It will be helpful once you create this register that you keep it under regular review.

Advocacy Activity 7: Influence Tree

What are the best routes to influence your national government and the national action plans?

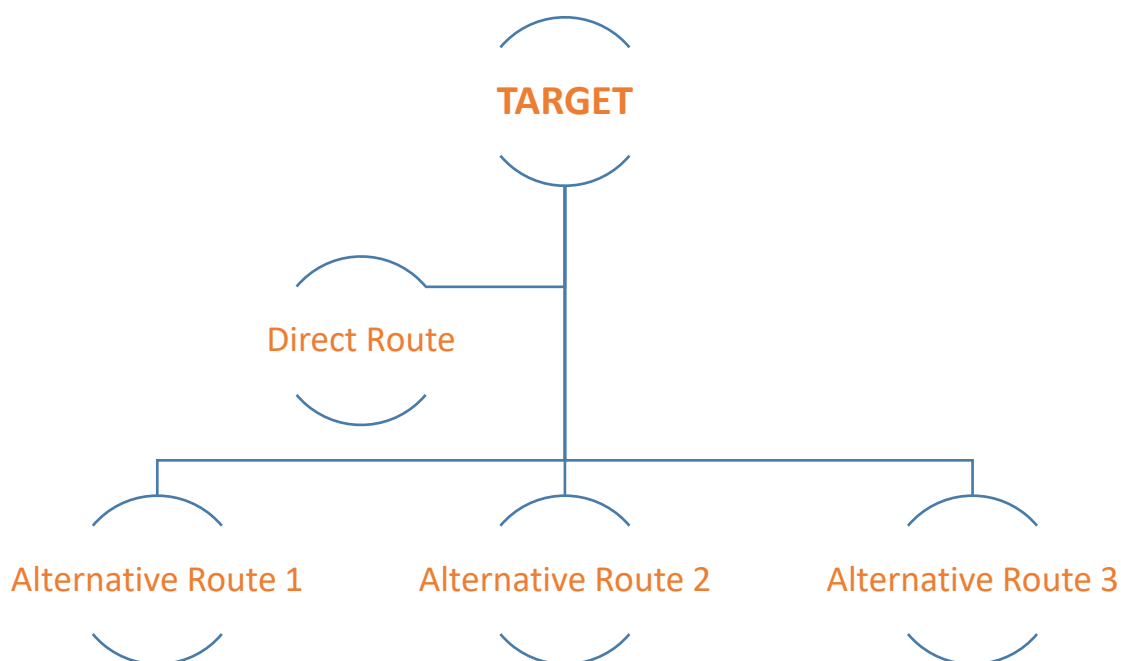
Before you start this exercise, you may want to look at the SWOT activity and remind yourself of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that you identified. This activity is all about how you will influence your target audience with your advocacy activities.

Start by identifying your main target audience, their name and the role they play in implementing the national action plans. This is the person – who if they agree with you – has the power to make the change that you want to see.

Then think about what you know about your target. Who or what influences them? How can you influence them to influence your target? The influence tree will be the road map for your campaign.

Once you have created an influence tree for your main target, you may want to go do the same activities focusing on other people with power and influence who could help you push this issue forward. First, you should identify their level of influence – how much power do they really have? And then think about whether they could be seen as an ally, neutral or hostile.

But remember there must be a connection between these influence trees (if you create more than one) and you must think about sequencing – you can't do everything at once – what will be your order of activity? What will you do first?



Advocacy Activity 8: Opposition Matrix

This activity encourages you to consider who will be opposing your advocacy messages and what information do they use.

Firstly, list all of the arguments against the implementation of the Child Guarantee -try to brainstorm all of the arguments that you all have ever heard. Then list all of your arguments in support.

Then consider specific elements of the Child Guarantee, eg advocating for child participation

The Child Guarantee Recommendation includes children as stakeholders that Member States should engage with in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Child Guarantee national action plans. The most effective way to ensure the Child Guarantee improves the lived experiences of children and protect and realise their human rights, is to guarantee their participation in national democratic decision-making. Children are experts in their own lives and it is essential that they participate in decisions that affect them. Children should not be viewed as only objects of government and social policy but rather as contributors to policy decisions that affect them. Policies that are informed by lived experiences of children and young people can better address key social challenges such as child poverty, inequality and child protection.

