



# Towards a Child Union

*Reducing children's inequalities in the EU  
through quality early childhood education and care (ECEC)  
and its interactions with social welfare policies*

## EXPERT SEMINAR

Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> February

Crèche ELMER

Rue du Progrès 319 - 1030 Schaerbeek

(close to Brussels Nord Station / Thomas tram station)

- 09:15 – 09:25**      **Arrival of participants** | @ Crèche Elmer
- 09:25 – 09:35**      **INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**  
László Andor, FEPS Secretary General
- 09:35 – 10:50**      **ROUNDTABLE ONE**  
**Two issues with ECEC: Quality and the Interplay with other Welfare policies**  
*Introduction by:*  
Josefine Hederström, Head of Unit, European Commission, DG EMPL  
Michel Vandebroek, Associate Professor, University of Ghent  
Réka Tunyogi, Head of Advocacy, Eurochild  
Chair: Maria Herczog, Executive Director, Family Child Youth Association  
Q&A
- 10:50 – 11:20**      **COFFEE BREAK**  
**with a presentation of the Elmer Crèche approach and the Elan social project**
- 11:20 – 12:45**      **ROUNDTABLE TWO**  
**Research for a “Child Union” Technical & Empirical Issues**  
*Introduction by:*  
Christian Morabito, International expert for Save the Children and the European Commission  
Federico Belotti, Associate Professor, University of Rome Tor Vergata  
Chair: David Rinaldi, Director of Studies and Policy  
Q&A



12:45 – 13:45

## LUNCH & POLITICS

### How to keep high ambitions for a Child Union

Light lunch will be served

with interventions by:

**Martina Vuk**, State Secretary at the Slovenian Ministry of Education, Science and Sport

**Pau Marí-Klose**, Member of the Spanish Parliament, Professor of Sociology at the University of Zaragoza and former Director General of the Spanish “Alto Comisionado para la Lucha contra la Pobreza Infantil”

**Elisabetta Gualmini**, Member of the European Parliament, S&D Group

## Participant list

<b>Laszlo Andor</b>	Secretary General, FEPS
<b>Federico Belotti</b>	Researcher and Associate Professor, University of Rome Tor Vergata
<b>Anna Colombo</b>	Sustainable Development Strategy , Political Advisor, S&D group
<b>Renato Cursi</b>	Executive Secretary, Don Bosco International
<b>Cristian Fabbi</b>	IBE UNESCO Senior Fellow in Early Childhood Care and Education, President of the Reggio Emilia municipal preschools
<b>Elisabetta Gualmini</b>	MEP, European Parliament
<b>Jana Hainsworth</b>	Secretary general, Eurochild
<b>Gábor Harangozó</b>	Program Director, Institute for Social Democracy, Hungary
<b>Josefine Hederstroem</b>	Head of Unit, European Commission, DG Employment
<b>Maria Herczog</b>	Executive Director, Family Child Youth Association, Hungary and Former president of EuroChild
<b>Axelle Devaux</b>	Senior Analyst, in charge of EPIC Platform, Rand Europe
<b>Livia Jourdain</b>	Committee on Employment and Social Affairs , Political Advisor, S&D Group
<b>Mojca Kleva Kekuš</b>	Chairwoman, Progresiva, Slovenia
<b>Margarita León</b>	Senior Research Fellow, IGOP, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
<b>Geraldine Libreau</b>	Policy Officer ECEC, DG EAC, European Commission
<b>Pau Marí-Klose</b>	Member of Spanish Parliament, PSOE and former alto comisionado para la lucha contra la pobreza infantil
<b>Ronan Mangan</b>	Policy and Development Coordinator, European Social Network
<b>Pascual Martinez</b>	Policy and Advocacy Officer, Coface
<b>Antoine Martzeisen</b>	Adviser Social and Employment policy, PES Secretariat
<b>Christian Morabito</b>	Researcher International expert for Save the Children and the European Commission
<b>Katerina Nanou</b>	Senior advocacy Advisor, Save the Children, Belgium
<b>Euléane Omez</b>	Project officer, FEPS
<b>David Rinaldi</b>	Director of Studies and Policy, FEPS and lecturer, ULB
<b>Laeticia Thissen</b>	Policy Advisor, FEPS
<b>Reka Tunyogi</b>	Head of Advocacy, Eurochild
<b>Michel Vandenbroeck</b>	Researcher and Associate Professor, University of Ghent
<b>Ellen Vercruyssen</b>	National Expert in Professional Training, DG EAC, European commission
<b>Martina Vuk</b>	State Secretary, Ministry of Education, Slovenia



## About the project

Over the last two decades, there has been increasing interest in the role that Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) can play in supporting children's early learning and well-being. A growing body of evidence is showing that participation in quality ECEC programmes lead to positive gains in children's early learning and well-being, the benefits of which might be seen beyond childhood. Particularly, children from disadvantaged backgrounds are benefiting the most from ECEC. Investment in ECEC makes sense; economically, socially and politically and is the only sustainable way of overcoming inequalities in the long term.

