

ACCOMPANYING TOOL TO GUIDANCE ON EXPLORING TRANSNATIONAL CHILD PROTECTION CASES IN EUROPE



About

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The project seeks to reinforce inclusive and resilient child protection systems, including in crisis contexts; enhance the operational capacity of national systems to address transnational child protection cases; and advance the role of Barnahus as an integral component within comprehensive child protection frameworks.

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Introduction

The Tool accompanies the Guidance on Exploring Transnational Child Protection Cases in Europe. The Tool serves as a support to both policymakers, child protection and justice services and professionals involved in administrative and justice proceedings when exploring how better to fulfil children's rights in transnational child protection cases.

The list of agencies, databases, networks and resources included in this Tool is not intended to be exhaustive. Rather, it aims to provide a wide range of reference points for those engaging with child protection in transnational cases, but it does not encompass all available materials or stakeholders in this evolving field.

Section 1 provides short profiles of relevant international and EU agencies, databases and key European networks involved in transnational child protection cases.

Section 2 compiles examples of practical resources which help fulfil children's rights in each of the main types of transnational child protection cases which are shaped by the EU legal and policy landscape.

Section 3 contains examples of child friendly information which may serve as inspiration for practice across different types of cases.

1. International & EU Landscape of actors, agencies & networks

In transnational child protection cases, EU and international agencies play an important role in supporting authorities in connecting with actors in another country. European and international databases may also be used by authorities in these cases. European networks, bringing together organisations and practitioners in different countries, also provide a means for connecting organisations around cases, practices, challenges and opportunities.



1.1 Key European and International Agencies



European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust)

Eurojust is the EU's agency for criminal justice cooperation, supporting judicial actors in the Member States in investigating and prosecuting cross-border crimes.

What role can the work of Eurojust play in transnational child protection cases?

- Facilitates the identification of victims and ascertaining their status.
- Ensures a multi-dimensional and coordinated investigation and response to the needs of the victims, through their coordination mechanisms and structures
- Facilitates compensation/reparation for the victims.

🔗 **More on the** [Eurojust's role in protecting victims of crime](#), on [the Eurojust's contact point for serious cross-border crimes committed against children](#) and on the role of [Eurojust](#).



European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol)

Europol supports law enforcement bodies and agencies in the EU Member States combat serious international crime and terrorism through intelligence-sharing

and operational support. It provides support in joint/transnational investigations, through their databases and resources, and in joint action in ensuring the accountability of perpetrators of violence against children cross-border.

What role can the work of Europol play in transnational child protection cases?

- Provides intelligence-sharing and database access for cross-border cases.
- Operates the [European Cybercrime Centre \(EC3\)](#) to combat [child sexual exploitation](#).
- Supports law enforcement in dismantling trafficking and child exploitation networks.

 **More about** the [Dedicated team working on crimes against children](#), on [the campaign Stop Child Abuse – Trace an object](#), and on the overall work of [Europol](#).

FRONTEx European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex)

Frontex supports the national authorities in migration management and return activities in all EU Member States and Schengen-associated countries, in the management of the EU's external borders and the fight against cross-border crime.

What role can the work of Frontex play in transnational child protection cases?

- Assists border officials in identifying and helping vulnerable children, especially unaccompanied minors.
- Trains officers to detect child trafficking at borders.
- Develops operational guidelines, including the [VEGA Handbooks](#) for child protection at borders.

 **More on** [Frontex's child protection initiatives](#) and on the overall work of [Frontex](#).



European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA)

The EUAA supports Member States' national asylum or reception authorities in applying EU laws that govern asylum, international protection and reception conditions, known as the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). The EUAA acts as a resource for national authorities in the field of international protection, with the ability to provide practical, legal, technical, advisory and operational assistance in many formats. It also periodically monitors the application of the laws.

What role does the work of EUAA play in transnational child protection cases?

- Provides practical, technical and operational assistance to Member States to ensure child asylum seekers are protected and their rights ensured
- Provides practical, technical and operational assistance to Member States to protect unaccompanied children
- Provides guidelines to enhance national asylum systems that safeguard children.

The EUAA Vulnerability Experts Network (VEN) was launched in 2018 in order to enhance the identification and response to the special needs of vulnerable persons who apply for or are in need of international protection. It produces resources linked to children involved in international protection procedures, see further section on children in migration below. 📄 **More on [EUAA's role](#), practical [tools and guides](#), and on the [VEN](#).**



European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

FRA conducts research and monitoring, provides independent, evidence-based advice on fundamental rights to EU policymakers, raises awareness on fundamental rights at EU, national and local level.

What role does the work of FRA play in transnational child protection cases?

- Conducts research in several areas of children's rights

- Provides evidence-based advice to policymakers on legal frameworks for child protection.
- Develops guidelines and reports on child rights in transnational cases.

🔗 **More on** [FRA's child protection work](#), on the [latest update on the situation of children's rights in Europe](#), and on the [overall work at the FRA](#).



The European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice

Operational since 1 December 2012, **the eu-LISA** manages large-scale IT systems that support the implementation of asylum, border management and migration policies in the EU. 🔗 [Discover eu-LISA portal](#).

Among the activities of eu-LISA, **EMPACT** is an EU Member States driven instrument to identify, prioritise and address threats posed by organised and serious international crime. It is a structured multidisciplinary co-operation platform of the relevant Member States, supported by EU Institutions and Agencies (Europol, Frontex, Eurojust, CEPOL, OLAF, eu-LISA, EFCA, etc.), associated non-EU countries, international organisations and other (public and private) partners. EMPACT follows four-year cycles which start with the assessment of criminal threats and the adoption of the EU crime priorities. These priorities include child sexual exploitation and trafficking of human beings.

International Agencies and Organisations



The International Organization for Migration (IOM)

IOM is the leading intergovernmental agency in the field of migration, working closely with governments, civil society, and migrants themselves. As part of the UN system, IOM supports safe, orderly, and dignified migration through policy advice, technical assistance, and direct services. It operates in over 100 countries, addressing a wide range of migration-related issues, including health, development, and protection.

What role can the work of IOM play in transnational child protection cases?

- Promotes child-sensitive migration management and legal safeguards.
- Provides direct assistance and case management for unaccompanied and vulnerable children.
- Works on family tracing and reunification, and protection from trafficking and exploitation.

 **More on [IOM work on the protection of children in migration](#).**

**United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**

UNHCR is the UN agency mandated to lead and coordinate international action for the protection of refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, and stateless individuals. It was established in 1950 to help millions of Europeans displaced by World War II and now operates in over 130 countries. Its mission is to ensure that everyone fleeing violence or persecution has the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge.

What role can the work of UNHCR play in transnational child protection cases?

- Ensures child-sensitive asylum and refugee procedures, including best interests' determinations.
- Strengthens community-based and institutional child protection mechanisms.
- Supports legal frameworks and capacity building for child protection in displacement contexts.

