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**DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION
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Network on Early Childhood Education and Care

RESPONSES ON FINANCING ECEC SERVICES: PORTUGAL

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QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE 7TH MEETING OF THE NETWORK ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE (ECEC): FINANCING ECEC SERVICES

PART I: Data on ECEC costs and financing and data-related issues

1.1 *General information: types of ECEC services*

1.1.1 This question aims to update the information on childcare and early education services presented for your country. Please review Annex A. If updates need to be made, please provide the necessary information below. If existing information is still accurate, simply indicate “No Change”; you do not need to duplicate.

No Change.

1.1.2 This question aims to complement Question 1.1.1 and elicit a fuller picture. Which type of ECEC provision is mostly in use or in operation in your country? Please indicate in the table below the proportion of:

- Children registered for each type of ECEC provision as a percentage of the total number of children of the age group; and
- Care services, centres or pre-schools for each type of ECEC provision as a percentage of the total number of such services.

Type of provision	Early Childcare a)		Pre-primary education b)		Integrated system	
	% of registered children	% of services, centres, pre-schools	% of registered children	% of services, centres, pre-schools	% of registered children	% of services, centres, pre-schools
Public provision	2%	2%	52,5	68,4%		
Private not for profit provision: (Private Institutions of Social Solidarity - IPSS)	78%	69%	31%	18,6%		
Private for profit provision	20%	29%	16,5%	13%		
Other type of provision						

Source(s): a) SISS COOP, 2009, Social Security Data Base for management of cooperation agreements with institutions and service providers. b) GEPE, Ministry of Education, 2007/2008

Known data limitations: _____

1.2 *Public spending on ECEC services*

1.2.1 *Public spending on public and private ECEC services*

This question aims to clarify whether public expenditure on ECEC services is spent *only* on public ECEC provision *or* on a mixture of public and private provision, which is not currently well understood.

Annex B provides the public expenditure data on childcare and early education currently available in the OECD Family Database (those figures are currently being updated through other OECD official channels). The public expenditure does not include cash allowances or tax expenditure such as tax credits, parental leave, etc.; here, you should include only public expenditure spent on ECEC services.

Please indicate in the table below the split in public expenditure between public and private ECEC services in your country, indicating the year the data is from.

	Early childcare		Pre-primary education		Integrated system	
	Public services	Private services	Public services	Private services	Public services	Private services
Public expenditure (as % of GDP)			0,4%	Missing		

Source(s): Answer to the UOE_2008 Survey, corresponding to the economic year of 2006 (601 million euros of expenditure on Pre-primary Education); GDP 2006: 155 446 million euros (Quarterly accounts from the *INE* – National Statistics Institute/March 2010)

Known data limitations: _____

1.2.2 Public spending on ECEC services at different levels of government

This question aims to clarify funding arrangements between national and sub-national governments. While Annex B provides overall public expenditure data on ECEC services, we do not currently have figures for what is spent by national governments *versus* what is spent at sub-national levels (e.g. regional and/or local). Please provide the most recent data for public spending for national and sub-national levels of government. Please note that “fiscal transfers” between levels of government should be netted out in order to avoid double-counting. Please also note that the question focuses on direct public spending on ECEC services, excluding cash benefits or tax credits.

Year	Early childcare a)		Pre-primary education b)		Integrated system	
	Total amount (local currency)	% of GDP	Total amount (local currency)	% of GDP	Total amount (local currency)	% of GDP
National			542,3	0,35%		
Regional			58,7	0,04%		
Local/Municipal			missing	missing		

Source(s): a) Social Security Budget, 2009; b) Currency unit: Millions of Euros. Answer to the UOE_2008 survey, corresponding to the economic year of 2006. GDP 2006: 155 446 million euros (Quarterly accounts from the *INE* – National Statistics Institute/March 2010)

Known data limitations: a) Each year is defined centrally, by the Central Administration [Social Security], the main priorities of implementation of new facilities, based on the local / regional needs identification, and this will support the definition of the local budgets. Besides this, it’s ensured fiscal transfers to local services in order to give continuity of previous funding for existing services.

