

VOTE FOR CHILDREN



Stand up for children's rights in the
European Parliament Elections

Become a
#ChildRightsChampion



Did you know?

1/4

1 in 4 EU children are at risk of **poverty or social exclusion**.



Globally, more than **1 in 6** children are living in a **conflict zone**.



9 million children and adolescents aged 10–19 in Europe lived with a **mental health** issue in 2021.



Approximately **1 billion** children face an extremely high risk from the impacts of the **climate crisis**.



1 in 5 children in Europe are subject to **sexual violence and abuse**, both **offline and online**, with girls being particularly vulnerable.



An estimated **5.4 million** children around the globe live in harmful **institutions**, with concerning high rates in the EU.



Each year, an estimated **250,000 children** are reported **missing** in Europe.



Around the world, **250 million** children aged 6 to 18 are **out of school**, with girls bearing a disproportionate burden.



6.6 million children with a **migrant background** lived in the EU in 2022. They run greater risk of poverty, discrimination and exclusion in the EU and abuse at its borders.



A **stateless** child is born somewhere in the world at least every 10 minutes.

What can you do?

Engage to become a #ChildRightsChampion.

We need a European Union (EU) that delivers for **every child** – in the EU's domestic and external actions – regardless of who they are, where they live, where they come from, and how they express their most authentic selves. Every child should enjoy the same rights and live free from discrimination of any kind.

As a future Member of the European Parliament (EP), we urge you to **put children's rights at the heart of your mandate**. Your future work to protect children within and outside the European Union must be enshrined in the rights, values and recommendations of the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**, ratified by all EU Member States, the article 3 of the Treaty on European Union and in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. You must ensure that **no child is left behind** and that EU policies and their implementation do no harm to children.

The #VoteforChildren coalition, composed of 23 child rights organisations, calls upon you and all candidates for the European elections to strive to secure and advance children's rights by:

- 1 Mainstreaming and protecting children's rights**
- 2 Breaking the cycle of poverty and inequality by investing in children**
- 3 Engaging with children**

1 Mainstreaming and protecting children's rights

Decisions taken at EU level have a direct impact on children's lives, in the EU and around the world. **Children's rights and their well-being should be among the main priorities of the EU's partnerships and policy-making.** However, children's best interests are rarely at the forefront of these processes. Children pay the highest price: they are often the most impacted by poverty and economic downturns, the consequences of climate change and environmental harm, the rolling back of social policies, and the multiplication of conflicts. In an increasingly digitalized society, children are also exposed to online risks.

In this context, it is imperative, now more than ever, for the EU to mainstream child rights, prioritize the best interests of the child and adopt a child rights-based approach as fundamental principles guiding all EU decisions, actions, and investments.

2 Breaking the cycle of poverty and inequality by investing in children

Twenty million children across Europe are at risk of poverty while globally, this number rises to 1 billion children. **Addressing child poverty is crucial for the EU.** Child poverty negatively impacts many aspects of a child's life, impeding their living conditions and personal development, with enduring consequences that span across generations.

To break these cycles of disadvantage, the EU must continue to prioritize the fight against child poverty. Universal access to quality essential services, such as health-care (including mental health), education, housing, and nutrition for all children and their families, is paramount. It is also crucial to guarantee all children the right to a birth certificate and a nationality, which is a pre-condition to fulfill many other fundamental rights. By adopting these measures, the EU can disrupt the negative impact of poverty, fostering an environment where children can reach their full potential.

3 Engaging with children

Children have the right to participate and be heard in all matters that concern them. As experts in their own lives, they should be actively involved in all policy, decision-making and proceedings at all levels that might affect them. **Child participation supports children's holistic development and empowers them as agents of change.** In turn, it promotes active citizenship and contributes to more inclusive societies and healthy democracies. The EU demonstrated its leading role in promoting and strengthening child participation by setting up the first ever EU Children's Participation Platform to facilitate children's active role in shaping European laws and policies.

It is crucial that EU decision-makers, particularly the future Members of the European Parliament, continue to lead by example and ensure rights-based, meaningful, inclusive, and safe child participation involving children from within and outside the EU in all debates and decisions that affect their lives.

Act as a #ChildRightsChampion

To deliver for all children throughout the 2024–2029 European Parliament legislature, I commit to:

1. **Promote and protect the rights of all children**, regardless of their nationality, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, sexual orientation, migration status, disability or any other circumstance or condition, **throughout both internal and external EU legislative processes, funding decisions and debates.**
2. Secure solid governance in the European Parliament which works for children by strengthening the mandate of the **European Parliament Child Rights Coordinator** and re-establishing the **Intergroup on Children's rights** among others.
3. Request a **child rights impact assessment** on any new legislative proposal and support legislation that guarantees a positive impact for children.
4. Secure a child-centered **EU budget, which invests in all children** as part of current and future EU internal and external funding instruments and ensure the European Commission tracks and reports on child rights related expenditures.
5. Call on the European Commission to renew its commitment to prioritize children's rights, by ensuring strong governance on children's rights, reviewing the **EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child**, and making sure it is effectively implemented through EU and national action plans that are adequately resourced and monitored.
6. Ensure that the fight against **child and family poverty** remains a political priority for the European Parliament by supporting the proper funding, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the **European Child Guarantee**.
7. Invest time and resources to facilitate meaningful, inclusive, and safe **participation of children in all EU legislative processes and debates** which concern them and guarantee the EU Children's Participation Platform is systematically used in European Parliament policymaking.
8. Engage regularly with **civil society organizations** working for and with children.

To sign the Child Rights Manifesto, please scan the QR code