 **More on [UNHCR work for displaced children across the globe](#) and on [child protection](#).**

**United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**

UNICEF is the United Nations agency dedicated to promoting and protecting the rights of children around the world, especially those most vulnerable due to poverty, conflict, natural disasters, or displacement. Founded in 1946, UNICEF works in over 190 countries and territories, providing humanitarian and

development assistance in health, education, nutrition, water and sanitation, and child protection.

What role can the work of UNICEF play in transnational child protection cases?

- Leads global efforts to prevent and respond to violence, exploitation, and abuse of children.
- Supports the development and strengthening of child protection systems in countries of origin, transit, and destination.
- Advocates for inclusive legal and policy frameworks to protect all children, in all settings, and particularly the ones in crisis and emergency situations.

 **More on [UNICEF work](#) across the globe and [in Europe](#).**



1.2 Key European and International Databases

 **Eurodac**

Eurodac is the European Union's centralised biometric database, designed to assist with the management of asylum applications and support efforts to detect, investigate, and prevent terrorism and serious crime.  [Source: EURODAC webpage where more info is available.](#)



The Schengen Information System (SIS)

The SIS is the most widely used and largest information sharing system for security and border management in Europe. SIS is the most successful cooperation tool for border, immigration, police, customs and judicial authorities in the EU and the Schengen associated countries.

Competent national authorities, such as the police and border guards, are able to enter and consult alerts on people and objects in one common database.

These people and objects can be located anywhere within the EU and the Schengen area during border, police or other lawful checks.

In 2013, the second generation of SIS (SIS II) was rolled out, and **SIS was renewed** with new alerts, upgraded data and enhanced functionalities.

[!\[\]\(4729e517bc6a7cd81c8025b9646574fb_img.jpg\) Source: SIS webpage where more info is available.](#)



National courts often pass sentences in criminal cases taking into account past convictions an offender has in their national criminal records register. ECRIS, a decentralised system for exchanging information on previous convictions between the Member States, supports Member States to take into account convictions in other countries. [!\[\]\(a03a7eb2f4046e1d3c76772003e549ea_img.jpg\) Source: ECRIS webpage where more info is available.](#)



ICSE, Interpol International Child Sexual Exploitation database

ICSE is an intelligence and investigative tool that allows specialized investigators from more than 70 countries to exchange information and share data with their colleagues across the world on cases of child sexual abuse.

This database helps victim identification specialists worldwide analyse and compare child sexual abuse images. Using image and video comparison software, investigators are instantly able to make connections between victims, abusers and places. The database avoids duplication of effort and saves precious time by letting investigators know whether a series of images has already been discovered or identified in another country, or whether it has similar features to other images. [!\[\]\(5361750c22c4e047a52f4eac1ec2d4cc_img.jpg\) Source: ICSE webpage where more info is available.](#)



1.3 Key international and European Networks

EU Institutional networks



European Network on Children's Rights

🔑 Representatives of national authorities working with children

It is an initiative of the European Commission that brings together EU institutions, Member States, civil society, and other stakeholders to support the implementation of the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child. It serves as a collaborative platform to ensure children's rights are consistently upheld across the EU, including in cross-border contexts.

What role does the work of the European Network on Children's Rights play in transnational child protection cases?

- Contributes to advancing the goals of the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, particularly regarding access to justice, inclusive education, and protection from violence—regardless of a child's nationality or location.
- Fosters coherence in how EU Member States address children's rights, including the protection of children in cross-border situations.
- Enables stakeholders to share knowledge and effective approaches for safeguarding children in transnational cases.

 **More on the** [Network, participants, methods and past meetings](#).



EMN

European Migration Network (EMN)

🔑 Network of migration and asylum experts

The EMN is an EU network of migration and asylum experts who work together to provide objective, comparable policy-relevant information and knowledge on emerging issues relating to asylum and migration in Europe. The EMN was established in 2008 (Council Decision 2008/381/EC) and amended by Regulation (EU) No 516/2014, and it is coordinated by the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs of the European Commission.

What role does the work of the EMN play in transnational child protection cases?

- Conducts studies and produces reports that analyse the protection of children in migration, offering insights and recommendations to enhance policies and practices.
- Provides a platform for sharing information among Member States and supporting efforts related to the care and protection of unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable children in migration contexts.
- Disseminates best practices and supports the implementation of effective measures for the protection of migrant children.

 **More on the** [EMN work](#), the [publications](#) and the [last report on children in migration 2021-2022](#).

**European Network of Victims' Rights (ENVR)**

ENVR  *Network of EU Member States' experts from competent government authorities responsible for victims' rights*

The ENVR is a platform that brings together national experts and authorities responsible for victims' rights across the EU. It aims to support the correct and effective implementation of EU legal instruments on victims' rights, facilitating collaboration between Member States.

What role does the work of the ENVR play in transnational child protection cases?

- Facilitates the exchange of expertise among national professionals on victims' rights, including children.
- Offers a platform for the exchange of promising practices and research, contributing to evidence-based EU policymaking.
- Help website users to localise the victims support services nearest to them, depending on the "category" of victims and on the country in which the crime has occurred.

 **More on the** [ENVR work](#) and on the ["ENVR Find my victim support service" tool](#).

European Judicial Network (EJN)



🔑 Network for the facilitation of judicial cooperation in criminal matters

The EJN is a network of national contact points designed to improve judicial cooperation in criminal matters between EU Member States. It helps facilitate direct contacts between legal authorities for a faster and more effective response to cross-border cases.

What role does the work of the EJN play in transnational child protection cases?

- Assists in international legal cooperation for cross-border criminal cases.
- Helps legal practitioners handle cross-border child victim and witness cases, providing practical resources.
- Provides practical information about relevant legislation adopted by European Union for judicial cooperation in criminal matters.

🔗 **More on the** [work and role of the EJN](#), on the [EJN judicial Atlas](#), and on the [EJN Judicial Library](#)



EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator (EU ATC) and EU Network of National Rapporteurs or Equivalent Mechanisms on Trafficking in Human Beings

The EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator is responsible for improving coordination and coherence among EU institutions, EU agencies, Member States and international actors, and for developing EU policies to address Trafficking in Human Beings. This includes monitoring the implementation of the EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings (2021-2025).

The tasks of the EU Anti-trafficking Coordinator are laid down in the Directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protection of its victims.

As per Article 19 of the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive, Member States have also an obligation to establish national rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms (NREMs). The NREMs' tasks include the carrying out of the assessments of trends in trafficking in human beings, the measuring of results of anti-trafficking actions,

including the gathering of statistics in cooperation with relevant civil society organisations active in this field, and reporting.