So, Social Security regional services are responsible for the management of the public fund available for financing the day-care services. These funds sustain all the cooperation contracts celebrated between Social Security and idoneous institutions that will delivered the service to children and families.

1.2.3 What is covered by public spending?

This question aims to understand what the public money is specifically spent on. Please indicate the estimated share, as a percentage of total ECEC public spending, for each category in the table below. The total should add up to 100%.

Service category	% of total public expenditure on		
	Early childcare a)	Pre-primary education b)	Integrated system
Infrastructure	10%		
Workforce supply (e.g. salaries, recruitment etc.)	90%	93 %	
Workforce development (e.g. in-service training, support services for staff, etc.)			
Curriculum and pedagogical materials			
Ancillary services (transport, meals, etc.)			
Research on ECEC			
Others, please specify			
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source(s): a) Social Security Budget, 2008 and 2009. **Observations:** Most of the cooperation contracts established with service providers, and that will permit the public funding of the ECEC Services, covers about 80% of the expenses. The rest of the expenditure is, most of the times, ensured by the service provider that is also responsible for it. The funding of the services doesn’t specify minimum shares for the

enunciated service categories. Yet, establishes minimum rules for operation, in terms of staff, materials meals that must be accomplished by the entitie. b) Answer to the UOE_2008 survey, corresponding to the economic year of 2006.

Known data limitations: _____

1.3 *Private spending on ECEC services*

This question aims to give a comprehensive picture of private spending relative to public spending, covering both childcare services and early education, which has long been wished for by many countries.

The UOE (UNESCO-UIS/OECD/EUROSTAT) has attempted to answer this question with regard to early education (* in shaded cells) and is in the process of updating the data (See Annex C).

In order to complement what is already known from the UOE data, please provide in the table below figures on private spending for early childcare (please indicate the year the data is from).

If your country has an integrated system, please provide the figures, which have not been asked by the UOE data collection process.

		Total spent, in local currency		
		Early childcare	Pre-primary education	Integrated system
Private sources	Household expenditure	86.392.721,52€ a)	*	
	Expenditure of other private entities		*	
	All private sources		*	
Private: of which subsidised			*	
Others, please specify				

Source(s): _____

Known data limitations: a) This value is based on the “Average comparticipation of parents per children / per month on a Childcare Center (established in 2009 in 109,69€) x 12 months x Total number of children registred in Childcare Centers”

1.4 *Issues on data collection*

Some network members have expressed their concern that data on ECEC in general are collected based on availability rather than policy needs.

1.4.1 What are the most critical gaps in national data and international comparisons?

The lack of articulation among policies at national and local level which influence children’s lives: health policy, social welfare policy, education policy, employment policy and cultural policy. This diversity of policies makes it difficult to put under perspective a global and integrated policy oriented to children, as it is difficult to accurately calculate the costs of childhood education and care per child within the different services.

It is important to establish new terms of comparison for ECEC with a quality dimension of analysis (that can include, for instance, qualification of staff, quality of meals provided, physical conditions, pedagogic contents), and that goes beyond the quantitative measurement and comparison (number of places available). This quality criteria will allow us to compare how services in each country are operating, what conditions are ensured for child well being.

1.4.2 Bearing in mind the possible quality limitations of comparative data, what internationally comparable data on financing ECEC would be most relevant for policy making in your country?

Considering the funding has implications on the quality indicators we condider the follwing reference indicators to be very revelants. These refrence indicators were defined in the Report Card 8, from UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre- The Childcare Transition, namely:

1. A minimum entitlement to paid parental leave
2. A national plan with priority for disadvantaged children
3. A minimum level of childcare provision for under-threes
4. A minimum level of access for four year-olds

5. A minimum level of training for all staff
6. A minimum proportion of staff with higher level education and training
7. A minimum staff-to-children ratio
8. A minimum level of public funding
9. A low level of child poverty
10. Universal outreach

1.4.3 Where quantitative data is not available, what kind of qualitative information – at a national and international level – on financing ECEC would be most useful for policy making in your country?

