



A NEW DEAL FOR FAMILIES OF TODAY

key 2020-2024 priorities for
COFACE Families Europe

#AllFamiliesSpeakOut

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According to Esping-Andersen's "The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism" (1990), there are three key players in the production of welfare: the state, the market and family. The demographic transition and evolving family patterns, coupled with low economic growth, increasing digitalisation of our lives and an ever-changing labour market, are all **structural factors placing pressure on families**. While fiscal consolidation reduces the resources available for social programmes, there is an urgent need to design welfare policies towards a smart social safety net based on access to adequate resources, services and time.

COFACE Families Europe is ready to address these challenges in partnership with the European Union, in an attempt to find sustainable and lasting solutions for the future. We are ready for a serious cross-party rethink of democratic public policy and budgets to make the economic system work for society. This **list of key short-term demands to be achieved by the new European Commission from 2020-2024**, are to be seen as concrete steps to meet the long-term goals of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

They reflect the needs and challenges of families of today and call for a mix of European actions (policy, law, funding, benchmarking, innovation) to drive real change. **These recommendations are addressed at EU-level policy-makers in the European Commission, European Parliament and Council of the EU**, from whom we expect joint leadership to ensure tangible results for Europe's citizens in the next 5 years. It is on this basis that we will measure and monitor the results of European Union actions.

Recommendations

I.	A Europe recognising ALL family forms without discrimination.	6
II.	A Europe which believes in equal opportunities for all families, with a special focus on equality between women and men, as a cornerstone for achieving reconciliation between family and professional life.	7
III.	A Europe which invests in child well-being, shaping a healthy society, environment and economy fit for children.	8
IV.	A Europe which promotes the participation of all families and children, with a special focus on persons with disabilities and their families, to all areas of life.	9
V.	A Europe which empowers all families and gives them a voice to act as citizens, consumers, and workers, with strong support for European and national civil society organisations.	10
VI.	A Europe which harnesses the transformative power of technology and promotes an Internet for All.	11
VII.	A Europe which tackles poverty and social exclusion of families and their members, through access to resources and community-based services.	12
VIII.	A Europe which promotes intergenerational solidarity, with full support and recognition of the role of family carers.	13
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I. A EUROPE RECOGNISING ALL FAMILY FORMS WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION.



NON-DISCRIMINATION:

A Europe recognising ALL family forms.

- Ensure recognition and targeted support to the wide diversity of families with a special focus on one-parent families, large families, families of persons with disabilities, rainbow families, and families in vulnerable situations; and further impulse sociological research on new family forms and needs.
- Ensure laws integrate family diversity by legally recognising all family structures, inserting the notion of equivalent second parent in national law through the transposition of the EU work-life balance directive.
- Empower immigrant families and lead in ensuring a human response to global migration, for the benefit and protection of all those involved, and break down barriers to EU free movement for all families. Use the 2019 COFACE paper on Building Inclusive Societies to build future action.
- Tackle stereotypes at all levels through inclusive EU policies, by supporting COFACE (e.g. #ToysAndDiversity) and other civil society campaigns which promote diversity and non-discrimination and by raising awareness of different societal and corporate stakeholders (manufacturers, advertisers, media, schools, parent associations) of their responsibility in making or breaking stereotypes in early childhood.

II. A EUROPE WHICH BELIEVES IN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL FAMILIES, WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN, AS A CORNERSTONE FOR ACHIEVING RECONCILIATION BETWEEN FAMILY AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE.



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES:

A Europe which believes in equality between women and men, as a cornerstone for achieving reconciliation between family and professional life.

- ➔ Work towards a Reconciliation Economy (as referred to in the 2017 COFACE paper Families on the Edge), based on a mix of EU policies and awareness-raising campaigns, to close the gender care gap and boost gender equality in the labour market. Recognise the important role of civil dialogue and social dialogue in the transposition of the EU work-life balance directive: COFACE Families Europe and the European Alliance of NGOs on Work-Life Balance must be consulted and actively involved; and the social partners must be encouraged to secure collective agreements on Work-Life Balance to drive change in workplace culture towards a family-friendly economy.
- ➔ Actions must be backed by boosting gender-sensitive research on families and households. Continue promoting evidence-based policies through different tools (e.g. Work-Life balance Index, develop indicators to monitor men leaves, reports on gender equality) and consolidation of the indicators in the EU Social Scoreboard. Furthermore, ensure that work-life balance remains a key priority in the European Structural and Investment Funds post-2020 to support innovation and upward national reforms.
- ➔ Support employment of mothers and fathers, as primary carers, by implementing COFACE recommendations for a New EU Deal for Childcare, through a concrete roadmap (policy, funding and targets) for boosting services to children below 3 years of age. This roadmap must pave the way to gradually move towards a right to inclusive and quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) for all families - regardless of their economic situation - to close the gap between the end of well-paid leave and legal entitlement to ECEC.

