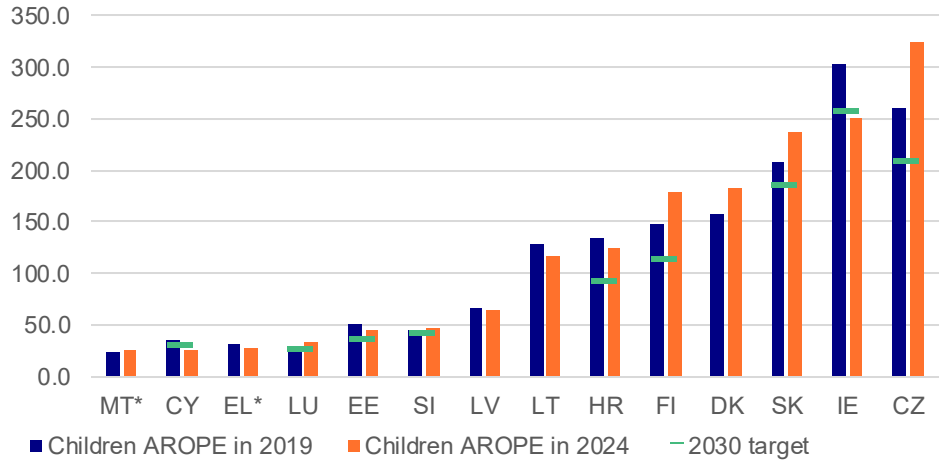
Addressing the root causes of poverty in the EU across generations: from child poverty and old age poverty to prosperity pathways

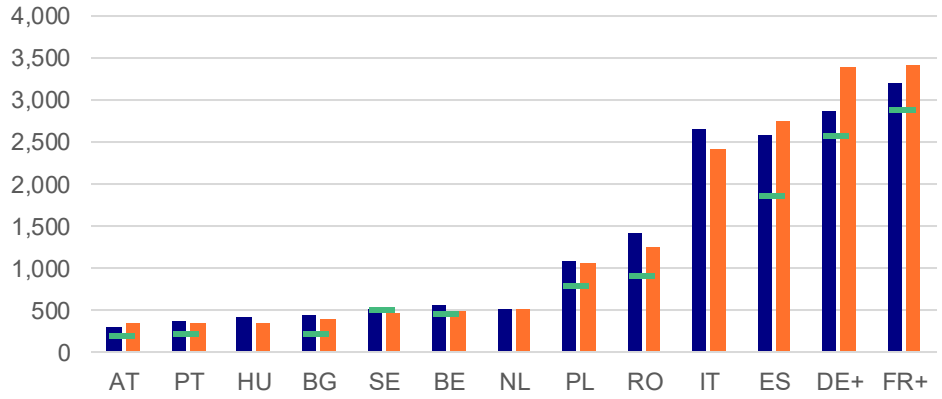
The EU's Anti-Poverty Strategy: An evaluation and next steps

Bocconi University, 20 October 2025

European Commission

Number of children AROPE by Member State (in thousands)





Ibid:

- MT, -6 p.p. AROPE
- EL, -6.6 p.p. AROPE

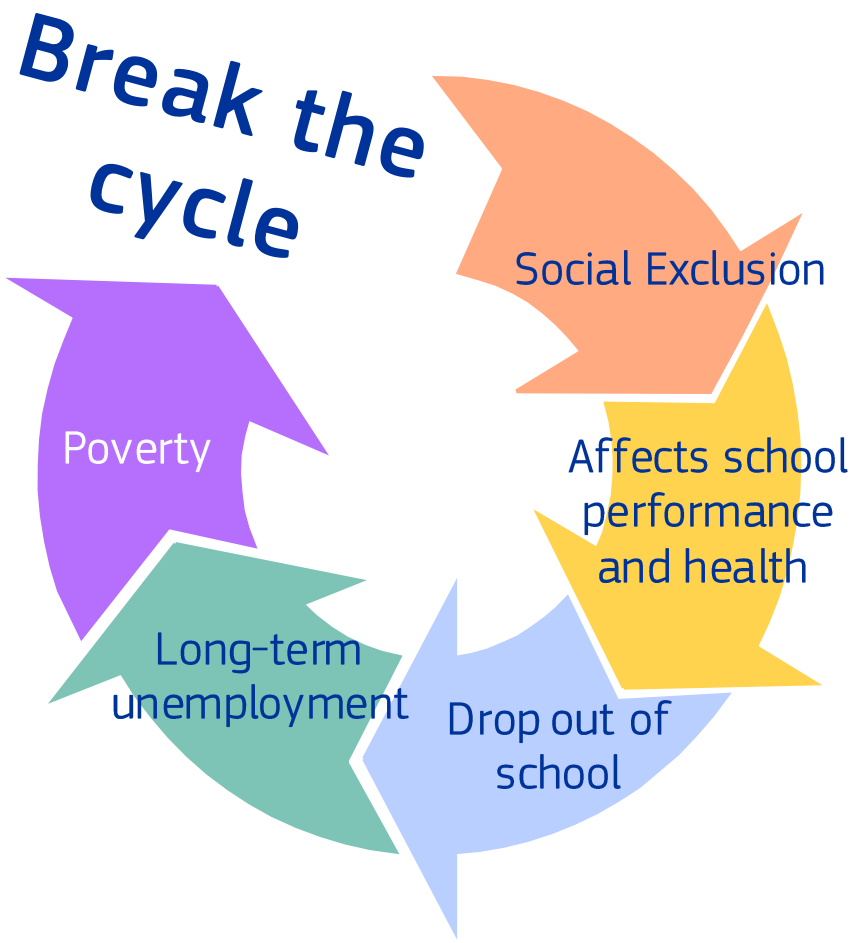
The remaining Member States have not set any child poverty target.