Qualitative information about specific programs, for instance. These programs might include national / local initiatives for extending the ECEC network, or other initiatives for funding the qualification of the intervention developed on these Services.

1.4.4 What are the biggest challenges in collecting data on financial aspects of ECEC services in your country (e.g. low policy priority, jurisdictional, lack of resources and capacity, fragmentation of ECEC services, lack of agreed common definitions of ECEC services within a country, etc.)?

- Fragmentation of ECEC
- Lack of agreed common definitions of ECEC services within a country

1.4.5 If you have taken some actions to improve data on financial aspects or ECEC in general, please describe your country experience.

Part II. Why invest in ECEC? Research on benefits of ECEC

This section aims to gather updated information on existing research from network member countries relating to ECEC participation and children's outcomes.

Please provide details of research NOT already included in *Starting Strong II*, which you do not need to duplicate. List relevant references and attach corresponding documents if available. If articles/reports are not in English or French, please provide abstracts in English or French.

2.1 What research has been carried out in your own country on:

- Net benefits to children, parents and society of public and private investment in ECEC
- Net benefits or evaluations of specific ECEC programmes or initiatives

Apart from Starting Strong I and II, Portugal has participated in several international studies, particularly the following ones:

- Eurydice, *Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe: Tackling Social and Cultural Inequalities* (2009) <http://www.eurydice.org>
- UNICEF, *The Child Care Transition*, Innocenti Report Card n° 8, 2008 www.unicef-irc.org

The survey study *Early Childhood Education and Care for Children Aged 0 -12* (2008) undergone by the National Education Council stated that there has been a very favourable development regarding the legislation for the promotion and protection of children in Portugal over the last decades. This legislation has accompanied the progress of public policies on early childhood education worldwide. Its main documents are:

- The comprehensive law on the education system which defines, organises and regulates the education of children (from the age of 3) as a public right
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child ratified by the United Nations in 1989 and in Portugal on 21 September 1990, which ensured and acknowledged the rights that children are entitled to
- The creation of Commissions for the Protection of Minors, which sets an interinstitutional and community-based participated system to protect children
- The Framework Law for Pre-school Education, which regulates the development of pre-school education
- The reform of the legal system regarding child protection, by legally separating child victims of negligence or abuse, under the Law for the Protection of Children and Young People at Risk.

- Adoption Law, which institutes new rules and aims at facilitating the adoption process

http://www.cnedu.pt/index.php?section=6&category_id=3&module=md_ecommer_cemodule

2.2 What research has been carried out in your country on the relative benefits of public ECEC investment to increase accessibility (*i.e.* children's enrolment) *versus* increasing quality of services (*e.g.* raising staff qualifications, improving staff/ child ratio, etc.)?

Under Starting Strong I some measures have been taken to improve pre-school education and increase the provision to children aged 2-6:

- Publication of Curriculum Guidelines for Pre-school education (1997)
- Expansion of the national network of kindergartens
- All pre-school teachers must have a higher education degree (2001)
- Publication of the General Teaching Profile and the Specific Teaching Profiles for pre-school teachers and (1st cycle of) primary teachers which sets the professional skills required (2001)

In Portugal, the Department for Innovation and Curriculum Development of the Ministry of Education has undergone studies in the scope of the Effective Early Learning Project, which enabled the collection of data on the quality of these kindergartens, the publication of a handbook and other resources for pre-school teachers. This project aims at improving the quality of the institutions by means of a process of self-assessment, the planning of a gradual change, the co-construction of the aims and purposes of the early childhood curriculum at local level and the involvement of all stakeholders in the various areas.

Part III. Financing mechanisms and funding strategies

This section aims to elicit:

1. information on overall policy contexts and trade-offs between different policy alternatives;
2. where resources on ECEC come from;
3. how the resources are managed; and
4. other policy issues.