The EU ATC works closely with the EU Network of the NREMs by sharing information and exchanging best practices, as well as in order to coordinate the tasks at the EU and national level. The Network meets twice per year, including in Joint Session with the EU Civil Society Platform, and the EU ATC, on behalf of the European Commission, co-chairs the meetings with the incumbent Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

What role does the work of the EU ATC and of the Network of NREMs play in transnational child protection cases?

- The EU ATC ensures coherent EU-wide responses to trafficking, while NREMs link national efforts with EU strategies, fostering cross-border collaboration on child protection cases.
- NREMs collect and share data on trafficking, including child victims, feeding into EU-level monitoring and policymaking led by the EU ATC.
- Both entities contribute to shaping, implementing, and evaluating anti-trafficking policies, ensuring that the rights and needs of trafficked children are central to EU actions.

 **More on the [EU ATC](#), on the [Network of NREMs](#), and on the [participants to the EU Civil Society Platform and ePlatform against trafficking in human beings](#).**

Civil Society Networks



Barnahus Network

 *Network to support Europe to adopt Barnahus as a standard practice*

The Barnahus Network is a member-led organisation that works to harmonise and consolidate good Barnahus practice across Europe. The members are Barnahus, ministries, government agencies, NGOs, academics, individuals, and other stakeholders who share a commitment to full, incremental implementation of the [Barnahus Quality Standards](#). The Network also consults with governments, civil society, NGOs, academia, and private companies worldwide, both to share expertise and ways of working, but also to understand the trends and needs in the field of providing protection, justice, and recovery services to child victims of violence.

What role does the work of the Promise Barnahus Network play in transnational child protection cases?

- Promotes the Barnahus model across Europe, ensuring that child victims of violence, including trafficking, receive coordinated support from justice, health, and social services in one safe environment.
- Develops and promotes European standards for child-friendly, rights-based interventions, and supports professionals through training and knowledge-sharing.
- Strengthens cooperation between countries to uphold best practices in child protection and advocates for policies aligned with international child rights standards.

→

 **More on the [mission and governance](#), on [Barnahus key criteria and obligations](#), and on the [collection of resources](#) available on the Promise Barnahus Network's website, work and services offered.**



Child-friendly Justice European Network (CFJ-EN)

 *Network to promote child-friendly justice across Europe*

The CFJ-EN brings together organisations and practitioners in the field of justice with children, to ensure that judicial systems across Europe are adapted to the needs of the children involved – as suspects, accused, victims and/or witnesses – and become more inclusive and child-centred. The mission of the CFJ-EN is to create a justice system which guarantees the respect and the effective implementation of all children's rights, giving due consideration to the child's level of maturity and understanding and to the circumstances of the case. In particular, this means that justice systems should be: accessible, age-appropriate, inclusive, speedy, diligent, adapted to and focused on the needs and rights of the child, respecting the rights of the child including the rights to due process, to participate in and to understand the proceedings, in respect of private and family life.

What role does the work of the CFJ-EN play in transnational child protection cases?

- Facilitates the sharing of promising practices, resources and training materials among professionals across countries.

- Advocates for child-friendly justice practices in all proceedings children are involved.
- Facilitates coordination among practitioners and local organisations that work on child justice and child protection cases.

 **More on the [mission and members of the CFJ-EN](#) and on the [resources available](#).**



European Legal Network on Asylum (ELENA)

 *Network of asylum lawyers and legal practitioners coordinated by the secretariat of the European Council on Refugees and Exiles*

The ELENA network is a forum of legal practitioners promoting the highest human rights standards for the treatment of refugees, asylum seekers and other persons in need of international protection in their daily individual counselling and advocacy work. a network of lawyers and legal practitioners specializing in asylum and refugee law. It aims to improve legal protection for refugees and asylum seekers in Europe.

What role does the work of the ELENA network play in transnational child protection cases?

- Provides and reinforces contact between legal practitioners in different European countries to promote co-operation on individual cases and practice
- Provides legal analysis of national, European and international law relating to refugees.
- Provides a platform for the exchange of expertise and practices among lawyers on topics related to refugee and asylum law.

 **More on the [ELENA network's activities, events and resources](#).**



European Guardianship Network (EGN)

 *Network to promote and improve guardianship services for unaccompanied and separated children in the EU Member States*

The EGN is a platform that brings together experts and organisations involved in guardianship for unaccompanied and separated children in Europe. It aims to strengthen guardianship systems and promote quality standards to ensure the protection and well-being of these children, especially in cross-border situations.

What role does the work of the EGN play in transnational child protection cases?

- Works to improve guardianship systems by developing and sharing common standards and training, ensuring that guardians can effectively support children across different legal and protection systems.
- Works to facilitate exchange and collaboration between guardians across countries to support the continuity of care and protection when children move or are transferred across borders (its cross border working group serves as a focal point in this regard).
- Raises awareness of the specific needs of unaccompanied children and fosters the exchange of expertise and good practices to strengthen guardianship responses in transnational contexts.

 **More on the** [guardianship standards](#), on the [national members of the EGN](#) and on the [EGN resources](#).



The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

ICRC

 *Independent international humanitarian organisation*

The ICRC is a neutral, impartial, and independent humanitarian organisation that operates to assist the victims of armed conflict and other violence and promote respect for international humanitarian law and its implementation in domestic law. It works worldwide to reunite families, ensure respect for international humanitarian law, and advocate for human rights for vulnerable populations.

What role can the work of the ICRC play in transnational child protection cases?

- Helps trace missing children separated from families across borders due to conflict, displacement, or migration.
- Monitors the treatment of children in detention and can support safe repatriation or reunification efforts, especially when children are held in foreign or conflict-afflicted territories.
- Works with governments and partners to ensure international legal standards protecting children in armed conflict and displacement are upheld.

 **More on the** [ICRC work](#) and on the [Restoring Family Links \(RFL\) program](#).



International Social Services

 *Network to support, protect, reunite, and mediate children, families, and individuals separated as a consequence of cross border migration.*

ISS is a network of NGOs and partners that works towards re-establishing links within a family separated by international borders.

The ISS network strives to find solutions that enhance the protection of children in vulnerable situations. Their key priorities are to protect the best interest of the child above all other considerations and provide socio-legal counsel and psychological support. Advocacy, policy development, research, training, and capacity building are among their main focus areas.

What role does the work of the ISS play in transnational child protection cases?

- Assists professionals in cross-border child protection cases, including custody and family reunification.
- Supports social workers, legal professionals, and policymakers in navigating legal frameworks in cross-border cases.
- Provides resources on several relevant matters, such as on child protection, international adoption, family mediation, alternative care.
-

 **More on the [resources available on the ISS platform](#), and on the overall work of the ISS.**



Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) network

 *Network to ensure that children's rights and well-being are protected as they migrate alone*

KIND is a network of non-profit organisations that provide legal assistance to unaccompanied and separated children across Europe. It focuses on ensuring that these children have access to high-quality, child-sensitive legal representation in immigration and asylum proceedings, helping to safeguard their rights throughout complex legal processes.

