Rationales for implementation of the *Activities for children, who are not enrolled in preschool, and their families:* What literature and research say?

3rd international training
Activities for children, who are not enrolled in preschool, and their parents
Ljubljana, Slovenia
May 9-13, 2016

Think about…

… why is ECEC important?

… which are the key roles of ECEC?

… what ECEC provides / enables / prevent / encourage / etc. / ?

… why is it important to implement **Activities for children, who are not enrolled in ECEC, and their families**?

ECEC policies in EU from 1990 to 2002

Council Recommendations on Childcare, 1992

- Women's participation to the labor market was the original driver of EU policies in support of ECEC→ accompanied by concerns about gender equality and sharing responsibilities between women and men in children's upbringing.

40 Quality Targets in services for young children, 1996 (European Commission; Network on Childcare..., 1996)

- affirming children's right to education and care services as EU youngest citizens...but never officially adopted by the Commission! (were considered too ambitious)

Barcelona Targets, 2002

- 33% coverage for children 0-3, 90% attendance 3-6 years old

Barcelona Targets (2002)
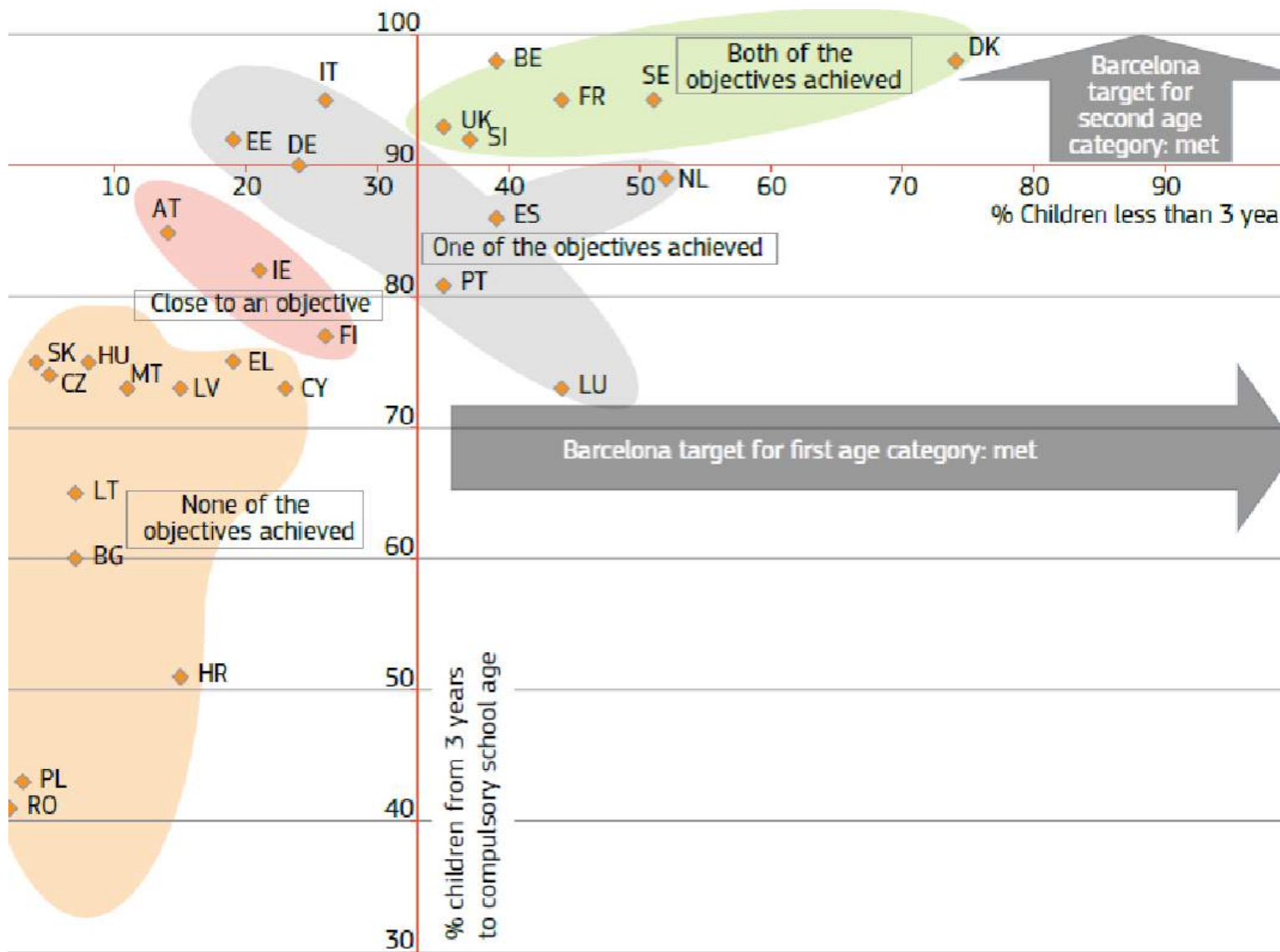
A turning point: ECEC has an important role to play!