3.1 Overall policy contexts

3.1.1 Policy objectives

Starting Strong II identified 5 main policy objectives for public investment in ECEC:

1. Responding to the rise of the service economy and the influx of women into salaried employment;
2. Reconciling work and family responsibilities in a manner more equitable for women;
3. Managing demographic challenges: falling fertility and continuing immigration;
4. Acting against child poverty and educational disadvantage;
5. Early childhood education and care as a public good.

Please indicate which of the above can explain the current policy objectives, underpinning your country's public investment in ECEC. If there has been a shift of policy focus in recent years, please describe how policy thinking has evolved.

Public investment in pre-school institutions is provided by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, through their national, regional services, and by the local authorities (municipalities).

Within the Public Network, the pre-school educational component is fully funded by the State.

Within the Private Solidarity Network, since 1997 the State has been co-funding institutions as it has fully funded the costs of the educational component and the promotion of the pedagogical quality of the services provided. It also shares the costs incurred with the family support component, as well as leisure and social education activities.

Within the Private Network, funding is based on monthly fees paid by the families. Contexts may request financial assistance towards needy families, in accordance with the income they get from the Contracts for

the Development of Pre-school Education. The current concern is that ECEC investment is on quality improvement, overall provision to children aged 3-6 and the increase of the provision to 0-3 year-old children.

In addition, there are other assistance measures to families with children:

- Fiscal benefits for all families. For income tax purposes, expenses incurred with education are deducted from gross annual income
- New legislation on parental leave – 6 months with 83% of the benefit or five months with 100% of the benefit, where the mother and the father share the leave, and the father is entitled to a 30-day leave or to two 15-day periods on an exclusivity basis.
- Universal entitlement to pre-school education for 5 year-old children
- Full time school – family support component, which provides lunch and extra afternoon care for pre-school children
- Investment in crèches
- Funds to support the initiatives proposed by the Municipalities and the Private Institutions of Social Solidarity (IPSS) in the areas of Lisbon and Oporto, in order to expand kindergartens (2008/2009).
- Inclusion and benefits for children with Special Needs so that they are entitled to the same rights as any other citizen (health, education)
- Early childhood intervention – a national system for early childhood intervention is operated through a coordinated action undergone by the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health, with the involvement of the families and the community. This system involves 0-6 year-old children with alterations on the body function and structure that limit their participation in activities appropriate to their age and social context, or at risk of mental disability and development delay. This support is also provided to the children's family

One of the main areas of intervention of Social Security is the cooperation with Private Social Solidarity Institutions in order to ensure that a local quality service is delivered to children and families. This relationship between Social Security and Institutions is mediated through Cooperation Contracts and involves public funding of these services.

Besides the financial support given to these institutions for its operation, there is one program in hand aimed at extending this network of equipment, named Social Services and Equipments Network Extension Programme (PARES). Launched in 2006, this program has already created 19.931 new places in child day-care, in the Welfare Network with priority implementation in areas of the country where the rate of cover is low.

Also, the qualitative improvement was considered by the Portuguese government as a priority, at the same time of the construction of new places in Child Care Centres. The Quality Manual for Child Care Centres, as for other services concerning children, has been implemented in a wide range of institutions and is considered an asset for the adequate development of these services.

3.1.2 *Political debate – balance between parental leave benefits and childcare services*

Countries often look to find a balance between encouraging parents with young children to stay home to care for their children and encouraging parents, especially mothers, to maintain an attachment to the labour market by providing ECEC services. Policy instruments – which can be used in combination – include:

- Paying parents through “parental leave”, “child-rearing leave” with low flat-rate payment, etc.
- Giving universal child/ family allowances;
- Giving targeted child/ family allowances by income level,
- Giving targeted child/ family allowances by work status, etc.

Regarding public investment in childcare services *versus* parental leave benefits, what are the current challenges and trade-offs in your country? Are these underpinned by specific policy objectives?