What role does the work of the KIND network play in transnational child protection cases?

- Ensures unaccompanied children receive free, expert legal assistance to navigate asylum, immigration, and protection systems in various European countries.

- Provides training to legal professionals, NGOs, and institutions on child-sensitive procedures, international protection standards, and cross-border legal challenges.
- Advocates for structural improvements in how unaccompanied children are treated in legal systems, pushing for harmonised protections and durable solutions across borders, including access to guardianship, family reunification, and long-term residency or protection status in line with their best interests.

 **More on the [KIND work in Europe](#) and their [global programmes](#).**



Missing Children Europe

 *Network to prevent and respond to cases of missing children.*

Missing Children Europe is the European Federation for Missing and Sexually Exploited Children connecting 33 grassroot organisations in 27 countries across Europe. Their goal is to prevent that children go missing, and to protect children from any violence, abuse or exploitation that leads to or results from them going missing. Missing Children Europe works with professionals who assist missing children, children at risk of going missing and their families. They support these professionals to better protect and empower children through research, training, advocacy, and awareness, facilitating exchange and cross-border cooperation. They coordinate the network of 116000 missing children hotlines, and the **Cross-Border Family Mediators network**, which offers a database of certified mediators trained for dealing with transnational family issues.

What role does the work of Missing Children Europe play in transnational child protection cases?

- Produces tools such as apps, reports, and handbooks to enable professionals and the public to better protect children from going missing.
- Supports the 116 000 national hotlines and the network cross-border family mediators
- Provides the platform for children, families and professionals to find the local support services

 **More on the [tools offered by Missing Children Europe](#), [on the 116 000 hotlines](#) and on the [cross-border family mediators](#).**



International Mediation Centre for Family Conflict and Child Abduction (MiKK)

 *Network of international family mediation specialists*

MiKK is an international mediation center specializing in cross-border family conflicts and child abduction cases. It is a non-profit organization providing multi-lingual and free-of-charge support, advice and referrals to mediation for parents in cases of cross-border contact, custody and relocation conflicts, as well as in cases of international parental child abduction.

MiKK organizes bilingual and bi-cultural mediations worldwide for parents in accordance with its internationally renowned mediation model using mediators who have been specially trained by MiKK. MiKK also offers information, training and consultation to judges, lawyers, social services and consular representatives.

What role does the work of the MiKK play in transnational child protection cases?

- Offers mediation for international child custody disputes.
- Assists in preventing parental child abduction.
- Provides information, training and consultation to judges, lawyers, social services and consular representatives.

 **More on the MiKK [mediation model](#)**, on a video presentation of the importance of [specialised mediation in cases of child abduction](#); and on the [work of MiKK](#).



Safe Passage International

 *Network of specialists supporting lone child refugees in Europe who are looking to reunite with their families.*

Safe Passage International is a UK-based charity with legal teams in France, Greece and the UK that work to ensure safe and legal routes for unaccompanied refugee and asylum-seeking children to reunite with family members across borders. The organization provides legal assistance, engages in strategic litigation, and advocates for policy reforms to uphold children's rights to family unity and protection.

What role can the work of Safe Passage International play in transnational child protection cases?

- Provides legal support to unaccompanied minors seeking family reunification, ensuring their rights are upheld during asylum and immigration processes.
- Engages in legal actions to challenge policies that hinder family reunification.
- Advocates for the establishment and maintenance of safe, legal pathways for child refugees to reunite with family members, influencing national and international policies.

 **More on the [work of Safe Passage International](#), their team in [UK](#), [France](#) and [Greece](#).**

 **Victim Support Europe Victim Support Europe (VSE)**

 *Network to support of the delivery of victims' services*

VSE is a European umbrella organisation that brings together national victim support services from across the EU. It works to ensure victims of crime, including child victims, receive the support and protection they need. VSE actively engages and influences in the development of European public policy to highlight the needs of victims and those affected by crime, as well as to strengthen victims' rights and protection in the aftermath of a crime. Victim Support Europe represents all victims of all crime, no matter who the victim is and what the crime is.

What role does the work of the VSE play in transnational child protection cases?

- Provides a platform thorough which to find the closest and most appropriate victims' support services at national level.
- Enhances and facilitates cooperation between victim support organizations in cross-border cases.
- Facilitates exchange of expertise and of promising practices across countries, and with other European networks specialised on child protection and child-friendly justice.

 **More on the work and services offered by [VSE](#), and on the specific [info for child victims](#).**



Child Helpline International

🔑 Global network of national child helplines to ensure children have access to help when needed

Child Helpline International is a collective impact organization with more than 150 members from over 130 countries and territories around the world. They coordinate information, viewpoints, knowledge and data from our child helpline members, partners and external sources. This resource is used to support child protection systems globally, regionally and nationally, and to help members advocate for the rights of children and amplify their voices.

What role does the work of CHI play in transnational child protection cases?

- Provides immediate crisis support to children through child helplines and counselling services around the world.
- Works on evidence-based advocacy and policy reform to empower and protect children.
- Facilitates cooperation and exchange between national hotlines, sharing promising practices and expertise to improve child protection policies.

🔗 **More on the [CHI work](#) and on [how to find your local helpline](#).**



End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT)

🔑 Global network of organisations working towards the end the sexual exploitation and abuse of children worldwide.

ECPAT is the world's largest influencing network fully dedicated to ending the sexual exploitation of children, with a membership of 134 civil society organisations in 110 countries.

ECPAT's mandate is to end the sexual exploitation of children in all its settings, including child sexual exploitation through prostitution; trafficking; early and forced marriage of children, online and in the context of travel and tourism.

- Works to better understand the problem through research while pushing for the critical systemic and social changes necessary to end the sexual exploitation of children with governments, intergovernmental

institutions, the private sector, civil society, and the general public, including with the children themselves.

- Offers information for children to understand their rights, gain access justice, and find medical, psychological, and social support services in case they are affected by sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Connects adult survivors of child sexual abuse and exploitation to work together to heal as a global community of advocates.

 **More on [ECPAT work](#), on their [resources](#) and on the [stories from the members](#).**



Eurochild
Putting children at
the heart of Europe

Eurochild

European Network of organisations and individuals working on children's rights

Eurochild is a Brussels-based network of organizations and individuals working across Europe to promote the rights and well-being of children, guided by the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Its membership includes civil society organizations, child rights advocates, and national coalitions in over 30 countries.

Eurochild primarily focuses on influencing European Union policy to make child well-being a central priority in law, governance, and funding. It does this by conducting research, organising advocacy campaigns, engaging with EU institutions, and facilitating child participation in policymaking, while also supporting national-level advocacy. Through its work, Eurochild aims to reduce child poverty, promote social inclusion, and ensure that children's voices are heard in decisions affecting their lives.

What role does the work of Eurochild play in transnational child protection cases?

