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# Empowering diversity: A journey through 2023

**2023**

**ANNUAL  
REPORT**

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# INTRODUCTION

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## Preliminary words

As we delve into the pages of our annual report for the year 2023, we embark on a journey that shows our commitment to build a strong social and inclusive Europe.

From the initial strides in combating energy poverty to the central discussions surrounding family diversity, each moment of this year has been focused on our dedication to foster positive change at European and national level.

Join us as we reflect on the milestones, challenges, and successes that we have shaped together with our members and in good cooperation with the European institutions and all our partners: researchers, civil society organisations and other stakeholders.

In 2023, our organisation focused on the recognition and support of family diversity as a cornerstone of social cohesion and solidarity. Throughout the year, we engaged in meaningful dialogues, initiatives, and partnerships aimed at understanding the needs and supporting families of all forms and compositions. Our continued efforts are centered on promoting acceptance and equal rights for families of today, including those headed by single parents, same-sex couples, blended families, and transnational family structures. We emphasised the importance of creating inclusive policies for parents with children with disabilities and environments that honour the unique needs and experiences of each family unit.

Additionally, we have invested a lot of our energy in the implementation process of the Work-Life Balance directive. We assessed the European Child Guarantee, a key framework to combat child poverty, and highlighted the importance of low child-staff ratio for quality early childhood education and care and recognition of the role of family carers.

We also invested in building our COFACE Family Lab, especially in the field of educational programmes and research. We further promoted the first LINK e-learning course on school bullying management, in close cooperation with our Greek member KMOP.

Our European Observatory on Family Policy launched in close cooperation with the Centre for Family Studies of ODISEE University of Applied Sciences, published its first report entitled "Towards greater family policy integration across Europe". This report studies the fragmentation points in policies for families with young children.

By participating in important Horizon Europe Projects such as rEUsilience and Path2include and working on projects concerned with the rights of children online, COFACE wants to amplify diverse voices and experiences.

By joining forces, nurturing a culture of acceptance and solidarity where every family feels valued and empowered, we believe we can build a stronger, more resilient society where every family can thrive and where we bring everybody forward.

Annemie Drieskens  
President of COFACE Families Europe



## About us

Founded in 1958 and with 50+ member organisations in 23+ European countries, COFACE Families Europe is a network which represents millions of families, volunteers, and professionals.

Our areas of work include social and family policy, education, disability rights, gender equality, child rights, migration, consumer issues as well as the impact of technological developments on families. COFACE Families Europe advocates for policies of non-discrimination and equal opportunities between persons and between family forms, and specifically supports policies aimed at increasing equality between women and men, with a special focus on reconciliation between work, care and family life.

## COFACE Families Europe aims to achieve several positive overarching outcomes for families and society.

**Work Life balance and family-friendly workplaces**

**Gender equal and caring economy**

**Inclusive education and societies**

**Social inclusion and poverty prevention**

**Independent living for all, family carers and persons with disabilities**

**Financial inclusion and an economy that serves society and the planet**

**Digital citizenship and harnessing the potential of technology**

**Child rights and family well-being**

## OUR MISSION

COFACE - FAMILIES EUROPE is a network promoting the well-being, health and security of families and their members in a changing society and serves as a trusted entity for family mainstreaming and for the voice/needs of families in the EU and beyond.

## OUR VISION

COFACE Families Europe works towards a family-friendly environment, enabling all families and their members to benefit from sufficient financial resources, available quality services and adequate time arrangements in order to live, be fully included in the community, and enjoy their family life in dignity and harmony.

## OUR VALUES

In a spirit of pluralism, working in the name of all types of families, COFACE Families Europe is rooted in a set of six core values:

- **Non-discrimination.** COFACE-Families Europe recognises all family forms.
- **Equal opportunities.** COFACE-Families Europe believes equality between women and men is a cornerstone for the reconciliation of family and professional life.
- **Respect of human rights.** COFACE-Families Europe seeks to advance the rights of families and their members to a decent quality of life.
- **Empowerment.** COFACE-Families Europe aims to give a voice to all family members as citizens, consumers and workers.
- **Social inclusion.** COFACE-Families Europe advocates for the shaping of policies to tackle poverty and social exclusion of families and their members.
- **Solidarity.** COFACE-Families Europe promotes intergenerational solidarity between family members.

COFACE views the family as a multi-faceted, dynamic and intergenerational entity coming in different shapes and sizes. We advocate for a systemic two-generation approach in policy-making to support families and children in different life transitions from birth to old age.



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## Key activities

- Represent** ✓  
Representing COFACE member organisations towards the European and international institutions (UN, OECD, Council of Europe), and towards other organisations operating at European level (EU agencies and stakeholder groups, NGO alliances, forums, platforms).
- Advocate** ✓  
Carrying out advocacy campaigns for families and family organisations wherever the interests of families and their members are at stake.
- Coordinate** ✓  
Coordinating and facilitating projects, programmes, activities and initiatives of member organisations, bringing a European dimension to their local initiatives to drive change for families.
- Monitor** ✓  
Closely following EU and international initiatives, assessing the negative and positive impacts for families. Assess emerging family trends across Europe through studies in various fields, and making the link with EU/international initiatives.
- Network** ✓  
Establishing networking systems for the continuing exchange of information and actions with member organisations on matters arising within the European Union, as well as reaching out to individuals who support COFACE's mission.
- Initiate** ✓  
Developing new research, projects, conferences, seminars, trainings and study days, and putting in motion programmes of action at European level, in partnership with other organisations.
- Educate** ✓  
Creating a wide range of tools to support life-long learning of families and professionals.
- Research** ✓  
Collecting data through different channels to better understand policies and practices to support families of today.



