



**Social policies can make a difference:**  
European urban-rural disparities in child poverty

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**Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion  
in Rural Areas**

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# Part I.

## New information on the rural-urban gap

- Almost no research on its policy consequences
- The study on Poverty and Social Exclusion In Rural Areas partly filled the gap – but COMPARATIVE EU DATA WERE MISSING.
- The EU SILC file 2006 HELPS

# Overall child poverty rate in the EU: range 15%

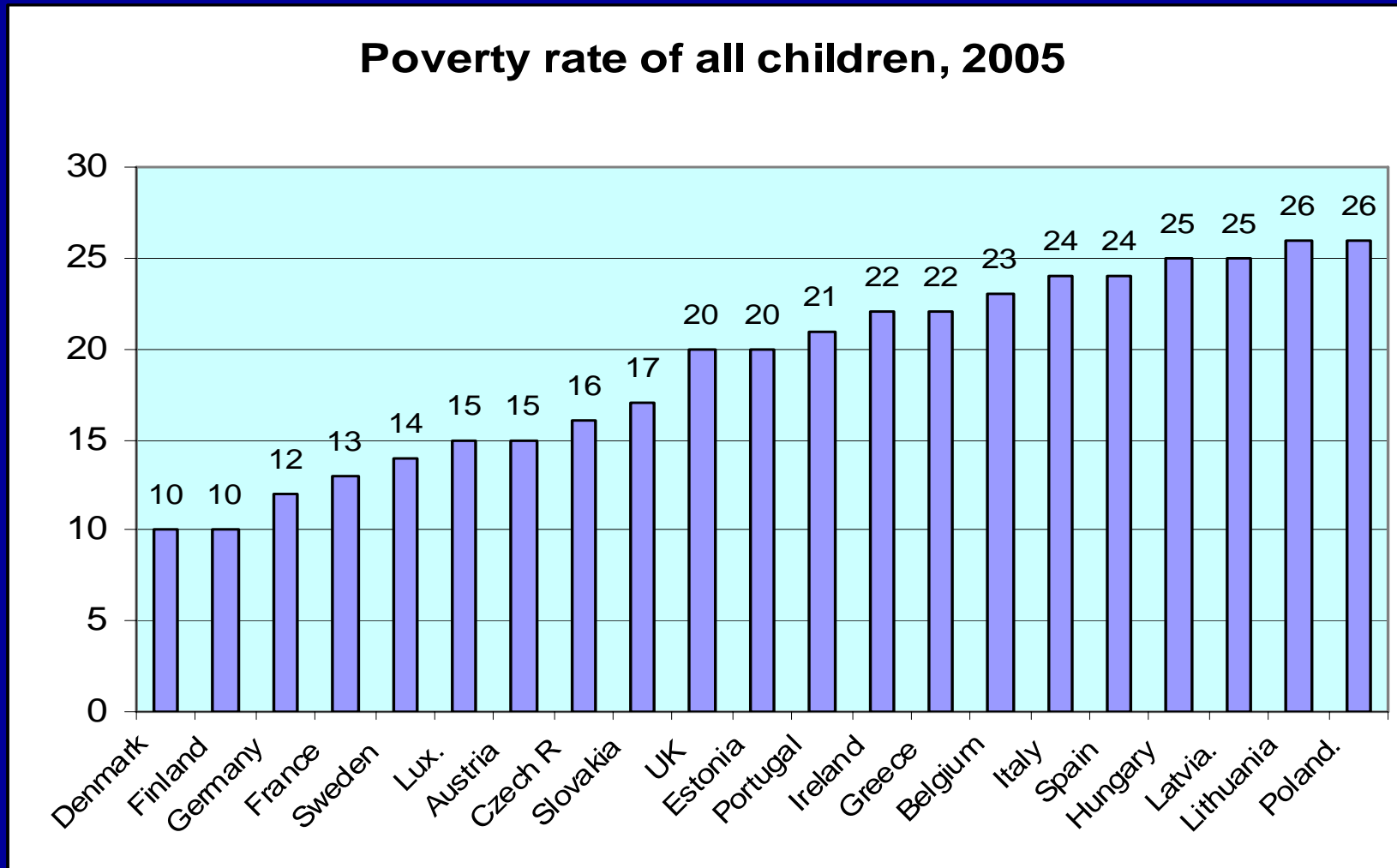


Fig.1.