- Works to influence EU-level policy and legislation to ensure stronger, rights-based frameworks for cross-border child protection.
- By connecting child-focused organizations across countries, it can facilitate information sharing and collaborative case handling.
- Offers training and resources to national organizations, enhancing their ability to manage complex international cases.

 **More on the [events and activities of Eurochild](#), and on the [resources available](#)**



European Forum for Restorative Justice (EFRJ)

🔗 Network to advance restorative justice approaches in Europe

The EFRJ is an international network organisation connecting members active in the field of restorative justice as practitioners, academics and policy makers throughout Europe and beyond. They promote research, policy and practice development so that every person may have access to high quality restorative justice services, at any time and in any case. The main focus is on the application of restorative justice to criminal matters but other areas, such as family, school and community mediation, are also included.

What role does the work of the EFRJ play in transnational child protection cases?

- Conducts advocacy and research to develop high quality restorative justice practices in cases involving children, including cross-border
- Facilitates exchange of promising practices and of resources among practitioners
- Provides a platform to call for advice and technical support among members to learn about restorative justice practices applied with children in cross-border cases.

🔗 More on the [work of the EFRJ on child-friendly restorative justice](#) and on its [organisational members](#).

2. Transnational cases in focus



Cross-cutting practical resources

The following collection of resources addresses child protection in transnational cases, with a focus on fulfilling children's rights. It is intended to support practitioners, policymakers, and stakeholders by offering practical tools and references. To connect these materials within the broader policy framework, please see Annex 1 to the Guidance on exploring transnational child protection cases in Europe which provides a cross-reference to key international and European policies, strategies and guidelines. These include the [EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child](#), the [Council of Europe Child-Friendly Justice Guidelines](#), the [General Comments of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), and the [Commission Recommendation \(EU\) 2024/1238 of 23 April 2024 on developing and strengthening integrated child protection systems in the best interests of the child](#).

Handbook on European law relating to the rights of the child - 2022 edition, CoE and FRA.

This handbook is a point of reference on both European Union (EU) and Council of Europe (CoE) law related to these subjects, explaining how each issue is regulated under EU law, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, as well as under the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Social Charter and other CoE instruments. It aims to illustrate how European law and case law accommodate the specific interests and needs of children and considers the importance of parents and guardians or other legal representatives.  [Download and consult the handbook.](#)

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), Mapping child protection systems in the EU – Update 2023.

Published by the FRA in 2024, this report provides an updated overview of national child protection systems across the 27 EU Member States, building upon the mapping conducted in 2015. The study offers insights into the current state of these systems, highlighting developments, persistent challenges, and promising practices. The mapping focuses on various aspects, including legal frameworks, institutional arrangements, coordination mechanisms, and the integration of services. It emphasises the importance of a rights-based approach, aligning with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The report also underscores the need for integrated child protection systems that are responsive to the diverse needs of children, including those in migration or

affected by displacement, such as children from Ukraine. By providing a comprehensive analysis, the report serves as a valuable tool for policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders aiming to enhance child protection measures and ensure the well-being and rights of all children within the EU.  [Download and consult the mapping.](#)

CoE HELP Programme. HELP is the main educational Programme of the Council of Europe for legal professionals. Its aim is to train judges, prosecutors and lawyers, but also other professionals, where relevant, on European human rights standards. The HELP online courses are interactive and visual. They cover various human rights related topics, reflecting the different areas of work of the Council of Europe, including [Asylum and Human Rights](#), [Child friendly-justice](#), [Children's Rights in digital environment and protection against sexual exploitation/abuse](#), [Combating trafficking in human rights](#), and many more.  [Consult the Catalogue of HELP online course.](#)

2.1 Unaccompanied Children from Third Countries within the EEA

Children in migration, whether travelling with their parents, unaccompanied or separated, arrive in Europe for a variety of diverse reasons. They may seek access to international protection. Within Europe, there is also an observed trend of unaccompanied and separated children who are not seeking international protection, who migrate for a very diverse range of reasons, including family reunification, education or economic opportunities. This includes children who may be moving from country to country within Europe and living outside of any formal reception or care system with limited or no access to services. The transnational dimension of addressing the protection of these children is evident, given that they are outside their country of origin or habitual residence, and since they may move or be moved between countries. [Guidance on Transnational Child Protection Cases in Europe, p. ...].

See chapter 3.1 of the Guidance on Exploring Transnational Child Protection Cases in Europe.



Practical Resources

Key tools to support professionals handling transnational cases concerning children in migration

The European Database of Asylum Law (EDAL): EDAL is an online database that contains asylum-related case law from 22 European states, the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Court of Human Rights. The database was created through funding from European Commission's European Refugee Fund, and it is managed by the [European Council on Refugees and Exiles](#) (ECRE). EDAL's objective is to strengthen the development of harmonised standards of protection within the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and, in particular, to increase consistency and quality in the interpretation and application of CEAS legislation. [Consult the database](#) filtering by applicable legal provision, by country of applicant, country of decision, date, and key topic, including [child specific considerations](#) and [best interests of the child](#) – among others.

Handbook on Guardianship for children deprived of parental care, EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) and Commission, 2014. This handbook notes that it aims to support public officials in European Union (EU) Member States who are in charge of, or involved in, guardianship and legal representation of children at a national, regional or local level. It provides guidance on how to

establish and run national guardianship systems, and it points to the main tasks that a guardian should carry out. In doing so, the handbook also aims to foster a common understanding of the function and role of guardians and legal representatives in the EU as an essential component of child protection systems. This, in turn, should contribute to promoting a shared understanding of the main principles and features of a guardianship system. Such a common understanding should help standardise the level of protection offered to children throughout the EU. Section 4 addresses the issue that “[w]ith increased mobility within the EU and globally, a child may be of concern to more than one EU Member State. To protect a child effectively from exploitation, abuse, neglect and violence, it is essential to have cooperation and coordination mechanisms within the EU, as well as internationally.”  [Consult the handbook.](#)

EUAA-FRA Practical Tool for Guardians — Introduction to international protection, 2023. This tool introduces newly appointed guardians to the concept of international protection, possible forms of protection recognised through the asylum procedure, the relevant legal framework and the related rights of the child. It is part of a series of four practical tools for guardians of unaccompanied children with international protection needs. The objective is to support guardians in their daily tasks and responsibilities during the asylum procedure, including the procedure under the Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 (Dublin III regulation) and temporary protection. The tools have been developed by the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA).  [Consult the tool.](#)

EUAA-FRA Practical Tool for Guardians — Transnational procedures in the framework of international protection, 2024. This booklet is intended to support guardians assigned to children in the asylum procedure, covering technical aspects of the legal procedures related to the cross-border movements and procedures, in particular: the Dublin procedure; relocation; legal pathways: resettlement, complementary pathways and the family reunification procedure. This tool will be updated in 2026.  [Consult the practical tool.](#)

EUAA, Practical Guide on the best interests of the child in asylum procedure, 2019 (under revision). This practical guide is intended to support competent Member State authorities in applying the principle of the best interests of the child and enhancing the guarantees within asylum procedures for children. The guidance is complemented with an overview of the terminology, a comprehensive checklist as well as relevant policy, guidance and legal framework documents. A second edition of this guidance will be published in

September 2025, with the related best interest assessment template.  [Consult the current Guidance.](#)

UNHCR Guidelines on International Protection: Child Asylum Claims under Articles 1(A)2 and 1(F) of the 1951 Convention and/or 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, 2009.

