**EU contribution to the Day of General Discussion on Children’s Rights**

 **and Alternative Care**

**Introduction**

The European Union would like to thank the Committee on the Rights of the Child for the call for submissions to help feed into the discussions on the Day of General Discussion on Children’s Rights and alternative care. The contribution from the EU comprised of external actions and policies.

**EU’s contribution**

In line with the newly adopted EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024, the EU continues to assist partner countries in building and strengthening child protection systems, and to support the development of quality alternative care and the transition from institution-based to quality family-and community-based care for children without parental care. The EU implements the Human Rights Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child in external action, which underline the importance of developing quality alternative care for children and providing them with appropriate support to participate in community life and to access services. In that respect, the EU is supporting a number of projects and is raising this issue in political dialogues. At multilateral level, in 2019, the EU together with the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC) tabled a resolution on children without parental care at the UN General Assembly Third Committee: first resolution dedicated to this theme.

The political commitment is supported by concrete projects. Within the programme for *Quality alternative care for children and deinstitutionalisation*, five projects are implemented in Armenia, Burundi, Cambodia, Georgia and Myanmar. In Armenia, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs has designed and approved the deinstitutionalization reform and Alternative Care Concept, with which the government shifts from institutional care to family and community based care, including foster care. The EU has supported the foster care reform and family-based care. In Albania, the EU funded project supported civil society to implement projects related to child protection in seven municipalities. The close collaboration between beneficiary organisations and Child Protection Units at local level strenghtened local child protection mechanisms, contributing to the monitoring process of the recently approved Law on the Rights and Protection of the Child. In Moldova, a number of EU-funded projects contributed to the process of de-institutionalization: the number of family care/foster families increased from 41 in 2019 to over 200 in 2020. A new child protection strategy and action plan for 2021-2026 is under drafting. In Myanmar, the EU funded project to strengthen the core components of the child protection system. This has included increasing government and community engagement in the de-institutionalization process and increased participation and empowerment of children through training, and expanded access to and provision of family and community reintegration and quality, non-institutional alternative care solutions. The EU continues to support projects in enlargement and neighbourhood countries to prevent the separation of families, strengthen the systems of quality alternative care and enhance the social protection system for families and children in vulnerable situations.