# The urban and rural rates are more varied:

**Urban and rural child poverty rate, 2005, ranked according to the urban-rural difference**

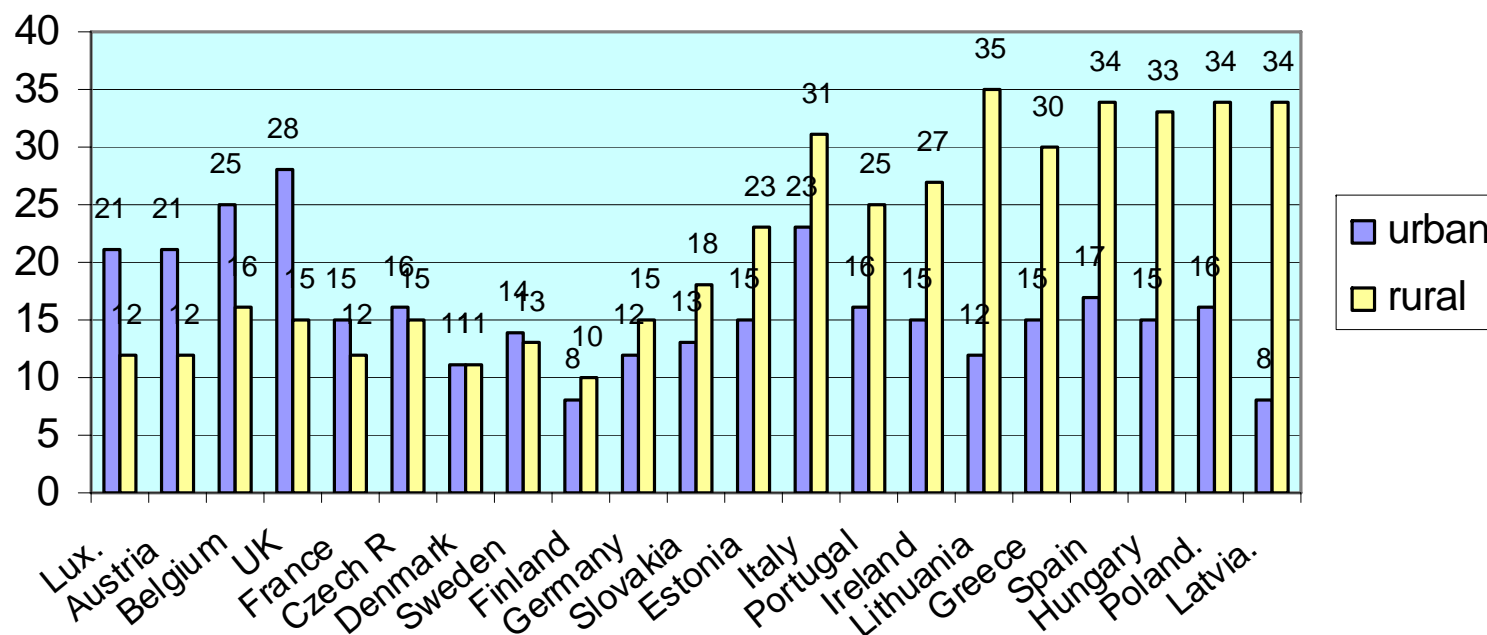


Fig.2.

# Urban child poverty rate in the EU: range 20 %

- Urban rates move between 8 per cent (Finland) and 28 per cent (UK).
- Urban child poverty almost independent of overall poverty rate
- Urban child poverty seems to be more ubiquitous than its rural counterpart.

# Rural child poverty rate in the EU: range 25 %

- The lowest rate (Finland) is 10 per cent, the highest (Lithuania) 35 per cent.

# The urban-rural gap

- The relationship between the urban and rural rates is expressed by the urban-rural gap.
- The gap has some explanatory force in country grouping (Fig.5).