These Guidelines offer substantive and procedural guidance on carrying out refugee status determination in a child-sensitive manner. They highlight the specific rights and protection needs of children in asylum procedures.  [Consult and download the guidelines.](#)

EUAA Practical Guide on Age Assessment, 2nd Edition, 2018 (under revision): This practical guide is intended to support EU+ countries in the implementation of the principle of the best interests of the child when assessing the need for age examination and when designing and undertaking age assessment. An updated version of this Guide will be published in 2025.  [Check the current version.](#)

EUAA Guidance on reception conditions for unaccompanied children, 2018. This guidance aims to support EU+ countries in the implementation of key provisions of the Reception Conditions Directive while ensuring an adequate standard of living for unaccompanied children that takes into account their special reception needs. It can be used at both policy and operational level as a framework for further development of reception standards at national level. It is also a tool to support reception authorities working with unaccompanied children in planning and running reception facilities and providing adequate care according to specific needs. The standards and indicators address the specific needs of unaccompanied children in reception facilities, though the guidance may also be applicable for accompanied children.  [Consult the Guidance.](#)

EUAA Practical Guide on Family Tracing, 2nd Edition, 2025. This guide provides a set of guidance and reference materials to support EU+ countries regarding family tracing for unaccompanied children, in line with their best interests. It provides as well as examples of promising practices and methods for family tracing.  [Read and download the Practical Guide.](#)

EUAA Practical Guide on Interpretation in the Asylum Procedure, 2024. This guide informs interpreters on what to expect when performing their tasks,

explains their role and key principles to uphold, and provides guidance on how to interpret in line with international standards.  [Consult the Guide](#).

The Practical Guide on Interpretation in the Asylum Procedure is complemented by the following practical tools:

- [Essential Rules](#)
- [Checklists](#)

EUAA Country of Origin Information (COI) Portal.

The COI Portal hosted by the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) is a centralised online platform that provides access to Country of Origin Information (COI) relevant to asylum and international protection procedures within the European Union. This portal is designed for use by asylum caseworkers, decision-makers, legal practitioners, and policymakers. The COI Portal includes reports, query responses, and other documents that provide factual, neutral, and up-to-date information on the political, social, economic, and human rights situations in countries from which asylum seekers originate. The aim is to support fair and evidence-based decision-making on asylum claims. On the COI Portal, the official COI Reports authored or endorsed by the EUAA and its COI Network are collected. A search by category, geographical coverage, keywords, and publication title is available.  [Check the COI portal](#) and [read the COI Report Methodology from 2023](#).

UNICEF Methodology Guidance on Child Notice, 2015. This Guidance aims to assist policymakers as well as case workers, lawyers, COI researchers and other professionals who work with children on the move. It is intended to give guidance for the research and writing of a Child Notice report. A Child Notice is a Country-of-Origin Information (COI) report providing information on the situation of children in a country of origin. Child Notices should describe the situation of children in the countries of origin, providing legal and practical information on education, health care and child protection services as well as information on key issues affecting their life, such as armed conflict, juvenile justice processes and risks of trafficking.  [Consult the guidance](#).

UNICEF, OCHCR, IOM, Save the Children, ECRE, PICUM, Child Circle, Guidance to respect children's rights in return policies and practices: Focus on the EU legal framework, 2019. This document provides guidance for state authorities on the design and implementation of return procedures that are child rights compliant. In particular, it sets out concrete measures necessary to ensure

respect for the rights of every child, including children in families, when implementing return legislation and policy in Europe, in line with international law obligations, in particular the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, and the EU Return Directive where applicable. It is aimed at those designing and implementing return procedures.

 [Consult the Guidance.](#)

HCCH The Application of the 1996 Child Protection Convention to Unaccompanied and Separated Children, updated version 2024. This document deals with the application of the *Convention of 19 October 1996 on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Co-operation in Respect of Parental Responsibility and Measures for the Protection of Children* in cross-border situations involving children who are unaccompanied, that is, children without parental care who “are not cared for by another relative or an adult who by law or custom is responsible for doing so”. It also deals with the application of the 1996 Convention to separated children, that is, children without parental care who “are separated from a previous legal or customary primary caregiver but who may nevertheless be accompanied by another relative”. This document will help legal practitioners, judges and professionals (e.g., child welfare / protection officials and enforcement officers) with responsibilities in the protection of these children to better understand the Convention, where it applies.  [Download the document in English, French, Portuguese or Ukrainian.](#)

KIND and Child Circle, Stepping Stones: Strengthening Key Procedural Safeguards for Unaccompanied Children in Transnational Procedures within the EU, 2021. This report focuses on strengthening procedural safeguards for unaccompanied children seeking international protection in the European Union (EU), with a special attention on strengthening legal assistance.  [Check the reflections and the actions for progress in the report.](#)

EUAA training module on interviewing children: The aim of this module is to provide asylum case officers with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to conduct a professional and effective personal interview with a child. It focuses on children’s developmental stages, the legal and procedural safeguards for children in the international protection process and child-specific interview techniques. Centring on the best interests of the child, this module explains how to assess the maturity of the child before and during the interview in order to

adapt the interview to the maturity and situation of each child. [!\[\]\(c8d96c8885d3000a912c2582004aed63_img.jpg\) Explore this module and further training EUAA offer.](#)

FRA Guardianship for unaccompanied children - A manual for trainers of guardians, 2023.

This manual is designed to help institutions, organisations and individuals to train guardians of unaccompanied children or to deliver ‘train-the-trainers’ courses. It can be used in a range of training contexts, such as professional and academic training, on-the-job training and continuing training. The manual is based on human and fundamental rights principles and ethical standards and recognises that the child and the guardian have their own personal stories, resources and capacities. It enhances guardians’ confidence to promote the child’s rights and best interests. It also enhances their confidence to act independently and impartially in relation to different state officials, service providers and other community members. [!\[\]\(666e09182d4cd268646ea700ea60dcdf_img.jpg\) Download the training manual.](#)

IOM and Sapienza University of Rome: Training manual for intercultural mediators - Responding to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) among unaccompanied migrant children (UMC), 2021. This manual is intended for frontline workers and provide specific content and advice for intercultural mediators on identifying and supporting unaccompanied migrant children (UMC) who have survived sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The sessions focus on the specific role of intercultural mediators interacting with UMC and within teams or other structures that bring together the different stakeholders involved in caring for and supporting UMC. [!\[\]\(c3d993ca47bfe2a953c700506ce31fa0_img.jpg\) Explore the training manual and programme.](#)

2.2 Criminal justice cases in another jurisdiction where children are victims and/or witnesses, and accused or suspects

In criminal cases, whether a child is a victim or a suspect/accused, any risks or protection needs should be addressed during the procedure and/or after it, including through access to necessary support and services. Criminal cases involving children which have a transnational dimension may trigger the need for cooperation between stakeholders in different countries on special measures for these child protection needs.