However, at present, there are **consistent inequalities in access to services across EU countries and regions**. Moreover, unequal enrolment to services is aggravated by an unequal distribution of quality across groups, with vulnerable children usually accessing lower quality settings. In most European countries early learning programmes poorly interact with other welfare and social policies, such as labour market policies and social safety nets, augmenting risk factors of vulnerability and reducing opportunities for children from lower socio-economic backgrounds to fully reach their development potential.

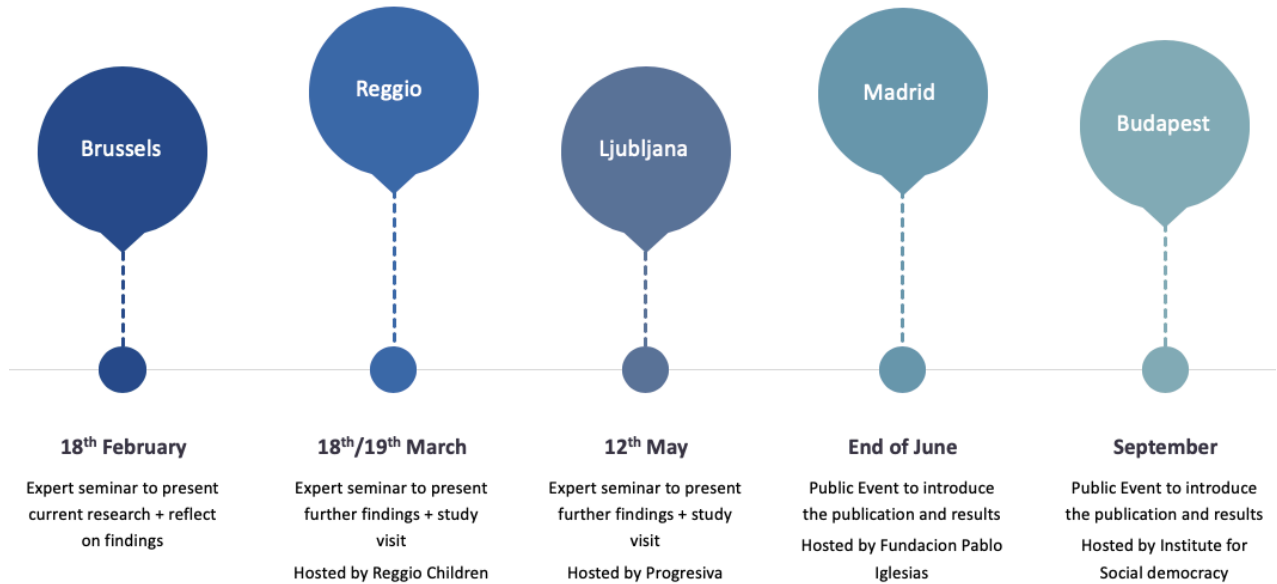
## The objectives

It is imperative for the **European Union to take action and urge all member states to ensure adequate access to quality ECEC along with social welfare policies** aiming at reducing inequalities among children. This research project aims at delineating the mainlines of the 'Child Union' intended as a European programme to fight children's inequalities through access to opportunities for children, above all, ECEC and social safety nets.

The research will help FEPS to show, in a compelling way, for external audiences, in particular European institutions, national institutions, academia, general public, the need for, and the way to structure, the Child Union. The Child Union should be designed as a European framework by which member states could be supported and compelled to increase access to quality ECEC as well as effectiveness of ECEC (and more in general welfare policies) with the ultimate goal of **enhancing opportunities for vulnerable children** (and families).



## Timeline



## Next Events

**Study Visit & Discussion on Preliminary Results:** Reggio Emilia (Italy) – 18.03.2020 (PM) and 19.03.2020 (AM)

**Experts Seminar - Discussion on Policy Recommendations:** Ljubljana (Slovenia) – 12.05.2020

**Presentation of the Study:** Madrid (Spain) – end of June 2020

**Presentation of the Study:** Budapest (Hungary) – September 2020

## Contact

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