The European institutions have published a few [infographics](#) and [factsheets](#) that might help you in making the Child Guarantee more accessible

Then pause – and ask yourself: do your arguments really answer all of the opposing arguments? And do you have a robust answer (evidence) for each opposing argument?

It can be great to share this exercise with your Taskforce team and allies to check your thinking and assumptions and to collect fresh ideas and arguments.

Argument Against the Child Guarantee	Argument for the Child Guarantee

Advocacy Activity 9: Theory of Change

How does advocacy work begin? How can you plan for your advocacy work to be sustainable to continue impacting the national action plans?

Can you develop a 'so that' chain of activities, which shows how you are going to build momentum on your campaign?

What is your first action? So that you can do what? So that you can do what? And so on....

What is the sequence of activities for your campaign? And remember there needs to be a logic from one activity to the next.

This exercise should be done in a group, and you should actively encourage challenge to each new 'so that' action. Remember, if you can't defend the logic behind your next step, maybe you need to rethink your next step. This exercise is all about challenging each other to develop the most robust approach for your campaign based on your current understanding of the reality of your environment.

We will develop this Theory of Change Activity over the next few months

Advocacy Activity 10: Developing advocacy messages at national level on the Child Guarantee

It is important to have a clear position and advocacy statement to ensure consistency and help to make your advocacy messages more memorable. Start by outlining your position and the changes you want to bring about. Try to include a solution to achieving your goal. You can then use this as the basis for your targeted advocacy messages for different audiences, and for messages at the national, regional and local level. These messages can then support you to prepare, implement and manage awareness raising through emails, presentations, social media and in your discussions. The examples on the table below can help you consider and develop your own messages. Afterwards, you can also reflect on the impact of your advocacy messages by considering what was successful and what to change next time, to help you develop your advocacy messaging in the future.

When developing your position consider: What you want to achieve? What do you want the audience to understand? What do you want the audience to remember? What do you want the audience to do?		
<i>Example of Advocacy Position: Governments must work in partnership with all relevant stakeholders to develop the Child Guarantee national action plans and will bring real change for children in need.</i>		
<i>Example of Advocacy Message: The Child Guarantee national action plans must be developed with the participation of children and relevant civil society organisations to take into account national, regional and local circumstances, and to effectively identify and reach out to the children in need and find out what barriers they face in accessing key services and how best to overcome these barriers. Working in partnership with civil society organisations and children will ensure the national action plans meet the needs of children in need and bring about real change.</i>		
Who is your audience at national level? Who do you want to reach with this message?	What are your concerns regarding the development of Child Guarantee national action plans?	Examples of messages aligned to the relevant audiences.
<i>Government level: government ministers, relevant ministry/department for children, national Child Guarantee coordinator, government advisers, decision makers.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Governments will develop the national action plans without meaningful input from children and experts working with and for children.</i> <i>The plans will not 'reach' or meet the needs of children most in need.</i> 	<i>To ensure we leave no 'child in need' behind in (YOUR COUNTRY), (YOUR ORGANISATION'S NAME) is looking forward to working in partnership with the government to identify the children most in need and the barriers they face in accessing and taking up the key services set out in the Child Guarantee.</i>
<i>Allies: civil society organisations, relevant national networks.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Other organisations are not aware of the Child Guarantee and/or the requirement to create a national action plan.</i> 	<i>Our government are currently developing a Child Guarantee national action plan. We can support the government to reduce child poverty by working with them to determine who are the children most in need in (YOUR COUNTRY) and identify the ways in which these children can access the free and inclusive key services outlined in the Child Guarantee.</i>

Advocacy Worksheet 11: Plan for success

Once your advocacy target agrees with you, what will you do next?

You do not need to spend too long on this activity, but experience shows that it is highly advisable to give this question some thought before the reality of it happening actually hits you!

Imagine that your main ask for the Child Guarantee national action plans is met with a promise from the government. At your moment of breakthrough

- Have a plan for success
- Never stop campaigning for your issue
- Remember at this point of success you are at your most vulnerable – your issue moves from being a campaign issue to a policy proposal – and you yourself could then be campaigned against!
- Be ready for success!