III. A EUROPE WHICH INVESTS IN CHILD WELL-BEING, SHAPING A HEALTHY SOCIETY, ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY FIT FOR CHILDREN.



CHILD WELL-BEING:

A Europe which invests in the health and education of children.

- Build sustainable education systems which put children at the centre, by funding innovation and partnerships for knowledge transfer between school professionals and families (first educators). Acknowledge the role of education in building inclusive, diverse and sustainable communities in Europe, and ensure all schools have holistic programmes to prevent and address bullying (as recommended in the 2017 COFACE Peer Review report on Live Without Bullying).
- Continue the work on the implementation of the 2013 European Commission Recommendation for Investing in Children around its three pillars of access to resources, access to services and children's right to participate, including support for parents as first carers and first educators in order to create a favourable family environment for child health and well-being.
- Hold ad hoc expert group meetings with civil society on key issues impacting children's health, especially childhood obesity (marketing, front of pack labelling, product reformulation, nutrient profiles), and organize High Level events with national health ministries to push for coordinated action based on the conclusions and recommendations of the ad hoc expert group meetings.
- Ensure full transposition/implementation of the Audio-Visual Media Services Directive, with a special focus on restricting marketing to children, and of the European General Data Protection Regulation to ensure data protection and privacy of children at all levels with clear regulator oversight of market innovations.

IV. A EUROPE WHICH PROMOTES THE PARTICIPATION OF ALL FAMILIES AND CHILDREN, WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES, TO ALL AREAS OF LIFE.



ACCESSIBILITY:

A Europe which promotes the participation of persons with disabilities and their families in all areas of life.

- ➔ Adopt a comprehensive European Disability Strategy 2020-2030 that satisfies all the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), highlighting the importance of family support, with a budget allocated for its implementation, and involving all EU institutions in its implementation and monitoring. Use the guidance of the COFACE Disability factsheet on the Family Dimension of the UNCRPD.
- ➔ Foster the creation of inclusive education systems and labour markets through strong Country-Specific Recommendations in the European Semester, as an essential precondition for building inclusive societies.
- ➔ Provide clear policy guidance instruments for the transition from institutional to community-based care, ensuring that investments and access to European funding is made conditional to promoting the shift to community-based care in line with UNCRPD article 19 on independent living.
- ➔ Ensure a swift and ambitious transposition and implementation of the European Accessibility Act into national legislations, so it can bring a meaningful change in the life of persons with disabilities and their families across the EU.

v. A EUROPE WHICH EMPOWERS ALL FAMILIES AND GIVES THEM A VOICE TO ACT AS CITIZENS, CONSUMERS, AND WORKERS, WITH STRONG SUPPORT FOR EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS.



EMPOWERMENT:

A Europe which gives a voice to ALL families to act as citizens, consumers, and workers, with strong support for European and national civil society organisations.

- Prioritise civil dialogue and active citizenship in European Commission-led stakeholder groups to improve democracy, transparency, access to fundamental rights for all and trust of EU citizens in building a just and sustainable Europe.
- Strengthen the European Code of Conduct on Partnership set up to ensure that civil society organisations are involved at all stages in the design and implementation of Partnership Agreements and programmes under the European Structural and Investment Funds.
- Ensure that the revision of the Consumer Credit Directive is in line with the right to access basic, fair, affordable and quality financial services for all (financial inclusion), given that it is a fundamental requirement to participate in our modern societies.

VI. A EUROPE WHICH HARNESSSES THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF TECHNOLOGY AND PROMOTES AN INTERNET FOR ALL.

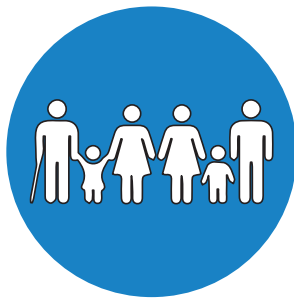


INTERNET FOR ALL:

A Europe which harnesses the transformative power of technology.

- ➔ Develop a mix of regulation, self-regulation and education measures to address transformative technological developments and to support digital citizenship through the implementation of the 13 COFACE Digitalisation principles: non-discrimination in access to digital services, access to the Internet, competences and skills, digital parenting, respect of human rights in the digital space, transparency, privacy and data protection, (cyber)-security, user control, health and well-being, and democratic participation as well as democratic internet governance.
- ➔ Invest in a better Internet for kids where their rights and needs are respected, notably by harnessing digital citizenship as a general framework for the implementation of existing EU regulation (such as the AVMSD or the GDPR), and by supporting civil society organisations like COFACE to sustain a strong voice in shaping and reviewing upcoming European policy frameworks.
- ➔ Include societal and ethical considerations in the regulation of online business models and technology, especially in algorithms or so called “artificial intelligence”, and mainstream these in all European Commission Directorates given the global impact of these technological developments (discrimination, automation, etc).