In Portugal, the female activity rates, particularly in the case of women in active maternal age, are the highest in the European Union.

In 2003, Portugal had an average rate of female employment round 61%, whereas in the EU the same indicator was 56% (INE – National Statistics Institute, 2004)

Most children in Portugal (66%) have working mothers. Taking into account the unemployed mothers, the percentage will rise to 73%. Therefore, the non-working mother (18%) is an exception. On the other hand, the younger the children, the bigger is the maternal activity rate (round 70% regarding mothers of 0-2 year-old children).

Source: Ana Nunes de Almeida <http://www.scielo.oces.mctes.pt/pdf/aso/n176/n176a06.pdf>

This results in the need to increase the number of institutions for children aged 0-3. Portuguese policy aims at providing a career-family life balance for mothers. Therefore, new legislation on parental leave has been implemented (as previously referred to), and there has been an expansion of crèches and kindergartens.

Through the conciliation of 2 main social policies: on the one hand, the improvement of quality and availability of ECEC services and on the other hand, by a new Parental Social Protection Scheme (For Maternity, Paternity And Adoption), that came into force on 1 May 2009.

Protection provided to employees through the granting of benefits in case of clinical risk during pregnancy, voluntary interruption of pregnancy, birth of children, adoption, particular risks and for the care of children and grandchildren with the aim of compensation for loss of earnings during employee leave periods, such as:

- Benefit in case of clinical risk during pregnancy
- Benefit in case of particular risks
- Parental Benefit:
 - . Initial Parental Benefit
 - . Initial (exclusive for mothers)
 - . Initial (exclusive for fathers)
 - . Initial (for one of the parents, if the other parent may not take leave)
- Extended Parental Benefit
- Adoption Benefit
- Adoption Benefit in case of extended leave
- Benefit for the care of children
- Benefit for the care of disabled or chronically ill children
- Benefit for the care of grandchildren: - In case of birth; - In case of a minor grandchild or a disabled or chronically ill child

3.2 Main sources of financing ECEC – where do resources come from?

3.2.1 Various sources

This question aims to give a fuller picture of the main sources of financing ECEC services in your country to complement your responses in questions under 1.1.2 and 1.3. Six major sources of financial resources have been identified in past research:

1. governments (See question 3.2.2);
2. parents;
3. for-profit providers,
4. ECEC as business communities;
5. social organisations, and
6. international organisations

Please indicate which of the above is applicable in your country and describe challenges and advantages associated with the current financing mechanism. Feel free to answer separately for the childcare and early education sectors if more appropriate in countries with the “split systems”.

In Portugal the main funding source of ECEC services is the Government. Parents contribute to the social component (lunch and extra afternoon care), according to their income, whereas the educational component is free for everyone.

For-profit institutions in the private network are also subsidised by the Government through Development Contracts.

3.2.2 Sources from governments

This question aims to identify what kind of public revenue sources are allocated to ECEC services at different levels of governments. Please complete the table below, indicating “x” in the columns applicable in your country.

Types of public finance	Federal/ national	State/ province/ region	Local/ municipal
General tax revenues	X*		
Ear-marked tax revenues for ECEC sector			
Earmarked tax revenues for specific ECEC programmes, type of services or categories of expenditure	X		
Transfers from other levels of government as part of general block grants			
Transfers from other levels of government as block grants to ECEC sector			
Transfers from other levels of government earmarked for specific ECEC programmes, type of services or categories of expenditure			X a)

Source(s): *GEPE, Ministry of Education, 2007/2008

Known data limitations: a) some Municipalities are creating their responses in Creche

3.3 Funding strategy – how to manage financial resources for ECEC

3.3.1 Strategies to increase public spending on ECEC

Has there been an increase in public spending on ECEC services since 2005? If yes, how much increase? What were the driving forces in making a case for increased spending on ECEC? Feel free to answer separately for the childcare and early education sectors if more appropriate in countries with the “split systems”.