# The urban-rural gap: range 39%

**Difference between urban and rural  
child poverty rate, EU 2005**

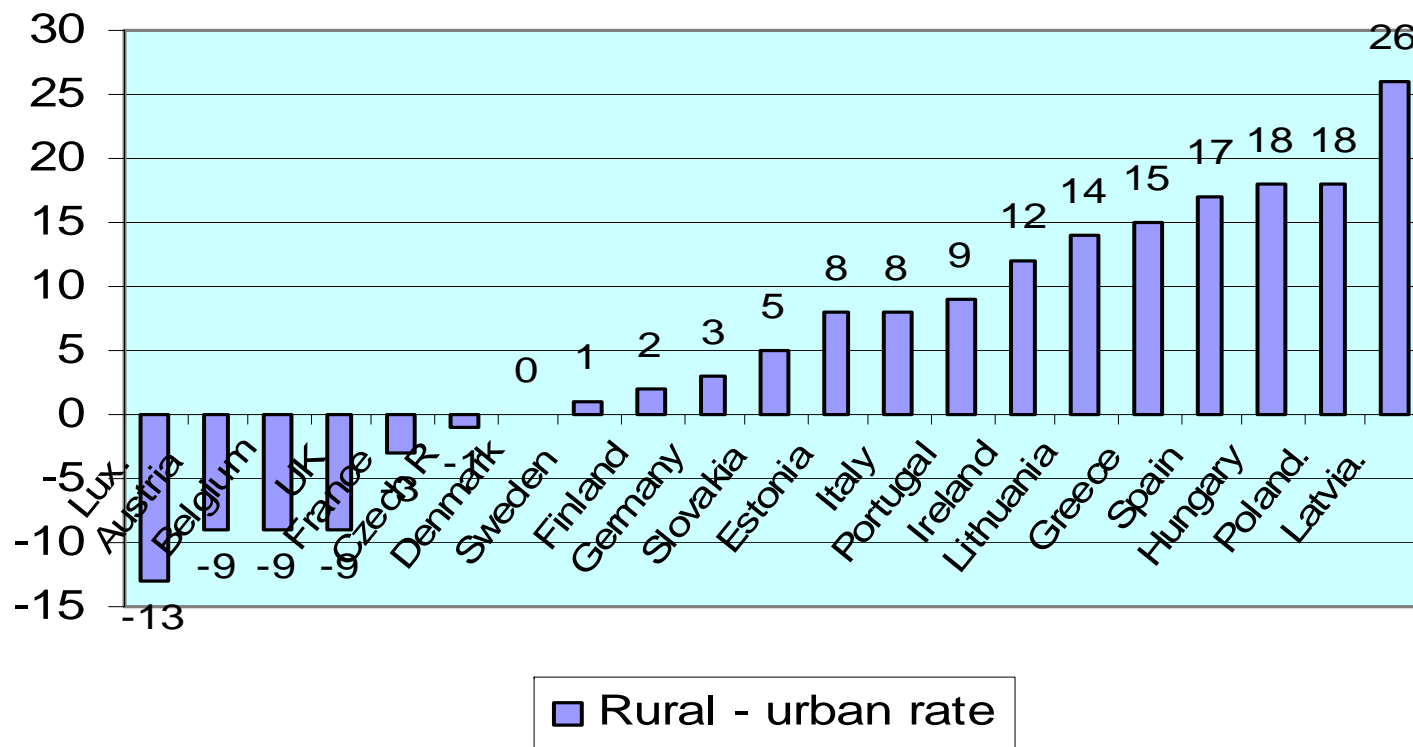


Fig.4.



# The gap and the grouping of countries –Group 1

**Urban child poverty higher than rural:**

Exclusively countries with early industrialization, possibly high rate of immigrant ethnic groups, “urbanized rurality”. (Luxembourg, Austria, Belgium, UK).

# The gap and the grouping of countries –Group 2

**Urban and rural child poverty similar and low:**

Countries with a developed welfare state – strong policy efforts to upgrade the countryside (Scandinavian countries the Czech R., Germany)