## 2023 highlights

### JANUARY

- **COFACE organises an online exchange with members** on energy poverty and its impact on families
- **rEUsilience (Horizon Europe project) consortium meeting** in Leuven, Belgium

### MARCH

- **COFACE publishes a media statement for International Women's Rights Day** on 8th March, focusing on vulnerabilities of single motherhood
- **European expert meeting on inclusive education in Europe**, co-hosted with AIAS Monza (Italy) together with COFACE General Assembly
- **COFACE Disability platform meeting** focusing on age, disability, and child rights

### FEBRUARY

- **Breakfast byte webinar** on interventions for children and youth in the digital environment
- **Capacity building communication webinar** on diverse participation in the EU elections
- **COFACE publishes a joint statement with European NGOs:** One year since the Russian invasion of Ukraine

### APRIL

- **Kick-off PATHS2INCLUDE (Horizon Europe project)** in Oslo, focusing on labour market discriminations
- **Online exchange with COFACE members on financial inclusion**
- **COFACE publishes opinion piece** on the situation of children with imprisoned parents





## MAY

- **COFACE launches a small-scale social media campaign** for the European mental health week on communities and mental health
- **Breakfast byte webinar** on child-staff ratios in early childhood education and care, and **launch of COFACE thematic note** on quality early childhood education and care
- **Online exchange organised for the TraFaDy COST network** on social rights of transnational families

## JULY

- **COFACE joins new alliance:** the European Child Sexual Abuse Legislation Advocacy Group (ECLAG)
- **COFACE attends European Banking Authority** stakeholders group meeting

## JUNE

- **Online exchange with COFACE members on European Commission proposal** for a regulation on parenthood recognition
- **COFACE gives a lecture at the University of Amsterdam summer school** on enhancing the effective exercise of social rights in Europe
- **COFACE is invited to speak about families and energy poverty** in EIGE workshop in the framework of the European Sustainable Energy Week

## AUGUST

- **Publication of rEUsilience working paper** on “Family Profiles: Risks, resources, and inequalities”
- **Launch of PATHS2INCLUDE website** on labour market discriminations



## 2023 highlights

### SEPTEMBER

- **Publication of COFACE energy poverty brief** calling for a families-sensitive approach in energy policy
- **Online education working group** under the L.I.N.K. education programme for social rights
- **COFACE is invited to speak at Spanish presidency conference** on the social protection of families

### NOVEMBER

- **Webinar to launch the first report** of the European Observatory on Family Policy
- **PATHS2INCLUDE Horizon Europe consortium meeting** in Girona, Spain

### OCTOBER

- **COFACE participation in panel of European Urban mobility days**, focus on child safety
- **Breakfast byte webinar** on school bullying management, in cooperation with eTwinning community
- **European expert meeting on family diversity**, co-organised with UNAF Spain with representatives from 23 countries
- **Joint statement with 17 European organisations on UN day for care and support** to boost the European Care Strategy implementation

### DECEMBER

- **Opinion piece: “Europe, listen to survivors and stop abuse online!”** by member of The Brave Movement
- **Launch of a COFACE Disability Thematic note on ageing family carers** for the International Day of Persons with disabilities
- **Online meeting with members** about proposed EU regulation on Child Sexual Abuse



## 2023 highlights

11

Newsletter  
issues

20.355

website  
page views

10K

Followers on  
social media

5

Media  
releases

1

EU policy assessment  
of the Child Guarantee

1

COFACE speaking engagement under  
the Spanish presidency of the EU

3

Horizon Europe projects  
consortium meetings

5

Active hashtag  
campaigns

10

COFACE online  
working groups

2

COFACE European  
expert meetings

12

Responses to EU  
consultations

1

Policy brief on  
energy poverty

25

Invitations to speak at  
events and trainings

1

Research report  
on family policy

6

Joint  
statements

3

Breakfast byte  
webinars

2

Thematic  
notes

1

Research  
webinar

2

Joint events  
in Brussels

1

Communication capacity-  
building on EU elections

1

European project kick-  
off (PATHS2INCLUDE)

1

COFACE TV channel  
with 3 new videos



# EUROPEAN FAMILY LAB

This European Family Lab, which we have been busy developing since 2020, serves as an innovation incubator for ideas and cross-country knowledge transfer to help family professionals deliver the best possible supports for families and children. Major steps were taken in 2023 to further develop the Family Lab in cooperation with members and partners.



## Breakfast byte webinars on family supports

A room dedicated to the breakfast byte webinars focusing on NGO family supports, with 3 new breakfast bytes in 2023 attended by 40-50 participants on average. They focused on different topics such as interventions to support children and youth in the digital environment based on DigiGen Horizon 2020 research; quality early childhood education and care for the international day of families; and finally school bullying management with a presentation of the L.I.N.K. programme e-learning course to tackle bullying as well as existing projects of eTwinning to support education professionals.

## European Observatory on Family Policy

The European Observatory on Family Policy is a joint programme of COFACE Families Europe and the Center for Family Studies of Odisee University of Applied Sciences. It aims to serve as a platform for the observation, analysis, and dissemination of evidence on family policy and other social concerns directly relevant to family well-being across the European Union. The first output of the Observatory, the report 'Towards Greater Family Policy Integration across Europe', was published in November 2023.

TOWARDS GREATER  
FAMILY POLICY  
INTEGRATION  
ACROSS EUROPE



## L.I.N.K: An education and training programme for lifelong learning on social rights from a whole-family perspective

The goal of L.I.N.K. (a joint programme of KMOP Education Hub and COFACE) as a modern education centre is to develop courses for three different target groups: families, professionals, organisations. The courses may follow asynchronous, synchronous, and blended e-learning methods. The first L.I.N.K. e-learning tool is a 3-hour course on “School bullying management: effective skills for educators”, for professionals, and namely teachers working in any educational setting, students of psychology, education, social sciences. This course is available in English and Greek and has seen 2660 enrollments and 700+ course completions.