- Increased number of studies on ECEC funded by the European Commission

- **Focus on the educational and social function of ECEC**

- Overall, the findings of these studies show that ECEC play a crucial role in:

- Enhancing children's **EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT** and **preventing ESL**

- Ensuring **EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

- **Tackling social and cultural INEQUALITIES**

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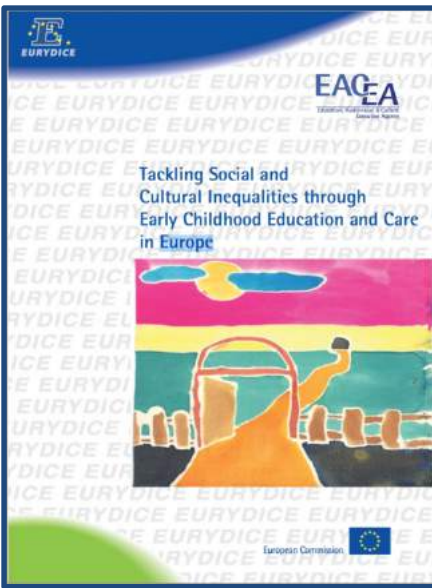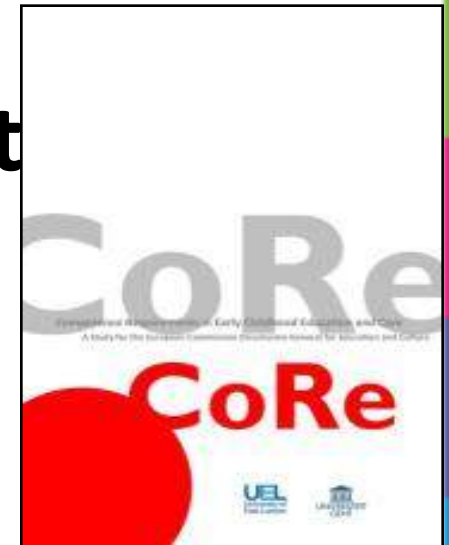
…but certain conditions are needed!

HIGH QUALITY

- ECEC of high quality entails **positive effects on cognitive and socio-emotional development** (Lazzari and Vandenbroeck, 2012; Burger, 2010)
- these effects are particularly **salient for children at risk of social exclusion** (EACEA, 2009)
- on the contrary: low quality may be damaging for a child's development and increase inequalities (NESSE, 2009)

GENERALISED AND EQUITABLE ACCESS

- **Children from low-income and migrant families are less often enrolled**
- when enrolled they are more often **found in lower quality ECEC provision**
- and tend to be more often absent and less often listened to

(Ghysels & Van Lancker, 2011; Noailly, Visser, & Grout, 2007; Vandenbroeck & Lazzari, 2014)

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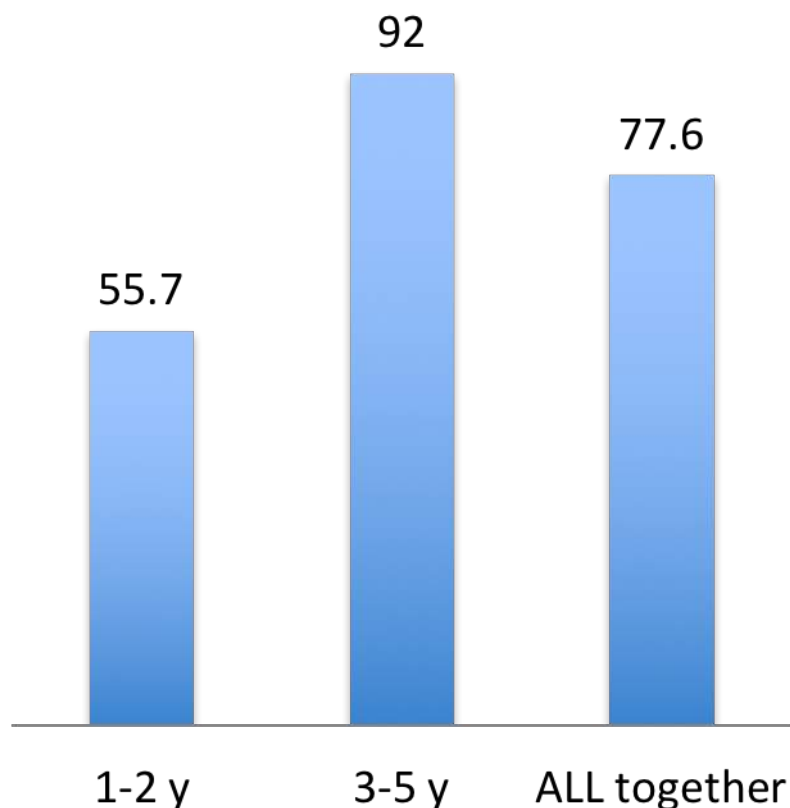Erasmus+

