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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Mînzatu
on behalf of the European Commission
(29.8.2025)

To support Member States' implementation of the European Child Guarantee, the Commission organised a meeting of national Child Guarantee coordinators with the School Meal Coalition¹ last year, which highlighted the large returns yielded by inclusive school meals programmes and on ways to further develop them². The Commission provides support through the purchase of food items with the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)³ and the 'School fruit and vegetables scheme' and 'School milk scheme'⁴.

For the next Multiannual Financial Framework, the 'EU School Scheme' which provides aid for the supply of fruit, vegetables, milk and milk products to school children⁵ is proposed⁶ to be delivered, as one of the Common Agricultural Policy interventions together with the ESF and other instruments, as part of the national and regional partnership plans, ensuring complementarity, synergy, coherence and consistency among different instruments at EU, national and regional levels. In addition, the proposal introduces the possibility for Member States to prioritise certain groups of children according to socio-economic considerations recognising that children from vulnerable groups are more prone to have unhealthy diets.

Overall, progress has been achieved in the provision of free healthy school meals. This will be further elaborated in the Commission report to the Council on the Child Guarantee implementation due in 2026. In addition, strengthening of the Child Guarantee will be part of the upcoming EU Anti-Poverty Strategy, as stated in the Commission's Political Guidelines for 2024-2029.

¹ <https://schoolmealscoalition.org/>.

² https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/european-child-guarantee-coordinators-meet-discuss-provision-school-meals-children-need-2024-12-11_en.

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/european-social-fund-plus-esf-2021-2027.html>.

⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/1308/oj>.

⁵ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/1308/oj>.

⁶ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/eu-budget/long-term-eu-budget/eu-budget-2028-2034_en.