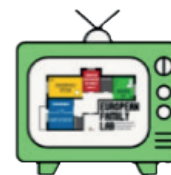
online course

### School Bullying Management - Effective Skills for Educators

Register for free at

[education-hub.kmop.org](https://education-hub.kmop.org)

## COFACE TV



## COFACE TV channel collecting videos on policy & practice

A room of the Lab is dedicated to COFACE TV, a YouTube channel collecting different types of videos on family policy and practice, functioning as a resource to find expertise, people and organisations to connect with. The new videos available in COFACE TV are especially recordings of the breakfast byte webinar expert talks on safer internet, quality early childhood education and care, and school bullying management, as well as the Research webinar launching the first report of the European Observatory on Family Policy.

## Families2030 peer exchange group

Coordinated by COFACE, this group of policy-makers from 15+ ministries of social affairs met for the first time in Berlin in 2022, and again in Madrid in 2023 to discuss family diversity as well as key EU developments in family policy integration linked to the European Child Guarantee and European Care Strategy, and opportunities under the Technical Support Instrument of DG REFORM of the European Commission. This group will be invited to convene around early October every year, with COFACE as facilitator of these exchanges.



# SPOTLIGHT ON COFACE'S COMMUNICATIONS CAPACITY-BUILDING WEBINAR

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A successful [capacity-building webinar](#) was organised for COFACE members and partners on **diverse participation in the EU elections**, also creating new links with European organisations that represent minority groups such as #DiasporaVote! and IGLYO, and with the participation of communications professionals in partner European NGOs.

**DG COMM of the European Parliament kicked off the webinar by providing an overview of how the EU elections work**, highlighting the fact that there will effectively be 27 national elections on 6-9th June 2024 and providing different resources to be used by COFACE members to help mobilise their networks and support more excluded families to vote. This webinar included interactive sessions and group discussions, fostering meaningful exchange of ideas between speakers and participants. It was attended by a mix of COFACE communication officers and COFACE Administrative Council members, which paved the way for internal discussions in 2023 on the EU elections in different COFACE meetings throughout the year.

There were also speakers from **organisations representing racial minorities, LGBTQI+ youth, and persons with intellectual disabilities**. #DiasporaVote!, representing racialised communities, brought key messages including the fact that racialised people are not a monolith and the importance of keeping intersectionality in mind. Essentially, to reach diverse audiences, the main recommendation is the need to work with diverse organisations who understand the ins and outs of their communities. IGLYO representing LGBTQI+ youth provided some key tips to boost diverse participation in the EU elections through strong communication strategies which have an intersectional perspective including various identities, the use of storytelling, making campaigns accessible and working with trusted media resources. Finally, **UNAPEI gave a presentation on communicating about the European Parliament and its elections with diversity in mind, including persons with intellectual disabilities**.

To this end, they carry out actions in France to promote accessibility of voting stations, as well as inclusiveness and accessibility of EU campaigns through the use of Easy-to-read material and participation in the European Parliament of persons with disabilities.

February 15th, 2023 - 09:30 - 12:30 CET

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## Communication capacity-building on diverse participation in the 2024 European elections

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Hosted by 



# POLICY AND ADVOCACY

## Thematic note on child-staff ratios in early childhood education and care



Principle 11 of the **European Pillar of Social Rights** states that children have the right to affordable early childhood education and care (ECEC) of good quality. Since its adoption in 2017, the European Commission has been actively engaged in developing policy proposals and indicators to improve the **availability and quality of ECEC in the European Union**.

COFACE developed a thematic note to trigger debate on ECEC quality. The note examines a crucial precondition for high-quality ECEC provision: the **ratio of children to staff in daycare settings (child-staff ratio)**. Low child-staff ratios can yield multiple benefits for the children and all the other actors involved. These include the ability for staff to create conditions for meaningful interactions with toddlers and infants, offering opportunities for stronger partnerships between parents and ECEC staff, and providing the necessary conditions for responsive, targeted approaches to the specific needs of children with disabilities.

## Paving the way for a disability-inclusive European Child Guarantee



Two years after the historical adoption of the Recommendation on the European Child Guarantee and the promise of all EU Member States to act to lift children and their families out of poverty, COFACE Families Europe assessed the plans submitted by April 2023 **from the perspective of children with disabilities and their families who experience specific barriers when accessing key services and have a more significant risk of poverty and social exclusion**.



Children with disabilities are one of the six target groups highlighted within the Child Guarantee Recommendation. In the assessment, specific attention was paid to the following dimensions: inclusive education and school-based activities, inclusive (digital) educational tools, accessibility of key services, intersections with other policy fields or discrimination forms, involvement of children with disabilities, their families and civil society organisations, and broader measures to support families of children with disabilities.



# RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

## European Observatory on Family Policy



The European Observatory on Family Policy is a joint research programme of COFACE Families Europe and the Centre for Family Studies of ODISEE University of Applied Sciences launched in 2022. The Observatory aims to serve as a platform for the observation, analysis, and dissemination of evidence on family policy and other social concerns directly relevant to family well-being across the European Union. COFACE Families Europe offers the programme its extensive knowledge on EU policies and the realities of families across Europe, while the Centre for Family Studies provides its expertise on practice-based research from the perspective of families and its research networks in Belgium and internationally. The partnership is conceived to bring together the respective strengths and expertise on family policy and family life to better meet its monitoring and analytical goals.

The starting point for the Observatory is values of human rights, gender equality, social inclusion, diversity, empowerment, and intergenerational solidarity, with a stated ambition of promoting policies which support all types of families, without discrimination. The key principles underpinning the Observatory's activity are public interest, impartiality, and quality of content.

The Observatory sets out to address three broad objectives: to identify emerging trends and priorities in family policy across EU Member states, while monitoring progress on family-related targets; to develop innovative frameworks for interpreting the evidence collected; to broker knowledge at the EU and member states level, providing a bridge between academics,

decision makers, advocacy coalitions, and grassroots family organisations.

