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Growing up in Europe: developing the first Europe wide birth cohort survey

There is, at present, no single data source to support comparative analysis of the well-being of children and young people across Europe as they grow up. Some European countries have regularly invested in cohort survey and benefited from analyses drawn from longitudinal studies, such as the British Cohort Studies, the French Longitudinal Study of Children, the Danish Longitudinal Survey of Children, Growing up in Ireland, or the National Education Panel on Early Education and Schooling in Germany. These surveys remain an important source of evidence which supports policy development. The merits of collecting national longitudinal data are widely recognised, and yet the current studies are not easily comparable as they contain different questions and are conducted at different times and on different age groups. Europe's first comparative birth cohort survey, a Research Infrastructure called EuroCohort, will be an important source of evidence in developing social policies for children, young people and families across Europe for many years to come. EuroCohort will be an accelerated cohort survey including a sample of new born babies as well as a sample of school age children. With two cohorts taking place in parallel it will be possible to make cohort comparisons early in the life of the survey.