Quality framework on early childhood education and care (ECEC)

Viktoria Bolla
European Commission
DG Education and Culture
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Education
and Training

European cooperation so far

Consensus on the need for EU policy cooperation to improve ECEC across Europe is relatively recent

2011: Communication on **'Early childhood education and care: providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow'**, EU Education Ministers adopted Council Conclusions which endorsed this

2012-2014:the Commission has set up under the OMC a Thematic Working Group (TWG) of policy-makers, academics and practitioners in ECEC

2014: **Proposal for a quality framework on early childhood education and care** (ECEC)

Approach to early childhood education and care

Improving **accessibility** and **quality simultaneously**

Holistic approach to children – **from birth to compulsory school age**

Keeping the **child in the centre of thinking** about improvements

Structure of the Key Principles for a Quality Framework

Image and Voice of the Child

Partnership

Process Quality

Competent System

Access: available, affordable for all; encourages participation and strengthens inclusion; embraces diversity

Curriculum: holistic; flexible; requires collaboration; improved/revised regularly

Workforce: professional and well-qualified; strong leadership; supportive working conditions

Quality informed by high expectations

Governance and funding: coordinated legislation and funding; responsibilities clear; collaboration encouraged; progress towards universal legal entitlement

Evaluation and Monitoring: regular and transparent; in the best interest of the child; effective use for policy development

Framework proposal on access to ECEC

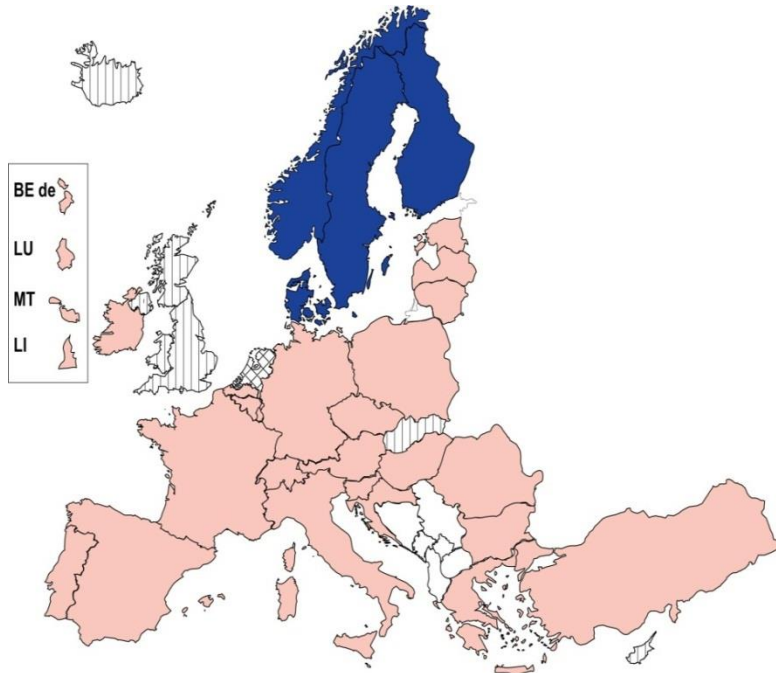Provision that is **available** and **affordable** to all families and their children

Provision that encourages **participation**, strengthens **social inclusion** and **embraces diversity**

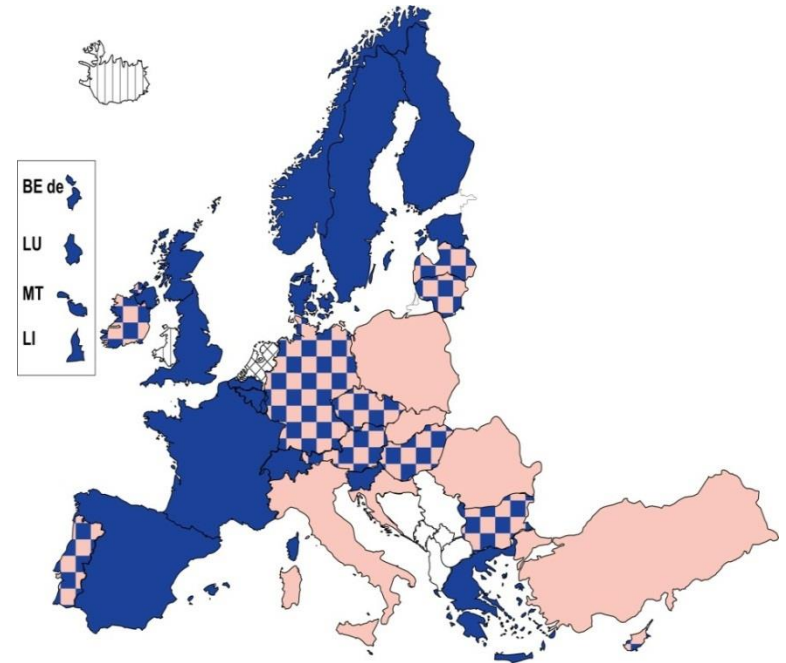Rights-based, cost, opening hours, geography, outreach, co –construction (usefulness and comprehensibility)

