

16 February 2011 - For more than two years now the crisis is having a **heavy impact** on the daily lives of millions of families, children and young people. Evidence suggests that the economic downturn

affect disproportionately children and families

. Consequences are multiple and of different nature:

- Absolute poverty levels are on the rise
- Unemployment hits marginalised groups hardest
- Salary cuts increase in-work poverty levels
- Young people lack job prospects
- Growing Numbers of children at risk or in the public care system
- Children's mental health is suffering
- Squeezed family budgets affect children's diet and health
- Family tensions and discrimination is increasing

And the recession **continues to claim victims** as governments adjust to new financial and economic uncertainty, by cutting public spending to reduce public debt. Eurochild is particularly concerned about **cuts to vital benefits and services**

on which millions of families and children rely, including high quality public education from an early age.

And there are **some alarm signs that policy makers tend to ignore the social impact of the crisis** and aggravating social policy cuts: Earlier this month, the European Commission published the **Annual Growth Survey** which focuses **exclusively on growth-enhancing initiatives**

and the need for fiscal consolidation, putting even more pressure on Member States to reduce public deficits quickly.

The impact on the growing number of children at risk is disregarded

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The governments' responses to the crisis should reflect on the **type of society we want in the future**. We believe that

supporting every child to realise their full potential is not only

a moral obligation, but also an economic necessity

. Unless children's well-being becomes a driving force in the inception and implementation of national policies,

we risk a "lost generation". Or even more.

In order to avoid this scenario, Eurochild is calling to:

- Ensure a quality work/family life balance for parents
- Strengthen early intervention and prevention services for families
- Ensure access to high quality inclusive education for all
- Invest and protect children's mental health and well-being
- Protect and increase budgets targeting children and families
- Strengthen family- and community-based care for children in alternative care

Children's well-being and eradication of child poverty must be a priority of government policy in efforts to learn the lessons from the economic crisis.

Eurochild Secretary General, **Jana Hainsworth** said: "*The evidence from across Europe is extremely worrying. Vulnerable children and families are the biggest losers from current austerity measures and the effects will be felt long into the future. Politicians need to wake to their short-sighted vision and take action to avoid a lost generation.*"

The report was officially published on 27 January 2011 on the occasion of the European Parliament's AGORA on Crisis and forms of Poverty.

The report is available on the EuroChild [website](#) .

Source: [EuroChild](#)