Two main pillars of EU policies in recent years:

QUALITY and **ACCESSIBILTY**

We cannot talk about quality without talking about equality!

They are not only **mutually interdependent** but also **complementary**.

Slovenia has achieved Barcelona Targets by 2010, but…
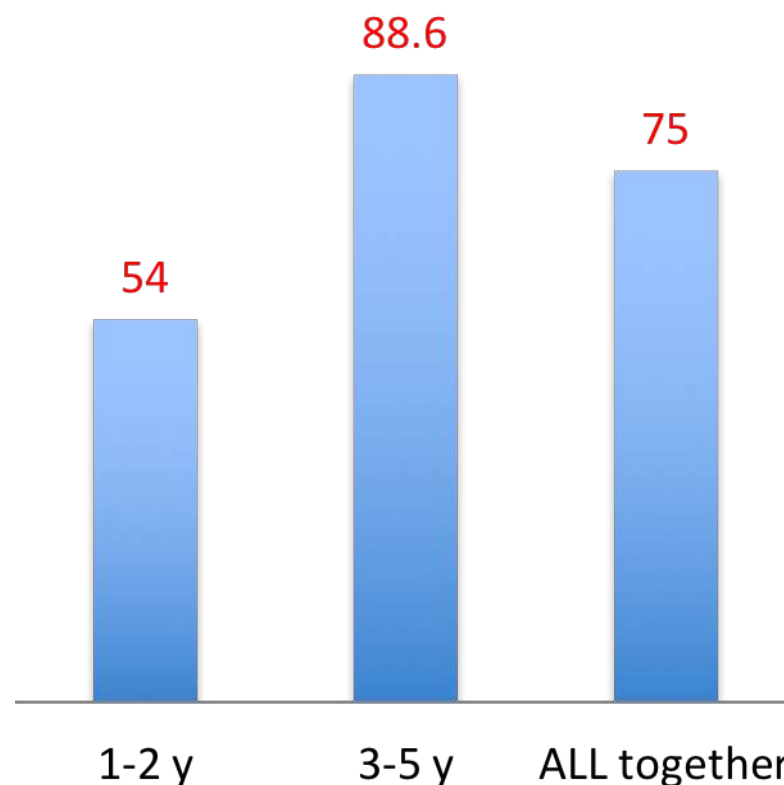
?!?!?!?!?!?!

- Why did the enrollment rates drop down?
- Who are children, who are not enrolled in ECEC services?
- Are they identified by someone?
- Does anyone care about them?
- Are they facing problems with accessibility? Affordability? Any other problems?
- **"How successful are we in bringing the most disadvantaged children into ECEC services?"** (Woodhead, ISSA 2014 Conference)

What literature and research say?

- ECEC services are **the least used by children of ethnic minorities, children from single-parent families and other social disadvantaged groups** (ECEC in Europe: Tackling Social and Cultural Inequalities, 2009).

- **Children of ethnic minorities and low-income families** are increasingly facing the **problem of access** to ECEC services (Vandenbroeck and Lazzari, 2013).

- **"Least advantaged children are least represented in ECEC services!"** (Woodhead, ISSA 2014 Conference)

Out-reach work is important!

*"Out-reach work is an important way of **making ECEC services <u>useful</u> and <u>desirable</u>**.*

*As children from disadvantaged families are under-represented in ECEC services, **out-reach activities are the first step toward <u>building bridges of trust</u>** between marginalised groups and ECEC services.*

Linking this work to the activities of locally established voluntary organisations with well-developed and high-trust relationship with marginalised groups can be effective."
(OSI, 2006 in Key Principles of a Quality Framework, 2014)

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Out-reach work is important!

WHY?

A Right to Education

"States Parties recognize the right of the child to education"
(**Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989**, Article 28)

"A child has the right to education"
(**Declaration of the Rights of the Child, 1959**, Principle 7)

"Everyone has the right to education"
(**Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948**, Article 26)

THE ONE THING ALL CHILDREN HAVE IN COMMON IS THEIR RIGHTS. EVERY CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO SURVIVE AND THRIVE, TO BE EDUCATED, TO BE FREE FROM VIOLENCE AND ABUSE, TO PARTICIPATE AND TO BE HEARD - SECRETARY-GENERAL BAN KI-MOON

Photo: www.decet.org

Social, demographic and economic factors

- Population is ageing; increased unemployment – more women in the labor market is essential (OECD 1999, 2001, 2006), as well as increased number of births (Peeters, 2008).

