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DRAFT REPORT

on the role of EU development cooperation in combating all dimensions of
child poverty in developing countries
(2026/2038(INI))

Committee on Development

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on the role of EU development cooperation in combating all dimensions of child poverty in developing countries

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The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 208 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which states in particular that ‘Union development cooperation policy shall have as its primary objective the reduction and, in the long term, the eradication of poverty’ and that the ‘Union shall take account of the objectives of development cooperation in the policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries’,
- having regard to Articles 3 and 21 of the Treaty on European Union,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 20 November 1989,
- having regard to the UNICEF report of 20 November 2025 entitled ‘The State of the World’s Children 2025: Ending Child Poverty – Our Shared Imperative’,
- having regard to the EU-UNICEF toolkit of 2014 entitled ‘Child Rights Toolkit: Integrating Child Rights in Development Cooperation’,
- having regard to the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty report of 20 May 2025 entitled ‘What Works to Reduce Child Poverty? Insights from Across the Globe’,
- having regard to the World Bank Group Policy Research Working Paper 11203 of 5 September 2025 entitled ‘Children in Monetary Poor Households: Global, Regional, and Select National Trends in the Progress against Child Poverty’,
- having regard to the joint statement of 30 June 2017 by the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission entitled ‘The New European Consensus on Development – Our world, our dignity, our future’,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 June 2021 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe, amending and repealing Decision No 466/2014/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Regulation (EU) 2017/1601 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 480/2009¹,
- having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid²,

¹ OJ L 209, 14.6.2021, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/947/oj>.

² OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/1996/1257/oj>.

- having regard to the Commission proposal of 16 July 2025 for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing Global Europe ([COM\(2025\)0551](#)),
 - having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 1 December 2021 entitled ‘The Global Gateway’ (JOIN(2021)0030),
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 24 March 2021 entitled ‘EU strategy on the rights of the child’ ([COM\(2021\)0142](#)), and in particular its reference to the global dimension,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions of 24 June 2024 on the update of the EU Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict,
 - having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 4 October 2022 entitled ‘Youth Action Plan (YAP) in EU External Action 2022-2027 – Promoting meaningful youth participation and empowerment in EU external action for sustainable development, equality and peace’ (JOIN(2022)0053),
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 6 May 2026 on the European Union’s Anti-Poverty Strategy: addressing and preventing poverty from childhood to old age ([COM\(2026\)0538](#)), and in particular its reference to the global dimension,
 - having regard to Rule 55 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Development (A10-0000/2026),
- A. whereas child poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon characterised by the ‘deprivation of the material, spiritual and emotional resources needed to survive, develop and thrive, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, achieve their full potential or participate as full and equal members of society’³;
- B. whereas nearly 900 million children across low- and middle-income countries experience multidimensional poverty, lacking basic necessities such as adequate nutrition, health services, education, housing, water and sanitation services⁴, and some 412 million children, mainly concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa, live in extreme poverty, surviving on less than USD 3 per day⁵;
- C. whereas many of the world’s poorest economies face economic instability and increased

³ Report – ‘The state of the world’s children 2005: Childhood under threat’, UNICEF, 2004, UN Doc. E/ICEF(058)/C3/2005 and study – ‘Fighting child poverty: the role of EU funding’, European Parliament, Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, 2018,

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/626059/IPOL_STU\(2018\)626059_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/626059/IPOL_STU(2018)626059_EN.pdf).

⁴ Report – ‘The state of the world’s children 2005: Childhood under threat’, UNICEF, 2024, UN Doc. E/ICEF(058)/C3/2005 and study – ‘Fighting child poverty: the role of EU funding’, European Parliament, Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, 2018,

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/626059/IPOL_STU\(2018\)626059_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/626059/IPOL_STU(2018)626059_EN.pdf).

