

France

Each year, the ESN European Semester Group follows the European Commission's cycle of policy coordination with EU Member States known as the European Semester and produces a report based on a questionnaire completed by public social services authorities on the social situation in European countries with a particular focus on social services. This country profile identifies the most important common challenges facing social services as reported by ESN members in Austria, related to three principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights and makes recommendations for the 2023 European Semester. The full report, with cross-country analysis of all the participating countries is available [here](#).

1. Children's services

1.1. Key issues

France has already a solid legislative and regulatory framework to provide access to key services such as early childhood education and care, education (including school-based activities) healthcare, nutrition, and housing, which also includes services for children with disabilities. The current policy framework also provides legal basis to prevent and combat children's social exclusion and poverty. The impact of the adopted laws and strategies as well as their action should be now assessed at the national level.

Prevention, coherence and the intersection of public policies and strategies, as well as the diversity of the level of actors involved, are today's major challenges for the implementation and the efficiency of the general current policy framework. In addition, the new law of 7 February 2022 which provides for a better coordination at state level by establishing a National Council for Child Protection acknowledges the request of the questionnaire's respondents to unify the decentralised policies and protocols at different government levels and bring all

the actors together from both decentralised and centralised agencies to issue opinions and make useful proposals relating to the protection of children.

Another important challenge is for professionals to be able to assess the best interest of the child (Art. 3 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) and take this into account as a primary consideration in all actions or decisions that concern children. Finally, respondents highlighted the lack of financial and human resources to tackle the low number of professionals in children's services. There is a lack of incentives to recruit professionals to work in social services including child protection services for reasons such as low salaries and lack of career prospects.

Recommendations

Training on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) should be provided for relevant professionals in child protection services. Funding should also be available to provide vocational training for future employees and provide incentives to retain current staff.

2. Long-term care

2.1. Key issues

The health crisis and the pandemic highlighted the fragility of French public policy towards older people residing in care homes, including excess mortality, lack of or poorly qualified staff, conditions in which older people are supported and not full observance of their fundamental rights¹. At the same time, a scandal at care homes managed by a large private company led to further serious concern about the extent of problems within the long-term care system.²

2.2. Recommendations

Key to maintaining quality long-term care services in France is continuous monitoring, including more frequent inspections of care homes. Supervision should pay special attention to the facilities' compliance with relevant regulations and monitoring the way revenue is raised by for-profit companies working in long-term care.³



Read the report online

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1 <https://www.plateforme-recherche-findevie.fr/sites/default/files/inline-content/PNRFV/COVIDEHPAD/rapport-covidehpad-final.pdf>.

2 <https://www.lefigaro.fr/societes/dossier/scandale-des-ehpad-orpea-en-pleine-tempete>.

3 No answer was provided with regard to this principle.