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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

No. prev. doc.: 14034/22

Subject: Council Recommendation on early childhood education and care: the
Barcelona targets for 2030

- Adoption
- Statements by the Hungarian, Polish and Spanish delegations

Delegations will find attached statements by the Hungarian, Polish and Spanish delegations in relation to the above Recommendation.

STATEMENT BY HUNGARY

TO THE COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE: THE BARCELONA TARGETS FOR 2030

Hungary welcomes the general objective of the Council Recommendation to provide parents with every possible tool to maintain a better work-life balance. Hungary acknowledges the importance of high quality, affordable and accessible early childhood education and care (ECEC) services, that can contribute to the more equal sharing of care responsibilities among parents and also enhance the labour market participation of women.

Hungary considers it important that the principle of subsidiarity and the different national circumstances and practices of the Member States are taken into account regarding ECEC. Hungary believes that the right to parental choice must be respected with regard the use of ECEC services.

Hungary interprets the Recommendation as the following: if a Member State achieves the proposed targets ahead of schedule, it does not mean that it will be moved to the next category automatically to achieve the higher target.

Furthermore, Hungary recognises and promotes equality between men and women in accordance with the Fundamental Law of Hungary and the primary law, principles and values of the European Union, as well as commitments and principles stemming from international law. Equality between women and men is enshrined in the Treaties of the European Union as a fundamental value. In line with these and its national legislation, Hungary interprets the term ‘gender’ as a reference to ‘sex’ in the *Council Recommendation on early childhood education and care: The Barcelona Targets for 2030*.

Moreover, the text of the *Council Recommendation on early childhood education and care: The Barcelona Targets for 2030* refers to several documents to which previously Hungary submitted a national statement. Hungary maintains all its national statements made earlier.

STATEMENT BY POLAND

OŚWIADCZENIE POLSKI DO PROJEKTU KONKLUZJI RADY W SPRAWIE WCZESNEJ EDUKACJI I OPIEKI NAD DZIECKIEM: CELE BARCELOŃSKIE NA 2030

Równość kobiet i mężczyzn została zapisana w Traktatach Unii Europejskiej jako podstawowe prawo. Polska zapewnia równość kobiet i mężczyzn w ramach polskiego krajowego systemu prawnego zgodnie z międzynarodowymi traktatami praw człowieka oraz w ramach podstawowych wartości i zasad Unii Europejskiej. Z tych powodów, wyrażenie "gender equality" Polska będzie interpretowała jako równość kobiet i mężczyzn, zgodnie z art. 2 i 3 Traktatu o Unii Europejskiej oraz art. 8 i 157 ust. 3 Traktatu o Funkcjonowaniu Unii Europejskiej, a pozostałe wyrażenia zawierające termin "gender", Polska będzie interpretowała jako płeć ("sex"), zgodnie z art. 10, art. 19 ust. 1 oraz art. 157 ust. 2 i 4 Traktatu o Funkcjonowaniu Unii Europejskiej.

COURTESY TRANSLATION PROVIDED BY THE DELEGATION

**STATEMENT BY POLAND TO THE DRAFT COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION AND CARE: THE BARCELONA TARGETS FOR 2030**

Equality between women and men is enshrined in the Treaties of the European Union as a fundamental right. Poland ensures equality between women and men within the Polish national legal system in accordance with international human rights treaties and within the framework of the fundamental values and principles of the European Union. For these reasons, the expression "gender equality" will be interpreted by Poland as equality between women and men, in accordance with Article 2 and 3 of the Treaty on European Union and Article 8 and 157 para 3 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and the remaining expressions containing the term "gender" will be interpreted by Poland as "sex", in accordance with Article 10, Article 19 para 1 and Article 157 para 2 and 4 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

STATEMENT BY SPAIN

DECLARACION DE ESPAÑA
Propuesta de RECOMENDACION DEL CONSEJO relativa a la Revisión
de las metas de Barcelona sobre educación y cuidados en la primera
infancia
12003/22 - COM(2022) 442 final

España acoge con satisfacción la adopción de esta Recomendación destinada a garantizar una mayor participación en servicios de educación y cuidados de la primera infancia (ECEC) de alta calidad, asequibles y accesibles en la Unión Europea y, en particular, elogia los esfuerzos de la Presidencia checa para llegar a un acuerdo sobre esta iniciativa.

Nos encontramos entre los países que han apoyado a lo largo de las negociaciones un alto nivel de ambición en la Recomendación, en consonancia con la propuesta original de la Comisión. Si bien esto se ha conservado en muchas partes del texto, creemos que el texto debería haber prestado más atención a la necesidad de incorporar efectivamente la igualdad de género en las políticas de cuidado infantil, lo que implica, entre otras cosas, que tanto los padres como los Estados deben ser corresponsables.

En este sentido, cualquier referencia a la "elección parental" en el texto no puede considerarse neutral en cuanto al género y puede tener consecuencias no deseadas que se desvíen del camino hacia la igualdad de género, ya que, en la mayoría de los casos, no existe tal libertad de elección por parte de los padres debido al peso de los estereotipos de género, los roles tradicionales y la falta de reparto equitativo de las responsabilidades de cuidado entre mujeres y hombres, fomentando así las desigualdades y obstaculizando el progreso hacia la igualdad de género.

Esperamos que los Estados miembros y la Comisión tengan en cuenta estas consideraciones a la hora de aplicar la Recomendación.

COURTESY TRANSLATION PROVIDED BY THE DELEGATION

<p style="text-align: center;">STATEMENT BY SPAIN Proposal for A COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION on the Revision of the Barcelona Targets on early childhood education and care 12003/22 - COM(2022) 442 final</p>
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Spain welcomes the adoption of this Recommendation aimed at ensuring an increased participation in high-quality, affordable and accessible early-childhood education and care services (ECEC) in the European Union and, in particular, commends the efforts of the Czech Presidency towards an agreement on this initiative.

-We are among the countries that have supported throughout the negotiations a high level of ambition in the Recommendation, in line with the original Commission proposal. While this has been preserved in many parts of the text, we believe that the text should have paid more attention to the need to effectively mainstream gender equality in childcare policies, which implies, among others, that both parents and the States must be co-responsible.

In this sense, any reference to “parental choice” in the text cannot be regarded as gender neutral and may have unintended consequences that deviate from the path towards gender equality as, in most cases, there is not such freedom of choice on the part of parents due to the weight of gender stereotypes, traditional roles and lack of equal sharing of care responsibilities between women and men, thus fostering inequalities and hindering progress towards gender equality.

We hope that these considerations will be taken into account by Member States and the Commission when implementing the Recommendation.