⁵ Report – ‘The State of the World’s Children 2025: Ending child poverty – Our shared imperative’, UNICEF Innocenti – Global Office of Research and Foresight, Florence, 2025.

vulnerability to shocks, leaving them unable to invest adequately in children; whereas political and economic stability is a key requirement for inclusive and sustainable growth;

- D. whereas children often pay the highest price in humanitarian crises, namely their loss of access to critical health, education and protection services;
- E. whereas poverty and social exclusion increase children's exposure to many forms of violence, exploitation and recruitment, often with lifelong consequences;
- F. whereas child poverty can have lifelong consequences for children's physical, cognitive and social development, but can also contribute to the intergenerational transmission of poverty and undermine future economic prosperity and social cohesion;
- G. whereas the vulnerabilities of children living in poverty are often compounded by additional disadvantages; whereas political stability and economic growth are required for a continuous reduction in poverty and inequality through innovative policies and approaches to reducing poverty, including through the expansion of social protection;
- H. whereas decent work and family-friendly policies are essential for reducing child poverty; whereas the family is the fundamental unit of society and the natural environment for the development and well-being of children, as recognised by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; whereas parents and guardians bear primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of children and should receive appropriate support in fulfilling these responsibilities;
- I. whereas investing in children fosters lasting improvements to their welfare and living standards, along with those of their communities, and can generate returns of up to ten times the amount invested; whereas, despite these high returns, only 12 % of Official Development Assistance (ODA) has benefited children despite their significant representation within the population, with only 5 % directly funding child-specific interventions⁶;

Importance and urgency of combating child poverty

- 1. Underlines that child poverty remains a significant obstacle to economic growth and sustainable development in many developing countries;
- 2. Stresses that progress in reducing child poverty is under threat owing to the spread of conflicts, political instability, and growing economic and digital inequalities;
- 3. Emphasises that child poverty is not inevitable and can be effectively addressed through appropriate policy choices and sustained investment in children;

Strengthening the fight against child poverty across EU development and humanitarian policies

⁶ Report – 'Putting Children First for Sustainable Development', World Vision International, London, 2024, <https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/Putting%20Children%20First.pdf>, p.4 and 5, based on an analysis of ODA flows between 2017-2021.

4. Calls on the Commission and the European External Action Service to systematically take into account the best interests of the child in all external actions, by assessing their impact on children's lives and their contribution to reducing child poverty, including by ensuring access to quality healthcare, nutrition and education, supporting parents and caregivers, protecting children from all forms of violence, and promoting safe and stable environments for children's growth and development;
5. Encourages the EU and the Member States to work holistically in humanitarian crises, combining life-saving interventions with the delivery of education in emergencies, and protection of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), healthcare and vaccination services; calls for the EU and the Member States to advocate for improved humanitarian access for children in conflict zones by upholding international legal obligations, removing barriers to aid delivery, protecting infrastructure such as schools and hospitals, engaging with humanitarian actors and ensuring accountability for violations;

Promoting integrated and child-focused development and humanitarian interventions

6. Calls on the Commission to strengthen support for cross-sectoral, integrated programmes that have a demonstrable impact on the key determinants of child poverty, including basic and essential services in the areas of nutrition, healthcare, WASH, education and child protection, as well as universal child benefit schemes and digital inclusion measures, recognising that investing in an integrated, context-specific package of essential services for children has a cumulative beneficial effect;
7. Calls on the Commission to facilitate access to funding for reliable aid actors that have a long-standing presence in the countries concerned and a verifiable track record of delivering tangible results, including smaller organisations that often struggle to meet administrative, financial or reporting requirements, yet have been running schools, orphanages, health centres and maternity wards in the most remote areas for decades; emphasises that aid must reach children directly by minimising intermediaries and administrative costs, and must benefit all children in need;
8. Encourages the EU and the Member States to exchange best practices with partner countries to strengthen and expand sustainable, resilient and child-sensitive social protection systems, universal health coverage systems and income support for vulnerable families and households, to strengthen civil registration and improve information management to provide better services to beneficiaries, including in remote areas, and to improve accessibility by reducing administrative inefficiencies and digital barriers;

Enhancing sustainability, financing and accountability

9. Calls on the Commission to systematically monitor and report on the direct and indirect impacts of the EU's external funding instruments on children's lives;
10. Calls for regular public reporting to Parliament and for stronger scrutiny of the results of EU-funded policies and strategies, so that enhanced transparency and accountability translate into better outcomes for children;

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11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.