



ACT NOW FOR FAMILIES OF TODAY

COFACE Families Europe together with its members is very active in addressing the social challenges faced by families of today and advocating for policies to support their well-being.

Civil society and rights-holders must be supported through sustained funding and life-long learning opportunities to engage meaningfully in the national and European policy-making processes in order to co-create systems and policies needed to support families of today. They are best placed to provide inputs and feedback on the policies which concern them.

COFACE has the ambition to shape together a strong social Europe fit for families and foster a European society that is more inclusive, offers equal opportunities and brings everyone forward.

In preparation of the next European elections on 6-9th June 2024, here are ten specific actions we would like to see integrated in the programme of the European Union.

These need to be developed within an economic framework which works better for society and planet towards an economy which cares.



CHALLENGE 1

Family diversity and inaccessibility of social rights for all families

Act now for family diversity, using proportionate universalism as an approach, whereby policies build universal support for all families, and extra measures targeting families which may need extra support (e.g. families with disabilities, single parents, large families, same-sex families, families in migration).



CHALLENGE 2

Health and well-being of families under pressure

Act now for health and well-being, through strong systems and policies which can boost the resilience of families, supporting them as health managers, and ensuring that investments are made to boost both physical and mental health supports from birth to old age.



CHALLENGE 3

Poverty and spiralling costs

Act now to address child poverty as a matter of urgency. Boost the European strategy for the Rights of the Child and especially the European Child Guarantee, making it disability-inclusive, and linking it to strong family policy levers in different Member States, while consolidating the Child Guarantee monitoring framework at EU level. This must go hand in hand with prevention of poverty, addressing different forms of poverty including energy poverty, by strengthening the social welfare systems to act as genuine safety nets, and by consolidating services for families across different areas of support.



CHALLENGE 4

Work-life imbalances and care responsibilities

Act now for reconciliation of work and family life, using a gender transformative approach which provides opportunities for men to care and for women to be economically independent, namely through full transposition of the EU Work-Life Balance directive. Drive implementation of the European Care Strategy, boosting quality of childcare systems through low child-staff ratios and quality long-term care services. Support all families to access sufficient resources, services and time arrangements to care for their family members.



CHALLENGE 5

The exclusion of persons with disabilities and their families

Act now to implement the EU Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and use the COFACE Disability SHIFT guide to rethink disability policy altogether using a more holistic and societal lens which focuses on Support, Human Rights, Independence, Families and Transitions. Support the shift towards inclusive schools and societies, namely stopping the segregation of children with disabilities in specialist schools, moving towards a fully inclusive education system, and using EU funds to support this transformation.



CHALLENGE 6

Financial exclusion and over-indebtedness remain high

Act now for an economy which serves society, ensuring that consumers are protected from online scams and unethical business practices, and have full access to financial products without discrimination (e.g. insurances, bank accounts), finally aiming for clear minimum EU standards on personal insolvency to prevent over-indebtedness.



CHALLENGE 7

Digitalisation of all aspects of family life

Act now to support children and families through the digital transition, empowering them to be digital citizens, ensuring safe and human-rights proof digital environments and products (free from child sexual abuse). This includes strong regulatory frameworks at EU level and reinforced implementation of the Better Internet for Kids+ strategy through digital citizenship education programmes targeting children, families, and teachers. Digitalisation also offers many opportunities which need to be fully harnessed for children and their families, ensuring full accessibility for all in this transition.



CHALLENGE 8

Lack of data on families and the new pressures they are experiencing (energy costs, security, war, climate change)

Act now to create a European Families Barometer, working with COFACE to develop this concept further, and make it relevant for all EU policies. Ensuring that all types of families are captured in EU data (including families living across multiple households such as recomposed families).



CHALLENGE 9

Demographic change and increasing pressure on family carers

Act now to set up a European Long-Term Care Platform. This is an essential first step to coordinate the urgent measures needed to address underinvestment, inadequate social protection, lack of person-centredness and staff shortages in long-term care. This must be supported by economic policies which prioritise care expenditure not as a cost, but as an investment to ensure sustainability of Europe's economy.

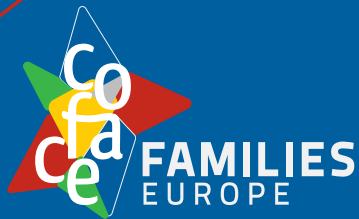


CHALLENGE 10

Unsafe routes to Europe for refugees and their families

Act now to strengthen the new Union Resettlement Framework (URF) adopted alongside the EU Migration Pact to enhance its potential to bring about a more coordinated, predictable and protection-centred approach to EU resettlement, especially for refugees in vulnerable situations.





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Co-funded by the EaSI strand of the ESF+ programme. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.