



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 30 November 2022
(OR. en, pl, es)

**Interinstitutional File:
2022/0263(NLE)**

**14782/22
ADD 1**

**SOC 625
EMPL 428
GENDER 185
EDUC 386**

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

No. prev. doc.: 14034/22

Subject: Council Recommendation on early childhood education and care: the
Barcelona targets for 2030
- Adoption
- Statements by the Hungarian, Polish and Spanish delegations

Delegations will find attached statements by the Hungarian, Polish and Spanish delegations in relation to the above Recommendation.

STATEMENT BY HUNGARY

TO THE COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE: THE BARCELONA TARGETS FOR 2030

Hungary welcomes the general objective of the Council Recommendation to provide parents with every possible tool to maintain a better work-life balance. Hungary acknowledges the importance of high quality, affordable and accessible early childhood education and care (ECEC) services, that can contribute to the more equal sharing of care responsibilities among parents and also enhance the labour market participation of women.

Hungary considers it important that the principle of subsidiarity and the different national circumstances and practices of the Member States are taken into account regarding ECEC. Hungary believes that the right to parental choice must be respected with regard the use of ECEC services.

Hungary interprets the Recommendation as the following: if a Member State achieves the proposed targets ahead of schedule, it does not mean that it will be moved to the next category automatically to achieve the higher target.

Furthermore, Hungary recognises and promotes equality between men and women in accordance with the Fundamental Law of Hungary and the primary law, principles and values of the European Union, as well as commitments and principles stemming from international law. Equality between women and men is enshrined in the Treaties of the European Union as a fundamental value. In line with these and its national legislation, Hungary interprets the term ‘gender’ as a reference to ‘sex’ in the *Council Recommendation on early childhood education and care: The Barcelona Targets for 2030*.

Moreover, the text of the *Council Recommendation on early childhood education and care: The Barcelona Targets for 2030* refers to several documents to which previously Hungary submitted a national statement. Hungary maintains all its national statements made earlier.

STATEMENT BY POLAND

STATEMENT BY POLAND ON THE DRAFT COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE: THE BARCELONA TARGETS FOR 2030

Equality between women and men is enshrined in the Treaties of the European Union as a fundamental right. Poland ensures equality between women and men within the framework of the Polish national legal system in accordance with international human rights treaties and within the framework of the fundamental values and principles of the European Union. For these reasons, Poland will interpret the term ‘gender equality’ as equality between women and men, in accordance with Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty on European Union and Articles 8 and 157(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and other terms containing the term ‘gender’ as referring to ‘sex’, in accordance with Article 10, Article 19(1) and Article 157(2) and (4) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

STATEMENT BY SPAIN

<p style="text-align: center;">STATEMENT BY SPAIN on the proposal for a COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION on the revision of the Barcelona targets on early childhood education and care 12003/22 - COM(2022) 442 final</p>
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Spain welcomes the adoption of this Recommendation aimed at ensuring greater participation in high-quality, affordable and accessible early childhood education and care (ECEC) services in the European Union, and in particular commends the Czech Presidency's efforts to reach an agreement on this initiative.

We are among the countries that have supported a high level of ambition in the Recommendation throughout the negotiations, in line with the Commission's original proposal. While this has been retained in many parts of the text, we believe that the text should have paid more attention to the need to effectively mainstream gender equality in childcare policies, which means, among other things, that parents and states must share responsibility.

In this respect, any reference in the text to 'parental choice' cannot be considered gender neutral and may have unintended consequences that deviate from the path towards gender equality, since in most cases parents have no such freedom of choice owing to the weight of gender stereotypes, traditional roles and the lack of an equal sharing of care responsibilities between women and men, which fosters inequalities and hinders progress towards gender equality.

We hope that the Member States and the Commission take these considerations into account when implementing the Regulation.