# The gap and the grouping of countries –Group 3

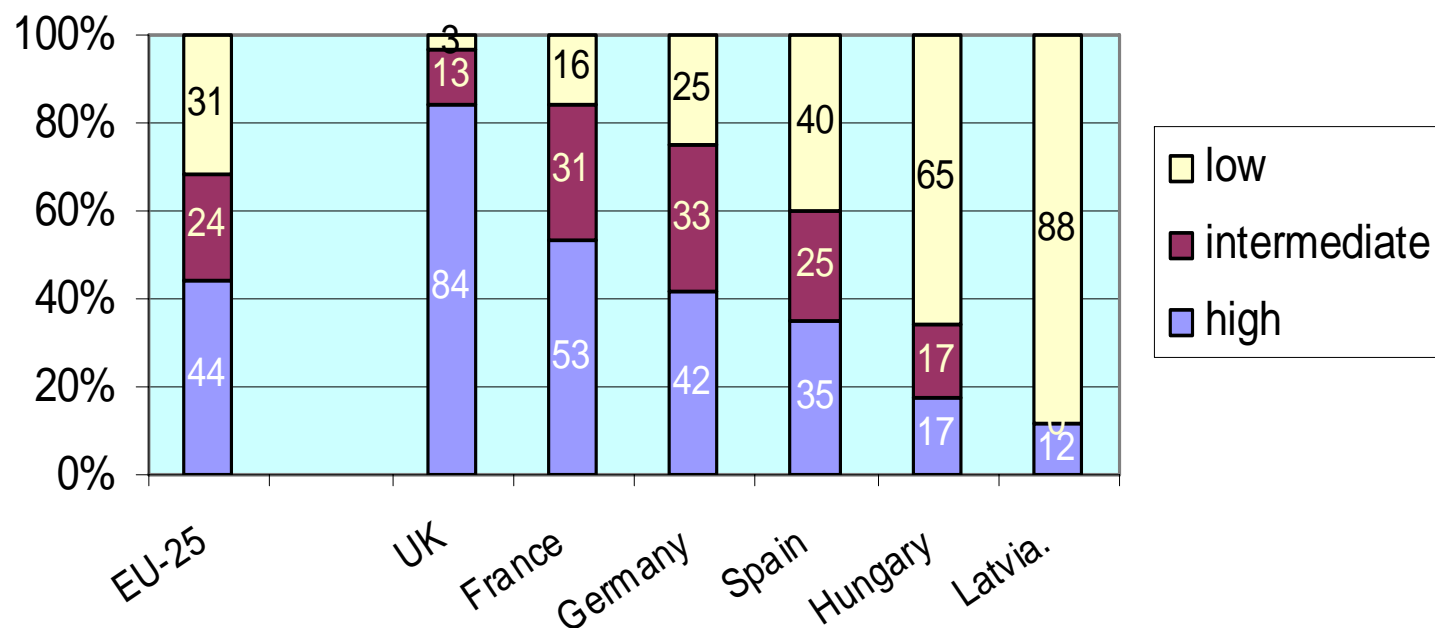
**Rural child poverty higher than – high or low – urban poverty.**

Large, heterogeneous country group: Most Southern and Eastern European countries, also Ireland-

Maybe two groups – research needed

# High rural poverty means that the majority of poor children live in villages

**Distribution of children living in localities of different degrees of urbanisation**



## Part II.

### Some implications for policy making

The main policy implications are spelt out by the Summary of the EU study.

There may be specific causes, though, of EE rural child poverty that should also inform policy. Two examples:

# Special difficulties of rural anti-poverty policy in EE

- In some EE countries foreign investment has been leading to uneven geographic development (the Kuznets-Williamson syndrome)
- Agriculture is
- The discrimination and segregation of the Roma, both in schooling and housing – is wide-spread. Poor and Roma people are squeezed out from towns to villages