Through its activity, the Observatory aims to document and highlight the impact of public policy initiatives on families, intended both as a set of individual members and as a collective entity. It brings together different perspectives on family resources and needs from a range of public policy, research, and advocacy contexts. It strives to integrate these viewpoints into a unified theoretical framework, and to design suitable recommendations for policymaking at EU, national, and local levels.





## First report: focus on early childhood

Families with young children have complex necessities in the period before the start of compulsory schooling. Often, these needs cannot be reduced to educational, healthcare or caregiving demands alone. They are multifaceted and require multidisciplinary responses that span across a number of public services and agencies. Successful fulfilment of these needs requires a joint effort of different governmental organisations to build ties and form functioning networks of cooperation over a long period of time.

The first output of the Observatory, the report 'Towards Greater Family Policy Integration across Europe', was published in November 2023. The report investigates possible responses to the multisectoral needs of households by providing an overview of the current alignment and coordination between complementary services and policy areas in five European countries (Belgium, Finland, Germany, Italy, and Poland). It focuses on three key cross-sectoral needs. The first is the requirement for an extensive reconciliation framework of work and family life over the early months of the child's life, which entails coordination between parental leave frameworks and formal day-care services to ensure that when parents' paid leave has ended, they have the opportunity to transition their child into formal childcare and education services without experiencing a gap in coverage.



# GROWING INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

## Key public networking events

MARCH 2023



COFACE-Disability and AIAS Monza held a 1-day [European expert meeting](#) on inclusive education in Monza (Italy) on 28th March 2023 gathering 134 participants from 19 different countries. Taking the Italian system as a starting point for discussion with European peers, we brought together organisations of families of persons with disabilities and service providers, education professionals, persons with disabilities and their families and policy-makers from several countries to examine key actions to implement inclusive education in line with the UNCRPD and the General Comment n4. We aimed to apply the COFACE whole-family lens to the topic of inclusive education as a way to build inclusive societies for persons with disabilities and their families, focusing namely on **1. education for building independent living and meaningful inclusion in society; 2. inclusive education from a life course perspective, namely inclusive education beyond compulsory education; and 3. Looking at the continuum of services between formal and non-formal education** with an added focus on culture and sports. This meeting supported innovation and knowledge transfer between civil society organisations, created new synergies between COFACE and COFACE Disability members and key Italian and European stakeholders, and contributed to the S.H.I.F.T. towards more inclusive education systems in Europe. There were a wide range of speakers from local to European level including representatives from European networks like **European schoolnet, European Disability Forum and the EU agency for Special needs and Inclusive education**. The findings of the conference are available in a [meeting report](#) on COFACE's website.

MARCH 2023



The annual COFACE Disability platform took place in Monza the day after the conference, where various topics were discussed including EU frameworks like the European Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the European Care Strategy and the European Child Guarantee. The members of COFACE Disability also discussed two main areas which are affecting families with disabilities: **exploring the intersections of disability and ageing, as well as exchanges on national advocacy strategies to support children with disabilities** in the context of the European Child Guarantee. This meeting included **30 participants from 10+ countries** providing different voices from family carers to professionals working with families with disabilities. This platform has existed for more than 20 years, bringing a strong voice for family carers of children and adults with disabilities, based on the UNCRPD, the European Charter for Family Carers and the S.H.I.F.T. guide for meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities and their families.



## Key public networking events

OCTOBER 2023



COFACE, together with its member UNAF Spain, organised a [European expert meeting](#) with **80+ participants from 23 countries** in Madrid in October 2023. This meeting focused on family diversity, taking the Spanish policy as a starting point for European exchanges and how to make social rights accessible to all families. Speakers were wide ranging including a **representative from the Spanish government** who worked on the family diversity law, diverse Spanish family organisations, and **EU experts**. The afternoon session of the meeting took the form of a family diversity **policy workshop which aimed to harvest the collective knowledge of all participants** present to think of challenges and solutions to help diverse families access their social rights, with a focus on **rainbow families, transnational families, and blended families**. A series of measures are needed to ensure less traditional families also access the supports offered by national family policies. The meeting report highlights [key findings](#) and future actions to be undertaken and is available on COFACE's website. COFACE also invited family organisations outside the network to join the meeting and connect with the network, namely from North Macedonia, Serbia, Portugal, Germany, Italy and Austria.



## Online communities

COFACE ensured an ongoing society watchdog function to raise awareness about new trends and emerging challenges for families at EU and national level, aiming to foster transfer of knowledge across countries, sections and levels.

COFACE does so in order to develop and disseminate innovative policy and practices as well as give a voice to challenges and needs of all types of families in the EU and inspire one another to tackle current and future issues.

This involves building various online information and advocacy campaigns to disseminate COFACE/EU activities strategically to local communities in Europe and beyond and at the same time spread grassroots information to the EU level.

The main communication channels helped in achieving our objectives.

The state-of-the-art multi-lingual website stays a central European hub on family matters, with 71 news articles, 20.000+ page views in 2023.

Social media are an integral part of our dissemination strategy. We engage in multilevel interactions with the 10.000 followers on our social media communities which are growing steadily through our activities on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram and YouTube (COFACE TV). Through these channels, we have started building various communities of EU and family professionals from different backgrounds, individuals interested in family matters and partnerships across sectors, countries, languages and political beliefs.

Equally the Families Corner newsletter gathers all relevant aspects about COFACE, its members, the EU and beyond which are sent out monthly to 4000+ people.

In 2023, COFACE published 11 Families Corner newsletters and connected you all by sharing key information and news affecting families across Europe and beyond through four sections:



- ★ **YOU&THE EU:** European initiatives which affect our daily lives directly or indirectly.
- ★ **CREATIVE HUB:** Highlights about the great work of the COFACE members and partners to support the rights of families.
- ★ **DISCUSS&DEBATE:** Opinion pieces from inside and outside COFACE to show the pluralism of views in our inclusive and democratic European societies.
- ★ **TIMEOUT:** A section with elements of humour, quirkiness and creativity which are integral parts of the Families Corner experience. This touch of light-heartedness aims to prompt moments of pause, reflection, and occasional laughter.