Sometimes a transnational dimension arises where the child has been a victim of a crime in another country, or where the perpetrator is in another country, as may happen in some cases where the crime takes place online. A transnational aspect to a child victim's situation may arise where the child is victim of trafficking, and s/he finds themselves outside their country of origin or habitual residence. Equally where criminal proceedings are transferred to another country a transnational dimension automatically arises, and the child victim should continue to have access to appropriate assistance and support in their own country.

The case of a child who is a suspect or accused in a criminal case will take on a transnational aspect where the child is from another jurisdiction but is being investigated/tried in the host country. Equally, transnational cases arise where the child suspect/accused might be investigated by a foreign jurisdiction, or where there may be a request to transfer a criminal case involving a child to another country. In some cases, a child who is suspect or accused of a crime may also be involved in a proceeding to determine their migration status (see section on children in migration). [Guidance on Transnational Child Protection Cases in Europe, p. ...].

See chapter 3.2 of the Guidance on Exploring Transnational Child Protection Cases in Europe.



Practical Resources

Key tools to support professionals handling cross-border criminal justice cases

Barnahus Network database of resources.

The Barnahus Network website offers a comprehensive collection of resources designed to support professionals, policymakers, and institutions involved in establishing and operating Barnahus services across Europe. These resources

include practical toolkits, such as the [Toolkit for Interagency Case Management](#), which provides guidance on implementing effective interagency collaboration and on applying the Barnahus Quality Standard 5. The website also includes foundational documents like the [Barnahus Roadmap Guidance and Template](#), on how to document and communicate the strategy and progress towards establishing and operating a Barnahus. Additionally, the website offers publications, training materials, and case studies that reflect best practices and lessons learned from Barnahus implementations across Europe, to support professionals in their daily work, such as the [Handbook and training for child interviews in investigations of trafficking](#). These resources are instrumental in promoting a child-friendly, multidisciplinary approach to supporting child victims and witnesses of violence.  [Explore the library on the Barnahus network website.](#)

The Barnahus Network also offers a **collection of training and e-learning for professionals**.  [Check here the catalogue of training offer.](#)

Child-friendly Justice European Network (CFJ-EN) database of resources.

The CFJ-EN has created an easy-to-use online database filled with helpful resources for anyone working to make justice systems more accessible and fairer for children across Europe. This includes useful tools like legal guidelines, training materials, case studies, and examples of good practices. One of its key resources is a **handbook on child-friendly justice**, first launched in 2022 and updated every year. The handbook brings together practical information about children's rights, available support services, and opportunities at the European level to improve how children experience justice—whether as victims, witnesses, or those in conflict with the law. The aim is to help professionals—from lawyers to social workers—better understand how to support and communicate with children in a way that respects their rights and needs.  Find the [2023 edition of the handbook](#), [explore for other resources](#), and [search for a publication](#)

The CFJ-EN also offers a **collection of training and e-learning available for legal professionals on child-friendly justice**.  Check here the [complete list](#), or find more about the [training for lawyers who work with children suspected or accused of a crime](#), or about the [training materials on access to justice for migrant children in the EU](#).

CHILD-Lex: Database on child friendly justice.

This database, developed under the EU-funded project Clear Rights - CLEAR-Rights: enhancing legal assistance for children in Europe and hosted by the CFJ-EN, aims to provide detailed information to professionals working with children about the rights of children in contact with the justice system (lawyers, prosecutors, social workers, judges, probation officers, etc.). It contains legal factsheets detailing these rights under international, European and national legislation and caselaw. The reader can search directly for an answer to their question using the search tool or look through the factsheets selecting language – between English, Romanian, French, Dutch or Hungarian – jurisdiction and/or topic(s) of interest.  [Explore the database through the search tool.](#)

FOCUS Standards on Individual Assessment for children in criminal proceedings

A set of 10 quality standards was created for the development and application of individual assessment processes, within the EU-funded project “FOCUS on my needs: Working together for children in criminal proceedings”. These standards aim to ensure that children involved in criminal proceedings, whether as victims or offenders receive fair treatment and individualised support. They were developed to guide professionals—such as judges, lawyers, social workers, and police—when assessing children involved in the justice system. These 10 quality standards help ensure that each child’s personal situation, background, needs, and best interests are taken into account throughout legal proceedings. By implementing these assessments, legal and child protection experts can better tailor interventions and support services, promoting justice processes that are both fair and responsive to the specific requirements of each child.  Read about the [background, the rationale and the details of the 10 Quality Standards for individual assessment for children in criminal proceedings.](#)



Quality Standards for Legal Assistance for Children suspected and/or accused.

Terre des Hommes (Tdh) and Defence for Children International (DCI) have developed legal aid materials such as this guide, which provide practical guidance for legal professionals to ensure children's rights are protected in justice systems. The guide emphasises child-friendly procedures, accessible information, and the importance of involving children meaningfully in their own legal processes. The goal is to strengthen fair, protective, and rights-based legal assistance for all children in contact with the law across Europe. [Check the step-by-step guide.](#)

ECPAT International Handbook for the Translation and Adaptation of the Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse 2017. ECPAT International's Handbook serves as a practical guide for accurately translating and culturally adapting child protection terms. This handbook aims to ensure that professionals across different languages and regions use consistent and child-appropriate terminology when addressing issues of child sexual exploitation and abuse. It provides step-by-step methodologies for translators and child protection experts to adapt the [Luxembourg Guidelines](#)—a comprehensive set of terms standardized by as an initiative of 18 international partners — to their specific linguistic and cultural contexts. By promoting uniformity and clarity in child protection language, the handbook enhances effective communication and advocacy efforts globally. [Download the Handbook.](#)

Child Helpline International Resources.

Child Helpline International (CHI) offers a wealth of resources, including data reports, toolkits, and publications, developed from the collective experiences of its member helplines. These resources aim to strengthen child protection systems and amplify children's voices globally.