# The National Strategy to combat child poverty in Hungary

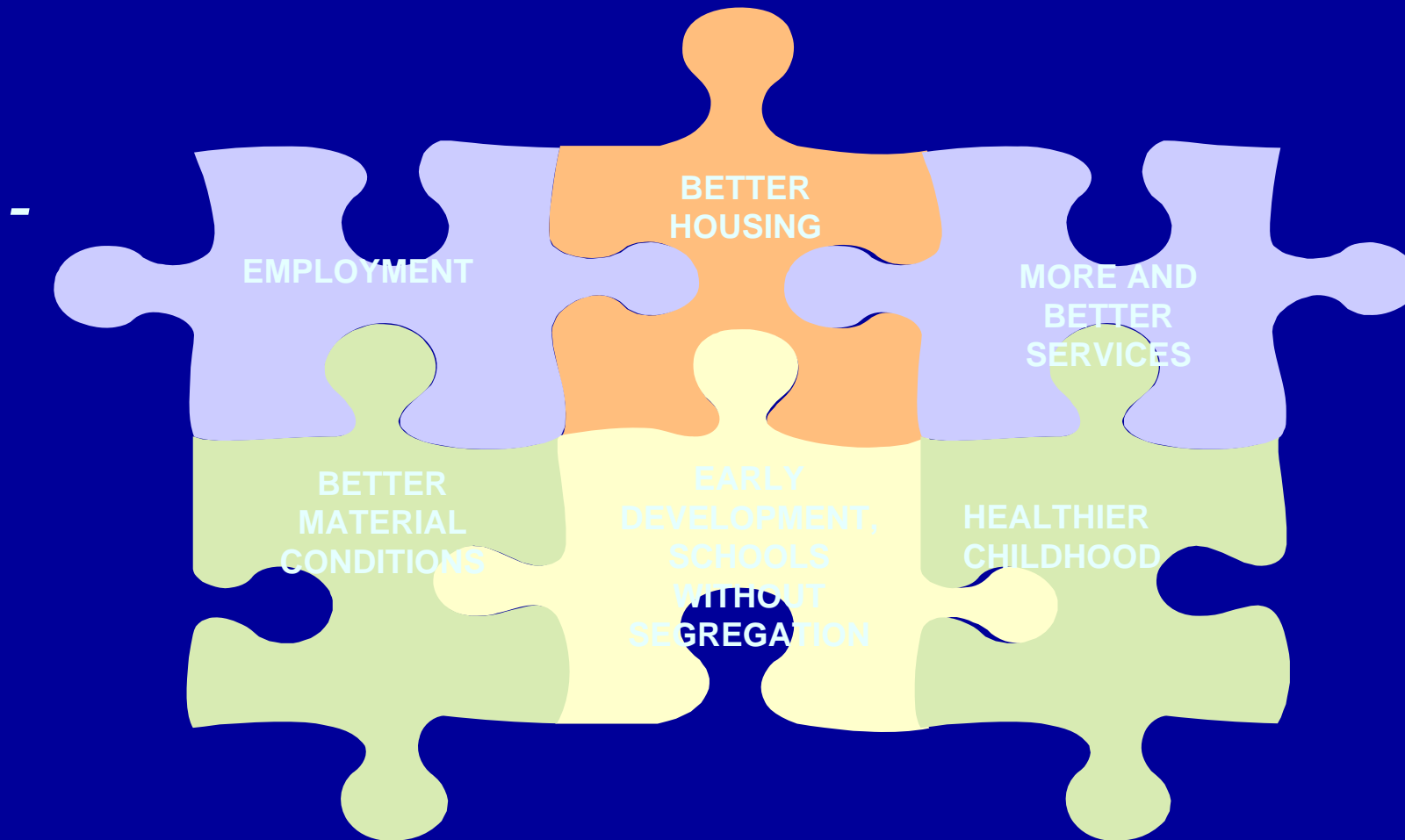
- 2005-2006: Elaboration in the HAS of a National Plan to Combat Child Poverty
- 2007 May: The Parliament adopts the National Strategy 2005-2032
- 2006: A pilot implementation programme starts in a poor micro-region

# The main targets of the national strategy

- **Decrease of the extent of child poverty**
- **Eradicate extreme forms of deep child poverty (bad nutrition, homelessness,..)**
- **Change mechanisms that reproduce child poverty**



# A complex programme based on cooperation at all levels



# The horizontal priorities of the National Programme

- Roma children,
- children with disabilities,
- deprived areas
- more and better personal services everywhere

# Pilot project for the complex implementation of the programme

- Szecseny: one of the poorest regions, 20.000 inhabitants in 13 municipalities, large Roma minority,
- Implementation: co-operation of local society (professionals, stake-holders, decision-makers) and the expert team of the HAS.

# Results and experiences of the pilot project

- The main results:
  - „material” achievements: 4 Children's Houses, a co-operative, 2 study-rooms, etc;
  - spread of information, knowledge: trained collaborators
  - awareness raising about better and more services needed, and about the better future of children as a collective must.

# The use of the Social Fund for multiplying the pilot projects

- The pilot project serves as a basis for multiplying the regions:
- 10 more micro-regions are starting the pilot project in 2009 and 2010 with the help of the European Social Fund, in the framework of the Social Renewal Operational Programme .

# Problems

- Crisis does not help
- The project approach clashes with complexity and long run
- The long run has already started



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# Thanks for your attention

The Program Office of the Hungarian  
Academy of Sciences to Combat Child  
Poverty