COFACE\_EU



Families Europe  
@COFACE.EU



Families Europe  
youtube.com/user/coface2010



familieseurope



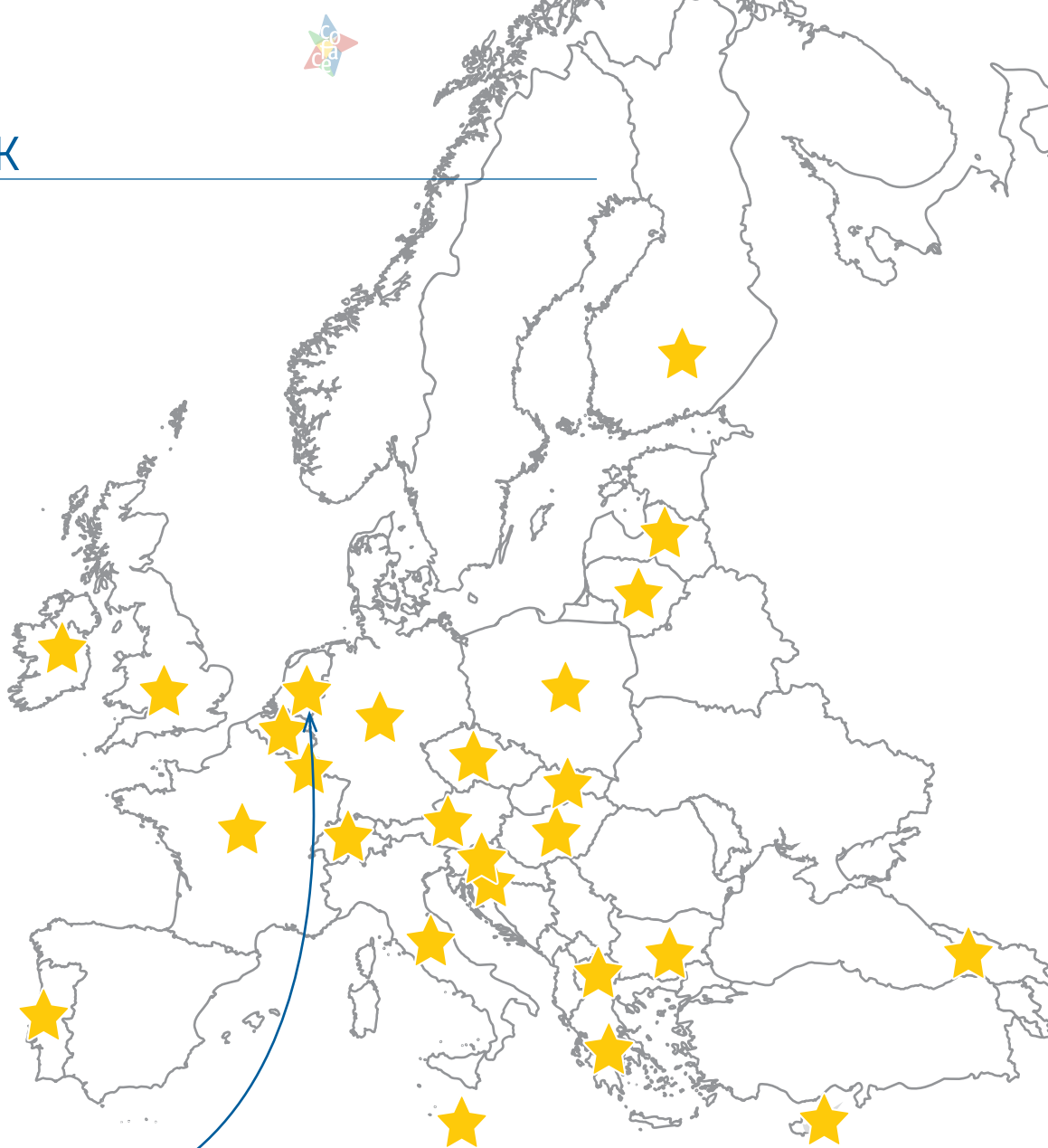
COFACE Families  
Europe



# THE NETWORK

## Members

- ★ Austria
- ★ Belgium
- ★ Bulgaria
- ★ Croatia
- ★ Cyprus
- ★ Czech Republic
- ★ Finland
- ★ France
- ★ Georgia
- ★ Germany
- ★ Greece
- ★ Hungary
- ★ Ireland
- ★ Italy
- ★ Latvia
- ★ Lithuania
- ★ Luxembourg
- ★ Malta
- ★ The Netherlands
- ★ North Macedonia
- ★ Poland
- ★ Portugal
- ★ Slovakia
- ★ Slovenia
- ★ Switzerland
- ★ United Kingdom



In 2023, we welcomed **Ouders voor inclusive** (Belgium) into the COFACE network.

It is a volunteer organisation of, for and by parents of children with specific needs. The organisation aims to support the right to an inclusive life by empowering and assisting parents in situations where they experience difficulties. The experiences, questions, and concerns of parents provide direction to the organisation.



# THE NETWORK

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## Online member exchanges

In 2023, COFACE members met regularly online, which also brought the COFACE secretariat closer to the members across 23+ countries. This was mainly positive in creating greater network cohesion and real-time exchanges on European to local actions.

Online meetings were organised nearly monthly in order to collect feedback from family organisations on emerging trends and also to update them on EU developments.