VII. A EUROPE WHICH TACKLES POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION OF FAMILIES AND THEIR MEMBERS, THROUGH ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES.



SOCIAL INCLUSION:

A Europe which tackles poverty and social exclusion of families and their members, through access to resources and community-based services.

- ➔ Continue the work of investigation on the feasibility of a European Child Guarantee, including a focus on guaranteeing access to early childhood education and care ensuring positive health outcomes for children in the first 1001 critical days of their life.
- ➔ Recognise access to energy as a basic human right and a public good that must be protected through effective policy and legislation and ensure the involvement of civil society in the transposition of the Clean Energy for All Europeans package.
- ➔ Strengthen national financial support mechanisms for families to have decent living standards that would allow them to live in dignity and avoid the risk of poverty namely through:
 - Access to decent wages and closing the gender pay gap
 - Fairer and more equitable tax systems
 - Removing implicit bias from indirect taxation (e.g. VAT)
 - Child/ family benefits and other forms of income support to face different expenses (eg. childcare, school material, healthcare, disabilities and chronic illnesses)
 - Adequate payment of family leaves, regardless of the type of leave, as a key element to ensure non-discrimination of workers based on economic conditions of the family.

VIII. A EUROPE WHICH PROMOTES INTERGENERATIONAL SOLIDARITY, WITH FULL SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION OF THE ROLE OF FAMILY CARERS.



SOLIDARITY:

A Europe which promotes intergenerational solidarity, with full support and recognition of the role of family carers.

- ➔ Adopt and consolidate legal measures to improve the social protection of family carers and of persons in need of care, and include family carers as a target group in the European Social Fund Plus. Integrate the recommendations of 1000+ carers across 16 countries (*2017 COFACE Who Cares study*) in the design and review of public policy and support services under the new 2021-2027 budget.
- ➔ Develop a European care package under the European Pillar of Social Rights including policy reforms towards a more holistic long-term care, taking the 10 measures outlined in the *European Charter of Family Carers* as a starting point.
- ➔ Develop harmonized and comprehensive definitions, indicators (including in the EU Social Scoreboard) and corresponding European targets on long-term care to assess the affordability, the accessibility, the quality and the availability of care and support services (see recommendations in the COFACE paper on the *Family Dimension of Long-term Care*).

IX. A EUROPE WHICH RESPECTS HUMAN RIGHTS AND ADVANCES THE RIGHTS OF ALL FAMILIES AND THEIR MEMBERS.



RESPECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS:

A Europe which advances the rights of ALL families and their members.

- ➔ Public policies and legislative measures should ensure that all European citizens and residents enjoy the same level of protection and can exercise their fundamental rights and freedoms, under the principle of self-determination and human dignity.
- ➔ The rights of the child are part of human rights: rights that the EU and EU countries must respect, protect and fulfil, acknowledging that according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is every person below 18 years of age.
- ➔ As party to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the EU must implement the Convention for matters of EU competence, including EU legislation and public policy, and promote, protect and monitor the UNCRPD in EU Member States

x. A EUROPE WHICH MAKES THE 2030 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS A REALITY.



SUSTAINABILITY:

A Europe which wants to make the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals a reality.

- ➔ Concerned about climate change and its impact, COFACE Families Europe as active member of the European multi-stakeholder platform on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), supports the mainstreaming of the SDGs throughout European policy-making through a clear 10-year action and implementation strategy 2020-2030.
- ➔ Break out of mainstream economic models, which are starving public services and leading the European Union and the whole world economy into a recession, by examining alternative models in order to make sure that the economic system serves society; and by redirecting the European Semester towards a socially and environmentally sustainable economic growth strategy.
- ➔ Families want a healthy environment for their children to thrive and attain decent standards of health, development and physical integrity, by accelerating a socially just transition to renewable energy supply which is clean, affordable and supports community ownership, and ensuring that European environmental standards meet the needs of children.

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About COFACE Families Europe






COFACE Families Europe has been involved for 60 years in building a strong social, family friendly Europe. It brings forward the voice of millions of families, gathering 50+ organisations from all over Europe. COFACE Families Europe advocates for strong social policies that take into consideration family needs and guarantee equal opportunities for all families.

More: www.coface-eu.org



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