	Early childcare (€)
2005	124.352.645,00
2006	142.009.670,70
2007	154.349.165,00
2008	156.749.420,09
2009	179.567.177,00

The increasing in financing ECEC services has as main source the State Budget and is connected with the need of expansion of ECEC services network, as a measure of conciliation between family and professional life.

One of the measures taken was **PARES** (mentioned above) that since 2006 increased the budget for build more childcare places and “re-cycle” existing services, in almost 20.000.000,00 €. As a major result, the percentage of coverage of these services that in 2004 was about 23,5%, has reached 30,2% in 2008 and 35% by the end of 2009.

Ministry of Education

The values inserted for Portugal in Table 2 of ANNEX D of the «Questionnaire Annexes anotado.pdf» do not match the ones presented in the UOE survey and which are included in the attached file entitled «valores_BaseDADOS_OCDE.xls».

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Portugal (Base de dados _OCDE) (Data Base OECD)	234,973	315,546	349,879	406,319	445,95843	552,72	566,73	594,7	600,97
Portugal (annex D - Table 2)	230,9	310,2	344,3	397,2	444,2	545,8	561,8	588,5	
Diferença absoluta Absolute difference	4,07	5,35	5,58	9,12	1,76	6,92	4,93	6,20	
Diferença Difference (%)	1,7%	1,7%	1,6%	2,2%	0,4%	1,3%	0,9%	1,0%	

It is worth enhancing that the table entitled “Funding source All sources (combined public, private, and international expenditures)” only includes public funding, because Portugal has not supplied data on private spending.

Please share your country experience such as:

- where the increased resources came from;
- strategies or research evidence that helped the argument for the increase;
- challenges associated with the increase and policy lessons you have learnt in tackling them;
- key political debates among politicians, general public, and the media of the time;
- how the increased budget was spent (*e.g.* to build more childcare places, increase the number of staff, increase staff salaries, increase participation of low-income families, etc.); etc.

Since 2005, Portugal has increased public investment in ECEC services, thereby increasing the provision of crèches and kindergartens. This results from the high rate of working mothers and the acknowledgement of the benefits for the child of being provided a quality childhood education

3.3.2 *Distribution of public resources to the providers (supply-side subsidies)*

Past research categorises supply-side subsidies broadly into two types:

1. government-run and subsidised non-profit private ECEC services; and
2. subsidies to for-profit private providers.

Please fill in the table below with relevant information. Examples are provided in Annex E. Where information is missing, please enter “m”. If your country has the “split system” for childcare and early education sectors, please prepare separate tables; one table for childcare and another for early education.

Child Care

	Government-run and subsidised non-profit private ECEC services	Subsidies to for-profit private providers	Others (Specify)
Name/ type of scheme	PARES: Social Services and Equipments Network Extension Programme	PAIES: “Support Program for Investment in Social Equipment”	
Duration of programme: hours per day, days per week, hours per year	Full - day	Full - day	
Purpose of subsidies	To create / build new places in childcare or “re-cycle” existing services, for its adaptation to new rules and children’s need	Aims to create 5.750 new places in Child day-care centres through support for private profit-making initiative.	
Universal or targeted (if targeted, specify conditions or eligibility)	Universal (0-3)		
Parents’ share (<i>e.g.</i> %, free, set ceiling, etc.)	The investment is both public and from non-profit private entities. In this specific Program, it’s involved a total investment of 35 millions €, with 53,5% of public funding		
Annual costs of programme per child/family (in local currency, year)	Total expenditure of the Programme (public funding): 18.955.534,79€ (2006-09)	Total expenditure of the Programme (public funding): 95.713,94 € (2009)	