This was the case:

- ★ in January with an online exchange on [energy poverty](#) and its impact on families;
- ★ in February with exchanges during the communications [capacity-building webinar](#) on diverse participation in the EU elections;
- ★ in March with an exchange on [ECEC quality](#);
- ★ in April with an exchange on [financial inclusion](#) developments namely the transposition of the Consumer Credit Directive and plans of the European Central Bank regarding the digital euro;
- ★ in May on the topic of social rights of [transnational families](#), examining more specifically the intersections between migration and care;
- ★ in June with an exchange on the EU [parenthood recognition](#) regulation proposal;
- ★ in September on [disability and ageing](#), as well as an online working group on [education for social rights](#) where members presented some interesting formal and non-formal education programmes to support digital parenting, family carers, and single parents;
- ★ in October and December with online exchanges on [safer internet](#) and developments in the [Child Sexual Abuse regulation proposal](#).



# BUILDING BRIDGES

## EU Projects in the spotlight

### REUSILIENCE RISKS, RESOURCES AND INEQUALITIES: INCREASING RESILIENCE IN EUROPEAN FAMILIES



Will a better understanding of families lead to improved welfare states? That is what this Horizon Europe research project in six European countries is achieving through the publication of a wide range of policy-relevant research.

Jointly coordinated by Stockholm University and the University of Oxford, in partnership with the Autonomous University of Barcelona, KULeuven, Warsaw and Zagreb.

The context is one of fast-paced changes in labour markets & income security to which families have to act as key responsive entities, cushioning potentially negative impacts and enabling/disabling risk-taking and change. In focusing especially on families that may not be able to respond and understanding the conditions that make for familial resilience more generally, the project answers two research questions: What challenges and difficulties are created or exacerbated for families by labour markets in the ‘new world of work and how do families try to overcome these? How do social policies contribute to familial resilience, especially in terms of the extent to which they are inclusive, flexible, and complementary?

As impact partner, COFACE Families Europe is contributing to the research over the three years of the project (2022-2025), as well as analysing the data from a policy and practice perspective, to ensure it feeds into key European social and employment policy frameworks under the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan. COFACE brought the data to different EU discussions on data collection and household surveys (e.g. filling data gaps on diverse families), on minimum income, and also [coordinated](#)

[media action](#) in 6 countries for the publication of the findings of focus groups involving 300 family members, which focused on identifying the realities of families when they are facing socio-economic risks. The research offers rich insights into the challenges that families face in navigating tough circumstances, unpacks how they use their often-limited resources to overcome pressures, and shares families’ views on the reforms needed for families to be able to do more than just survive one day at a time.



**i More information:** [www.reusilience.eu](http://www.reusilience.eu)

**Follow rEUsilience:** [Twitter/X \(@rEUsilience\)](#)  
[LinkedIn \(reusilience\)](#)

Make sure you [subscribe](#) to the project’s newsletter via the website to receive the latest updates about the research.



## EU Projects in the spotlight

### **PATHS2INCLUDE: NEW KNOWLEDGE ON PATHWAYS TO INCLUDE PERSONS IN VULNERABLE SITUATIONS**

PATHS2INCLUDE is a European research project focusing on understanding processes that shape barriers or facilitate inclusive labour markets. It aims to uncover factors that can be changed and revised by political decisions aiming to reduce inequalities and promote social inclusion in the European labour markets.

Discrimination and poor inclusion of persons in vulnerable situations in the labour market, often related to gender, ethnicity, age, health, and family situation, is detrimental to the EU economy and societal unity. By combining diverse methods, data and disciplines (economics, political science and sociology), PATHS2INCLUDE intends to uncover how European policies aimed at protecting persons in vulnerable situations on the labour market reflect, speak to, and support the ways in which employers themselves perceive challenges related to recruitment, career trajectories and work exit.

As the world of work is changing, we will develop empirical tools to discover combinations of context and individual characteristics that generate vulnerable situations and positions in the labour market today, and new risk factors in the future of work. Based on this knowledge, PATHS2INCLUDE will develop proposals for effective policies combatting labour market discrimination and promote inclusion in the EU.

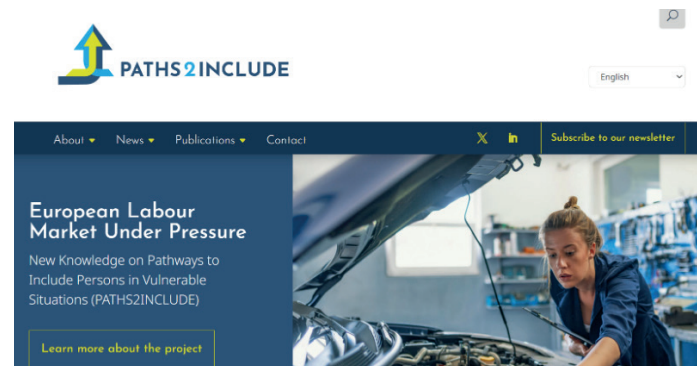
As impact partner, COFACE Families Europe will be following and contributing to the research over the three years of the project (2023-2026), as well as analysing the data from a policy and practice perspective, to ensure it feeds into key European employment policy frameworks as well as company policies. COFACE organised an impact workshop at the kick-off

meeting of PATHS2INCLUDE in April 2023, working with a mix of researchers and key policy stakeholders including Social Platform and the European Network against Racism, to collect inputs on data gaps on vulnerabilities in the labour market and how to ensure the PATHS2INCLUDE data can be useful for the work of practitioners in services, in public policy and in companies.

**i More information:** [www.paths2include.eu](http://www.paths2include.eu)

**Follow PATHS2INCLUDE:** [Twitter/X \(@PATHS2INCLUDE\)](https://twitter.com/PATHS2INCLUDE)  
[LinkedIn \(@paths2include\)](https://www.linkedin.com/company/paths2include/).

Make sure you [subscribe](#) to the project's newsletter via the website to receive the latest updates about the research.