Demand and supply of places in publicly subsidised centre-based ECEC settings, 2012/13

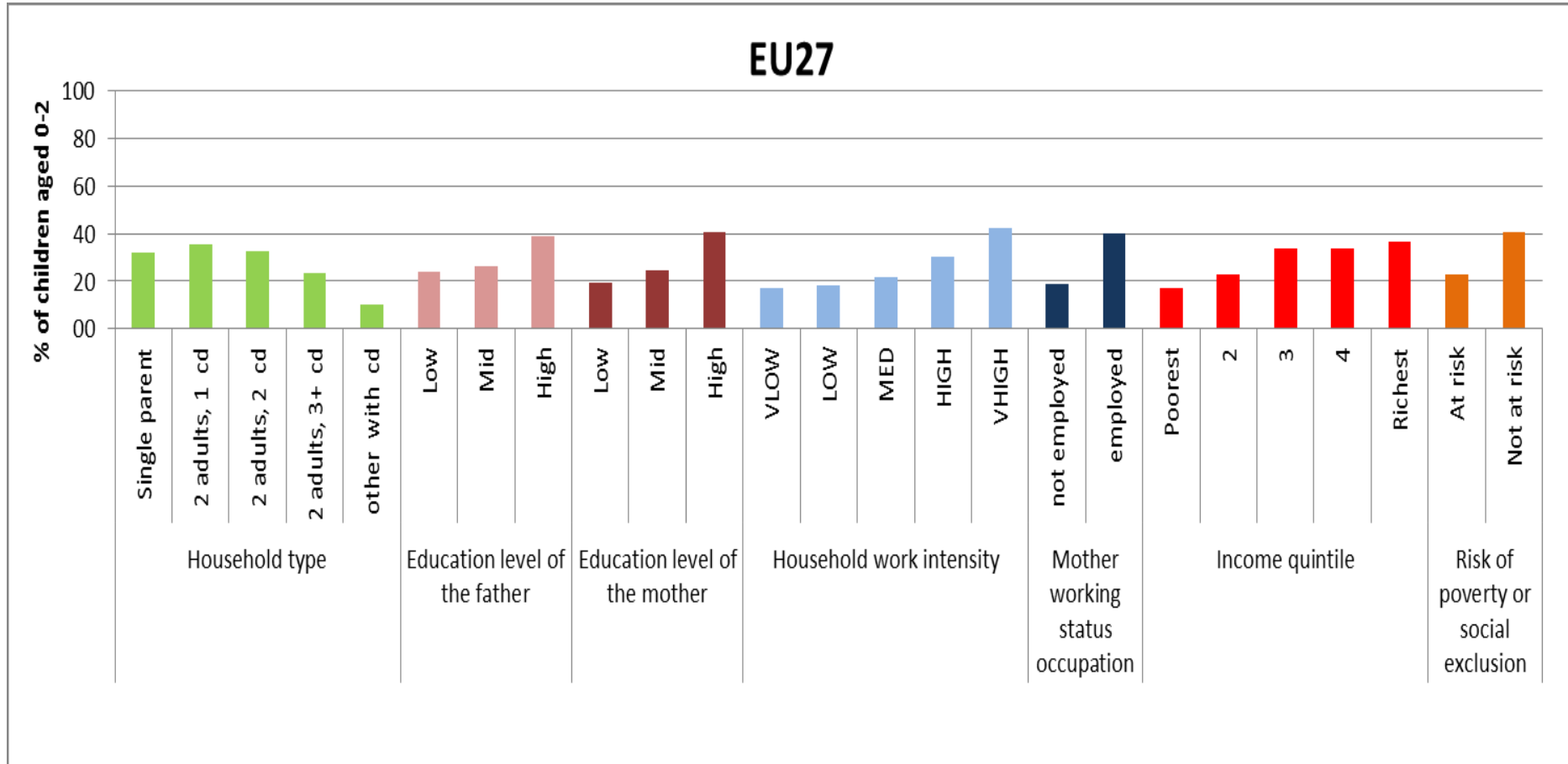## Children under 3

3 years and older children

Demand is higher than supply

Supply meets demand

No data

Social gradient in the use of formal childcare for children aged 0-2

EU27

Framework proposal on ECEC workforce

Well qualified staff whose **initial and continuing training** enables them to fulfil their professional role

Supportive **working conditions**, including **professional leadership**, which creates opportunities for observation, reflection, planning, teamwork and cooperation with parents

Theory and practice, needs-based training, flexible career pathways, networks

Workforce

The **younger the children the lower the minimum qualification requirements** for staff

Continuous professional development is professional duty for education and care staff in settings for younger children in 2/3 of European countries

Childminders – min. level of qualification is required in 1/3 ed. systems with home based provision, in half only special course is needed

Framework proposal on ECEC curriculum

A curriculum based on **pedagogic goals, values** and **approaches** which enable children to reach their **full potential** in a **holistic** way

A curriculum which requires **staff to collaborate** with children, colleagues and parents and to **reflect on their own practice**

Traditions, based on child development, sense of identity and belonging, co-construction

Educational guidelines

European Commission

Children Over 3 years	• literacy • numerical and logical reasoning • adaptation to school life
SOME countries	• understanding of the world • health education • physical development • artistic skills
ALL countries	• personal development • emotional and social development • language and communication

Learning objectives

• balance between adult-led and children-initiated activities

• free play

Learning approaches

Framework proposal on ECEC monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluating produces **information** at the relevant **local, regional** and/or **national** level to **support continuing improvements** in the quality of policy and practice

Monitoring and evaluation which is in the **best interest of the child**

What, how, for which purpose?

Monitoring and evaluation

Each country has a monitoring system in place but the focus is mainly on **structural quality**, on compliance with rules. For older children it is more complex.