- The employment of women = one of the main measures for breaking social exclusion and poverty (Esping-Anderson, 2002).

- A need for reconciliation of business and private life → a need for ECEC services is greater (EC, 1992; OECD, 2006).

- **What about Romani parents in regard to (un)employment? If they are unemployed, does this mean that they do not have a need for ECEC services? But children have A RIGHT to education!**

- It is important to ensure useful, accessible, affordable, quality **and desirable** ECEC services!

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Poverty

*In 2013, **25.7% of children, aged 6 years or less, lived below the poverty threshold** and at high risk of social exclusion* (Eurostat People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex).

Children, particularly at risk of poverty:

- *live in Eastern Europe (in Romania and Bulgaria 40 % of children live in poverty);*
- *Romani children;*
- *children in large families with low incomes;*
- *children in immigrant families;*
- *street children and children who are exposed to a number of other risks, such as homelessness, domestic violence and human trafficking* (Bennett, 2012a).

Sweden, longitudinal study: **long term poverty in childhood has been identified as the most harmful to the educational attainment and social mobility.**
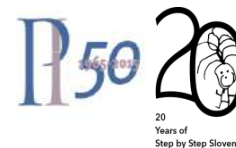
When poverty is linked to the disadvantaged or indifferent family environment and poor parental education, **poverty becomes the greatest obstacle to achieving educational outcomes** (Bäckmann & Nillson, 2010).

Poverty – *continued*

Efforts should be made **to ensure equally accessible and high-quality preschool programs** that contribute to reducing the dropout rates, reducing the risk of poverty and social exclusion (Council of the European Union, 2011), since there is evidence that **poverty and social exclusion affect children's development**, and with a lack of quality pre-school education services they have an additional impact factor (Duncan and Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Phillips and Adams, 2001; Pungello and Kurtz-Costes, 1999; Vandenbroeck, 2007).

If we all together succeed to prevent the loss of development potential of children which, due to insufficient investment and lack of resources affects millions of children around the world before reaching their fifth birthday, than we can break the cycle of poverty and start building on equity in the society.

(Grantham-McGregor, 2009)

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Social inclusion

- Because of poverty, many families are socially excluded.
- **If preschool programs are well developed and planned, and supported by local and government administration**, they can support child's development and enhance participation of families in the community (Friendly, 2007).

EPPE (Sylva et al., 2004) and **EPPNI** (Melhuish et al., 2006) **research:**

- **Vulnerable children benefit most from EC programs of high quality**, especially if they have the opportunity **to interact with children who come from different backgrounds** (different families, cultures, different nationalities, socio-economic status, linguistically different backgrounds, with different conditions and learning opportunities, etc.).
- **An inclusive approach** in education (implementation of preschool programs for all children together, not separately and specifically only for children at risk) **is crucial**.

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Home environment

LANGUAGE AND VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

- Socio-economic status of the family, mother's education and home learning environment affect child's language and vocabulary development (Logan, 2012; V. J. Molfese, Modglin & Molfese (2003).

- **Less developed vocabulary**, which is affected by the above risk factors, **is a predictor of poorer academic performance of the child** (Logan, 2012).

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Home environment - *continued*

	Well educated parents	Working parents	Uneducated, unemployed parents
Nr of words/hour	2.153	1.251	616
Nr of words in child's first 3 years	45 million	30 million	13 million
Verbal encouragements by age 3 (This is good; Well done! Etc.)	750.000	300.000	60.000
Verbal prohibitions by age 3 (No! Don't! You're not allowed! Etc.)	130.000	170.000	280.000

Hart and Risley (1995). Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children.

A growing need for quality ECEC programs!

Effective Provision of Pre-School Education* (EPPE) *Study (Sylva et al., 2004):

- vulnerable children benefit the most from **quality** early childhood programs
- **interactions among children who come from different backgrounds** (different families, cultures, ethnicity, socio-economic status, different linguistic environment, different conditions and opportunities for learning, etc.) **must be enabled**
- enrolling pupils in ECE **can mitigate social inequalities and promote better student outcomes overall**
- enrollment in **ECE improves all aspects of a child's cognitive and social development** (for example, independence, concentration, cooperation, relationships with peers).
- earlier the child was enrolled in preschool (before three years of age), **better intellectual results were achieved; better relationships with their peers** at the age of three years were developed.

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