Early Education

	Government-run and subsidised non-profit private ECEC services	Subsidies to for-profit private providers	Others (Specify)
Name/ type of scheme	Private Institution of Social Solidarity – IPSS Pre-school Education (kindergarten)	Development Contracts	
Duration of programme: hours per day, days per week, hours per year	Full- day	Full- day	
Purpose of subsidies	Anti-poverty, ensure equity and quality in child outcomes	Anti-poverty, ensure equity and quality in child outcomes	
Universal or targeted (if targeted, specify conditions or eligibility)	For 3-6 years	For 3-6 years	
Parents' share (e.g. %, free, set ceiling, etc.)	According the family income	According the family income	
Annual costs of programme per child/family (in local currency, year)	m	m	

Source(s): _____ Known data limitations: _____

3.4 *Other policy issues*

Market mechanisms to widen access to, and ensure quality of, ECEC services

3.4.1 How are ECEC services regulated by public authorities? Please detail minimum quality standards. How are these statutory quality standards set? Who polices them and how? How is the quality (e.g. curriculum, staff qualifications, staff-child ratio, space, etc.) of individual services communicated to parents?

At a national level (central administration), the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity / Social Security Institute is responsible for: developing legislation/regulations related to service provision and financing; organising service provision including eligibility and entitlement criteria for services; financing service provision and for evaluating/monitoring the performance of services.

The Licences to operate as a day-care centre are attributed by Social Security to all Service providers that want to deliver these kinds of services and have the conditions to provide it. Although private institutions can deliver services without public support, licensing is compulsory.

The Decree-Law 64/2007, March 14th, defines the legal frame for the implementation, functioning and supervision of the ECEC and other social support entities, and the Decree-Law 75/1992, establishes the rules for the celebration of cooperation agreements between Social Security and Institutions, and defines the rules for the selection, monitoring and supervision of ECEC.

Concerning Private non-profit organizations, the relationship between Social Security and Institutions is mediated through Cooperation Contracts and involves public funding of ECEC services. These contracts also enable public authority to monitor and control quality of services delivered. This activity is generally developed by regional services of social security.

The Cooperation Program for the development of Quality and Security Standards of Social Services was assumed since 2003 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity and all the National Organizations of Institutions and Social Services providers. This Program introduced 2 important tools for several services, and specifically for child care centres:

1) Technical Recommendations for Child Care Centres: establishes specific orientations – some of them compulsory by law or only highly recommendable - regarding buildings and space organizations.

2) Quality Manual for Child Care Centres: includes several tools – Quality Evaluation Model, Key-process activities, questionnaires for evaluation of clients, staff and stakeholders' level of satisfaction.

ECEC public services (3-6 year-olds) are regulated by the current legislation, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, mainly the following ones: Curriculum Guidelines for pre-school education;

legislation on the regulations of the facilities, of the equipment and material, and legislation on teaching and non-teaching staff.

Monitoring is conducted by the Ministry of Education. IPSS (Private Institutions of Social Solidarity) are monitored by the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity.

3.4.2 Are the for-profit providers eligible for public funding in your country? If yes, besides the financial incentives, what other incentives do you give to stimulate them to provide more and better ECEC services (e.g. regulation or deregulation on the minimum standards)?

PAIES: “Support Program for Investment in Social Equipment”, aims to create 5.750 new places in Child day-care centres through support for private profit-making initiative. Besides this specific programme, there’s no public funding of for-profit providers.

Private for-profit providers can also be subsidised by the Government, through Development Contracts and the deployment of pre-school teachers paid by the State.

3.4.3 If your country has any case studies of a provider failure, inspectorate reports, and/or research on low quality of the private ECEC services, please list references and attach relevant documents, if available.

Financial crisis and ECEC

3.4.4 Please share your country experience with an increase/ decrease on the budget on ECEC services as a result of, or in response to, the economic crisis. Was there a budget cut on ECEC as a result of the crisis; if yes, how much? Has ECEC been included in the stimulus package; if yes, what was the rationale/ policy thinking behind the decision?

Until now there has not been any decrease on the budget on ECEC services

Apart from the investment in the opening of more crèches, there has been a large investment in the National Reading Plan (covering children since birth), School Libraries, pre-school teacher training and the publication of materials to support the pedagogical practice of pre-school teachers.