Monitoring and evaluation often happens under **different bodies** at central, regional and local level.

Often **accreditation** is done by a different body.

Framework proposal on ECEC governance and funding

Stakeholders in the ECEC system have **clear** and **shared understanding** of their **role** and **responsibilities**, and know that they are expected to **collborate** with partner organisation

Legislation, regulation and/or **funding** supports **progress towards** a **universal legal entitlement** to publicly subsidised or funded ECEC, and progress is regularly reported to all stakeholders

coherent frameworks, public commitment, targeted vs. universal

Next steps at European level

November 2015: Education Council – informal debate about diversity and multilingualism in ECEC

Creating a corresponding **indicator set**, from which countries can choose from

Education and Training Monitor 12 November 2015 with a chapter on ECEC and country analysis

Research plan for further European research in the field of early childhood education and care

EU supports Member States in welcoming **refugee children** in the service (peer learning)

Peer Counselling

Peer Counselling

- International peers and scientific experts
- Commission as a match-maker
- Independent report to support national policy
- Part of ET2020 toolbox

1. Clear objective

2. Commitment

3. Careful timing

4. Complementarity

Light vs. Full version of peer counselling

	Length	Report type	Visibility	Country visits
Light version	3-6 months	Brief & focused	No press	One seminar
Full version	6-12 months	In-depth	Media event	Two seminars

European initiatives, policy cooperation

Policy priorities
- Europe 2020 Strategy: European Semester; Annual Growth Survey
- Country Specific Recommendations
- Cross-sectoral synergies: work-life balance package, rights of the child, social benchmarks, SDG 4.2

Education and Training 2020 Strategy
- Open Method of Coordination
- New Working Groups (Schools)
- Joint Report priorities (new emphasis on social inclusion)
- Peer Counselling

Policy debate
- Education Council
- DG Schools

Funding
- Structural Funds
- European education and research programmes through Horizon 2020
- Erasmus +
- Investment Plan for Europe

Tools
- eTwinning,
- School Education Gateway

Thank you for your attention.

Email: viktoria. bolla@ec.europa.eu

ECEC Quality framework:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/school/early-childhood_en.htm