## EU Projects in the spotlight

### CHILD PROTECTION AND EMPOWERMENT IN THE DIGITAL AGE – THE FAMILY PERSPECTIVE

Digitalisation is now all-pervasive in the life of families and children. The challenge is to ensure a holistic and societal approach to child protection and empowerment, while also preventing violation of child rights online. These activities are based on COFACE's [13 Digitalisation principles](#) for creating a better Internet and web for all with the aim of ensuring that digitalisation and new technological developments serve the general interest of all European citizens and families. In 2023, we were especially interested in boosting implementation of Principle 4 "digital parenting" and Principle 5 "child rights in the digital world".

To this end, COFACE worked especially to support families by building partnerships for educational tools and awareness-raising campaigns (parenting support, cyberbullying, media awareness, sexual and reproductive health education, digital citizenship), by advocating for strong EU policy and regulation (e.g. Child Sexual Abuse Regulation, Digital Services Act, European Child Guarantee, EU Child Rights Strategy), and by engaging in dialogue with relevant industries (e.g. Apple, Meta, Google, Microsoft, Vodafone, Discord) so that their platforms and products are designed to implement child rights, as well as industry groupings such as DOT Europe, Video Games Europe.

**COFACE aims to build bridges with the EU institutions and stakeholders to mainstream child rights online.** We do this through direct dialogue in working groups or round tables providing input on parental perceptions on digitalisation, participation in the [Safer Internet Forum](#), through joint campaigning around Safer Internet Day with [Better Internet for Kids](#) advisory board and with CSO alliances like the ECLAG

and the CRAG, participation in the [EU forum on the rights of the child](#), and the Child Rights Intergroup of the European Parliament.

**This also contributes to increased outreach and awareness-raising on child rights online through a wide range of communication and dissemination tools.** We published different types of content on the COFACE website including news articles on the EU context, information about joint campaigns, examples of COFACE member programmes on CSA, and an opinion piece providing a channel for the voice of CSA survivors. We invested time and resources in making our 13 Digitalisation principles more inclusive and accessible in Easy-to-Read language, which is also core to our disability rights strategy and reaching out to children, youth and parents with disabilities.

**We also try to consolidate the role of national family organisations as experts in digital policy and specifically child rights online.** Two online meetings were organised with COFACE members in October and December 2023 with 10+ participants from 8 countries (Germany, France, Finland, Greece, Belgium, Spain, Bulgaria, Croatia) to brief them about the European Commission's proposal for a CSA regulation and other digital policy initiatives like the DSA, BIK+ strategy, Safer Internet Forum. A stocktaking of COFACE member activities on tackling and preventing CSA is currently underway with a variety of approaches and programs emerging, including policy and advocacy in Germany, CSA programmes in Croatia, European projects on CSA in Greece, CSA prevention through digital parenting programmes in Belgium and France, sex education programmes in Finland, and campaigns on videos games and sexism in Spain.



## EU projects

### FINISHED PROJECTS

- ★ WAF Project: Work Autonomy, Flexibility and Work Life Balance
- ★ Families And Societies: studying diversity of family forms, relationships, and life courses in Europe
- ★ ENABLE: European Network Against Bullying in Learning and Leisure Environments
- ★ Delete Cyberbullying: European Awareness raising campaign on Cyberbullying
- ★ SIP-Bench III: Benchmarking of parental control tools for the online protection of children
- ★ Female breadwinner families in Europe: on the impact of earnings and distribution power in families
- ★ POSCON: Positive Online Content and Services for Children in Europe
- ★ EU CONVINCENCE – EU COMMON VALUES INCLUSIVE Education – Create an alliance of schools for inclusion
- ★ Digital Citizenship Education (with the Council of Europe)
- ★ Ad-PHS: Advancing Personal and Household Services
- ★ TRIPS – TRANSPORT INNOVATION FOR DISABLED PEOPLE NEEDS SATISFACTION
- ★ Skills4Parents – Empowering families and professionals for positive parenting
- ★ DigiGen – The impact of technological transformations on the Digital Generation
- ★ Children Online – Research and Evidence (CORE)
- ★ euCONSENT – Trust services for Children in Europe
- ★ European Platform for Investing in Children
- ★ EuroFam-Net. The pan-European Family Support Research Network

### CURRENT PROJECTS

- ★ rEUsilience – Risks, Resources and Inequalities: Increasing Resilience in European Families
- ★ Paths2Include – European Labour markets under pressure: New knowledge on pathways to include persons in vulnerable situations
- ★ Child protection and empowerment in the digital age – the family perspective
- ★ Transnational family dynamics in Europe
- ★ Platforming Families: Tracing digital transformations in everyday life across generations (PlatFAMs)
- ★ ALFA – Aligning Law with Family Arrangements: Non-traditional Families' Contribution to Addressing Italy's Demographic Crisis
- ★ Transeuroworks – Transforming European work and social protection: a New proactive welfare state fit for the future world of work
- ★ UNIC-towards user-centred funding models for long-term care
- ★ CAPABLE Enhancing Capabilities? Rethinking Work-life Policies and their Impact from a New Perspective.
- ★ Euroship – Closing gaps in social citizenship
- ★ More Years Better Lives: on the challenges of demographic change
- ★ EUSOCIALCIT – The state and future of social rights in Europe



## Partners

An important role of COFACE Families Europe is to function as a bridge between civil society organisations, research bodies and public authorities. We build on the experience of our member organisations and we listen to the needs of families at grassroots level and channel these to policy and decision makers at EU level daily, ensuring links between EU and local realities. In addition to consulting our member organisations, we regularly link up to other networks to exchange best practices, learn about other ways of solving societal problems, and grow our network, on which we can rely for our events, projects and advocacy work. We are actively engaged in a number of official European Commission stakeholder groups, to which we bring our knowledge about the needs of families across Europe. This is also the case with key Members of European Parliament. Finally, we also work closely with EU agencies and international bodies.

### EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

- ★ Interest group on Solidarity between Generations
- ★ Disability Rights Intergroup
- ★ Child Rights Intergroup
- ★ Interest Group on Carers
- ★ Committees FEMM, EMPL

### EU ADVISORY GROUPS

- ★ Disability Platform (EMPL)
- ★ Alliance to Better Protect Minors Online (CNECT)
- ★ Consultative Commission on Industrial Change (EESC)

### EU AGENCIES

- ★ European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (EUROFOUND)
- ★ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)
- ★ Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA)
- ★ European Banking Authority (EBA)
- ★ European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA)
- ★ European Labour Authority (ELA)

### INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES

- ★ United Nations (special consultative status at the ECOSOC)
- ★ Council of Europe
- ★ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
- ★ United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)



## EU CIVIL SOCIETY NETWORKS

- ★ EU Work-life balance coalition
- ★ Better Internet for Kids
- ★ eTwinning
- ★ EESC – Civil Society Liaison Group
- ★ EU Alliance for Investing in children
- ★ European coalition to end violence against women and girls
- ★ European Disability Forum
- ★ European Expert Group on the transition from institutional to community-based settings
- ★ European Platform on Asylum and Migration
- ★ European Public Health Alliance
- ★ Finance Watch
- ★ Right to Energy Coalition
- ★ Population Europe
- ★ Social Platform
- ★ Sustainable Development Goals Watch Europe
- ★ European Child Sexual Abuse Legislation Advocacy Group (ECLAG)

## CORPORATE NETWORKS

- ★ ICT Coalition for Children Online
- ★ EU Digital Citizenship Working Group
- ★ Toy Industries of Europe “Play for Change” awards



# BEHIND THE SCENES

## We would like to thank...

**ALL our members** for their enthusiasm and active involvement offline and online.

**The COFACE Administrative Council members:** Elisabeth Potzinger (AT), Annemie Drieskens (BE), Christophe Cocu (BE), Maria Petkova (BG), Michaela Marksovà (CZ), Sven Iversen (DE), Antonia Torrens (EL), Amaia Echevarria (ES), Marina Wetzzer-Karlsson (FI), Benoit Menard (FR), Fiammetta Basuyau-Bruneau (FR), Silvija Stanić (HR), Anna Nagy (HU), Mary O'Halloran (IE), Gaetano Santonocito (IT), Rasa Zemaite (LT), Romain Kraemer (LU), Gonçalo Solla (PT), Peter Grabner (SL), Karolina Andrian (PL), Chantal Bruno (COFACE Disability Platform for the rights of persons with disabilities and their families).

### The four Executive Bureau members:

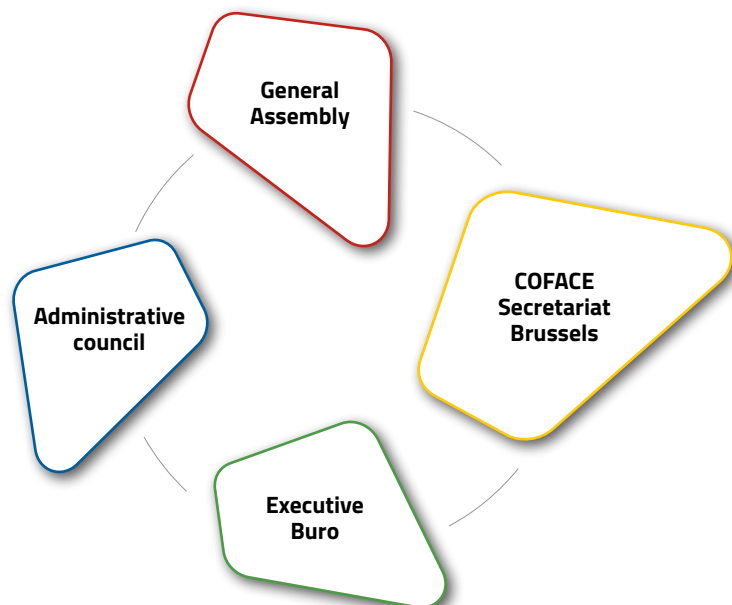
- ★ Annemie Drieskens (BE) President
- ★ Silvija Stanić (HR) Treasurer
- ★ Antonia Torrens (EL) Vice-President
- ★ Sven Iversen (DE) Vice-President

All the members of the **COFACE Disability platform** for the rights of persons with disabilities and their families, and namely the co-chairs of the platform: Sylvie Hirtz (APEMH) and Chantal Bruno (APF France Handicap).

Our **COFACE Secretariat** in Brussels, in charge of ensuring the organisation of all those events, in close cooperation with COFACE members and partners. The Secretariat is made up of Elizabeth Gosme (Director), Florian Charron (Senior Project and Finance Manager), Bettina Guigui (Senior Communication Officer), Martin Schmalzried (Senior Policy and Advocacy Manager), Camille Roux (Senior Policy and Advocacy Officer), Holly Shorey (Project and Advocacy Officer), Attila Böhm (Policy

and Advocacy Officer), Martino Serapioni (Project coordinator for the European Observatory on Family Policy) and Beybin Elvin Tunç (Education programme coordinator), Samira Boumakdi Isabel (Project and advocacy officer), and Beatrijs Gelders (Policy and Advocacy Officer). We would also like to thank Eirini Vlachopoulos who joined us for an internship, and of course our COFACE penguin family.

And last but not least thank you to all our **partners, followers, fans, supporters, colleagues, friends, and of course, our funders: the European Commission and in particular, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.**








## Join us!

- ★ Is your organisation an NGO representing families or services to families?
- ★ Do you want to join an international community of practice to work collectively in the interest of families?
- ★ Do you want to become an expert on EU family matters?
- ★ Do you have a local innovation you would like to scale up across other EU countries?
- ★ Are you looking for best practices from other countries or seeking to set up new European projects?

**If you are interested in any of the above, you're in the right place.**



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