FR and DE series are adjusted due to major breaks in time series and are flagged by +.

Source: Eurostat (ilc_PECS01)

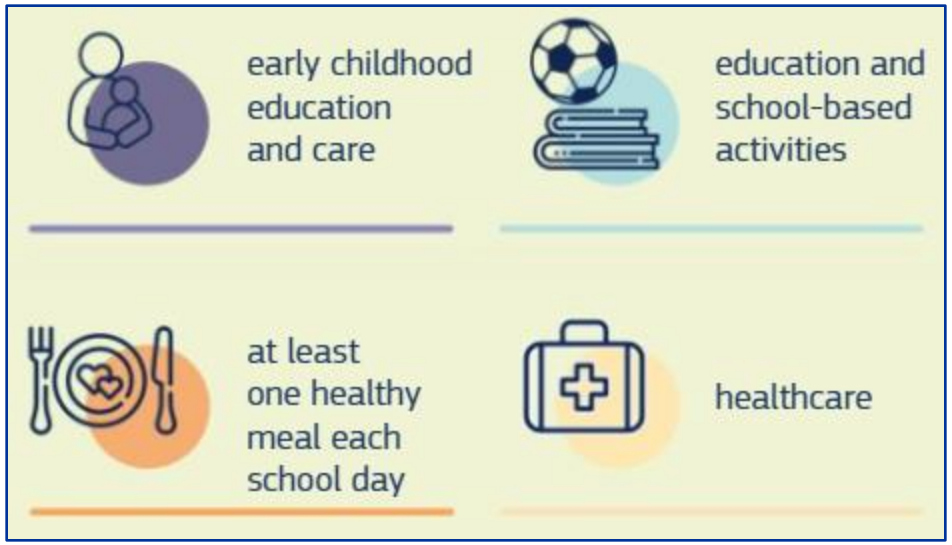
The OECD estimates that the **yearly cost of child disadvantages amounts to 3.4% of GDP on average in the EU**, due to their negative impact on children's future prospects in life, especially in terms of employment and health.

The European Child Guarantee



Member States should guarantee for children in need:

- **free and effective access** to:

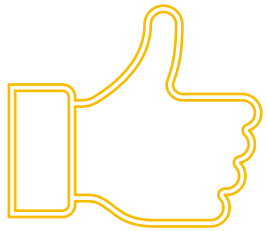


- **effective access** to:

State of play

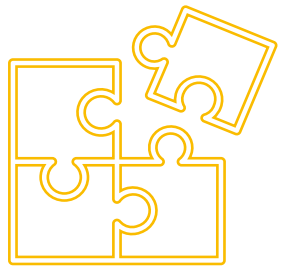
Good examples include reforms such as:

- **Free ECEC** in Malta and Portugal
- Extension of **childcare facilities in disadvantaged** areas in Poland
- Implementation of **educational support** schemes in Germany
- Creation of new **social housing units** for families in France



Remaining gaps:

- AROPE for children **not declining**
- **Persisting gaps** in access to services, e.g. ECEC



Tentative principles guiding our preparatory work

1. A person-centred approach

- Aiming to develop concrete solutions for people (acting on both the root causes and immediate needs)
- A life-cycle approach
- Focus on key moments when people risk to fall into poverty
- Supporting AND empowering people (ie. activation)

2. A systemic approach

- Aiming to take into account public policy areas beyond employment and social policy remits in order to address the various needs of vulnerable groups

3. Recognising the role of national/local authorities

- Aiming to support national and local authorities in THEIR fight against poverty, drawing inspiration from best practices across the EU that have proven to work