

# Meeting *children's basic needs* and *guaranteeing their rights* in all aspects of their daily lives

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Children are legal subjects who enjoy all the human rights and specific rights recognised by the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. In the face of inequality, upholding these rights is a collective commitment.

In May 2025, the Prime Minister asked the CESE to organise a citizens' convention dedicated to children's lives:

*'How can we better structure the different moments of children's daily lives so that they are more conducive to their learning, development and health?'*

The EESC's opinion reflects the common position of civil society organisations: trade unions, employers' organisations, associations and NGOs. It contributes to the debate initiated by the Citizens' Convention, which published its report on 23 November, and which the government has undertaken to address through broad consultations with all stakeholders, including children.

The EESC advocates a clear ambition: to recognise children as the primary actors in their own education in all areas of their lives. Children learn and develop everywhere and at all times: in their families, during leisure, cultural and sporting activities, during holidays or at times not supervised by adults, spent alone or with peers, at school and/or in nature.

It is unacceptable that children continue to experience material deprivation (16.2%), food deprivation (22.8%), deprivation of access to knowledge (25.4%), or deprivation of contact with their friends outside school and home (19.2%). Action on children's time cannot be taken without action on their living conditions.

The nineteen recommendations set out in this opinion are part of a comprehensive vision of children's time and are consistent with the more than seventy recommendations already made in previous EESC opinions.

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OPINION

### 1 INVESTING IN CHILDHOOD

Today, 3 million children live in poverty, budgets dedicated to children are in a critical state, and social and regional inequalities are widening.

The CESE recommends providing financial support to stakeholders so that they can implement social pricing that promotes access to physical and sporting activities, and maintaining a substantial and sustainable budgetary effort by the State and Social Security.

Public services for educational continuity (SPCE) must be launched to identify the needs of local areas and respond to them by reviving local education projects (PEDT).

### 2 ENABLING THE EXERCISE OF A GENUINE RIGHT TO REST AND HOLIDAYS

Every child has the right to holidays, leisure activities, rest and nature. However, nearly five million children do not go on holiday, 30% of children and up to 70% of adolescents do not get enough sleep, and four out of ten children never play outside during the week.

The EESC recommends stepping up information campaigns on financial assistance for holidays, introducing rest periods, quiet time and naps in all facilities catering for children and young people, and funding facilities that strengthen children's connection with nature and outdoor education.

### 3 ENSURING RESPECT FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

By including a 'child impact clause' in every bill and regulatory text, the aim is to assess the consequences of a draft legislative text on children.

The EESC recommends transposing the European directive on work-life balance and creating a right linked to parental obligations.

### 4 ADAPTING SCHEDULES TO CHILDREN'S NEEDS

With regard to school schedules, the EESC considers that the status quo is no longer tenable in terms of ensuring children's well-being, and that it is necessary to change school schedules in consultation with all stakeholders, including student representatives. It agrees with the Citizens' Convention's proposal to organise the French school calendar with two holiday zones, alternating between seven weeks of school and two weeks of holidays, and maintaining eight weeks of summer holidays.

The EESC also calls for increased resources for all school education staff in order to ensure working conditions that are more conducive to welcoming pupils.

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