Key resources include reports that analyse trends and issues affecting children, such as mental health concerns, the impact of the war in Ukraine, and experiences of violence. CHI also provides practical guides, such as the "[Child Helpline Starter Kit](#)," technical guidance on online child sexual exploitation and abuse, and resources for supporting forcibly displaced children. These resources are valuable tools for professionals and organisations working in child protection, offering evidence-based insights and practical tools to enhance support for children worldwide. [🔗 Explore the CHI resources.](#)

The E-Learning platform of the Global Initiative on Justice with Children offers a range of self-paced courses designed to empower individuals globally in advocating for and implementing child-friendly justice systems. These courses include reading materials, videos, case studies, quizzes, and recommendations, providing comprehensive training on various aspects of justice for children. Upon completion, participants receive a certificate of participation, acknowledging their commitment to advancing child-centered justice practices. [🔗 Check the e-learning on Protecting child victims through restorative justice in English, in Greek and in Dutch, or the MOOC on Ensuring non-discriminatory access to justice with children.](#)

The Child Protection Hub (ChildHub) Platform is an interactive, multilingual platform and network dedicated to enhancing child protection practices across Southeast Europe and beyond. Launched in 2015 by Terre des hommes and its partners, ChildHub serves as a dynamic community of practice for professionals working in child protection. Its primary aim is to strengthen collaboration, innovation, and knowledge-sharing among child protection actors to improve the lives of children who are victims of various forms of violence. The training materials, e-learning, webinars and resources available on ChildHub cover a wide range of topics, from school bullying to procedural safeguards for children within the criminal justice system, training for lawyers, methodologies for school teachers, and more. [🔗 Consult the offer on ChildHub.](#)

2.3 Children in Civil Law Cases involving Parental Responsibility, Child Abduction and Child Protection

Increased mobility within the EEA and the rising number of international couples and families is resulting in an increasing number of cross-border family disputes and child welfare cases, which often affect children's protection.

For example, a child may become party to a transnational child protection case where they are born to parents with different or multiple nationalities and one parent abducts the child to a country other than the one of their habitual residence. Another example of a transnational child protection case relates to children who have gone missing, or run away, from one country to another. Transnational child protection cases may arise where supervised access measures by a parent to child have been put in place by one country and the child has now moved to another country. Equally, provisional child protection decisions may need to be taken in relation to children who are present in a State other than the one in which they are habitually resident. Cases may also relate to questions concerning placement of children in care arrangements in another country; for example, where a child is placed with a grandparent. Transnational child protection cases may also arise in less obvious situations, such as where families have moved from one country to another, and the parents may be perpetrators of violence towards children and sometimes may indeed have moved precisely to avoid child protection interventions in the first country. [Guidance on Transnational Child Protection Cases in Europe, p. ...].

See chapter 3.3 of the Guidance on Exploring Transnational Child Protection Cases in Europe.



Practical Resources

Key tools to support professionals handling cross-border civil law cases involving parental responsibility, child abduction and child protection

HCCH, Practical Handbook on the Operation of the 1996 Child Protection Convention, 2014.

The Practical Handbook on the Operation of the 1996 Child Protection Convention, published by the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH), serves as an essential guide for practitioners, judges, and authorities involved in cross-border child protection. It provides detailed explanations on

the application of the Convention, including jurisdiction, applicable law, recognition, enforcement, and cooperation in matters of parental responsibility and protective measures for children. The Handbook offers practical guidance, case examples, and insights to facilitate effective implementation and international cooperation under the Convention.  The Handbook can be downloaded in several languages, including in [English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#) and [Russian](#), besides [many other official languages of the EU](#).

HCCH, Practitioners' Tool: Cross-Border Recognition and Enforcement of Agreements Reached in the Course of Family Matters Involving Children, 2022.

This tool by the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH), serves as a comprehensive guide for legal professionals and mediators. It provides how family agreements involving children – such as those concerning custody, access, or relocation – can be made enforceable across borders through the application of HCCH Conventions, specifically the 1980 Child Abduction Convention, the 1996 Child Protection Convention, and the 2007 Child Support Convention. This resource addresses the complexities and challenges that may arise in securing the enforceability of family agreements in cross-border situations, providing practical guidance on navigating the cooperation between different legal systems. By promoting the use of mutually agreed solutions, the Tool aims to facilitate the continuation of meaningful relationships for children with both parents when they live in different States and to deter parental child abduction.

 [The Practitioners' Tool is available for download on the HCCH website.](#)

The [HCCH | Child Abduction Section](#) and [HCCH | Child Protection Section](#) provide a rich collection of explanatory documents, publications, implementation checklists, past meetings, judicial communication, bibliography, useful links and other sources of information.

European Commission, Practice Guide for the application of the Brussels IIb Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2019/1111), 2022.

This is an authoritative resource developed by the European Commission to assist legal practitioners, judges, and central authorities in navigating cross-border family law matters within the EU. It provides comprehensive guidance on the Regulation's provisions concerning jurisdiction, recognition, enforcement, and cooperation in cases involving divorce, legal separation, annulment, and parental responsibility. The Guide aims to facilitate the consistent and effective application of the Regulation across Member States, enhancing the protection of children's rights in transnational family disputes.

 [The Practice Guide is available on the European Commission's website in all EU official languages.](#)

MiKK e.V. – International Mediation Centre for Family Conflict and Child Abduction provides a range of **practical resources** to support professionals and families involved in cross-border family disputes.

One key resource is the [MiKK International Expert Family Lawyers List](#), which helps users find experienced lawyers, mediators, and guardians with expertise in international family law and child abduction cases. The list includes professionals from various countries, facilitating access to qualified support in cross-border situations.

MiKK also offers a [flyer on cross-border mediation in family disputes and child abduction cases, available in multiple languages](#). This flyer provides an overview of how mediation can be used to resolve international family conflicts, emphasising its benefits for achieving child-centred and amicable solutions. It is a valuable tool for informing families, legal professionals, and authorities about mediation options in cross-border cases.

The Cross-Border Family Mediators Network, coordinated by Missing Children Europe, is another dynamic platform of certified family mediators trained to mediate in cross border contexts. These mediators have received specialised training to tackle cross-border family conflicts, and the network aims to actively contribute to creating comprehensive child protection systems by facilitating mediation in international family disputes. Through this network, Missing Children Europe promotes cross-border family mediation as an instrument to prevent abductions and de-escalate international family conflicts, emphasizing its role in protecting children's rights and well-being.

 The network's website offers a [searchable database of certified family mediators](#). Users can search for mediators by country, language, other occupation (e.g., lawyer, psychologist), or specialisation.

Legal database on international child abduction law by the HCCH (INCADAT)

The INCADAT database is a comprehensive legal resource maintained by the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH). It provides searchable summaries and full-text judgments of significant court decisions related to the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction,

aiming to promote consistent interpretation across jurisdictions.  [Consult the database.](#)

The Specialised Cross-Border Family Mediation (CBFM) Training offered by MiKK e.V. is a comprehensive 50-hour advanced course designed to equip practicing family mediators with the skills necessary to handle complex international family disputes. The training emphasises a child-centered approach, focusing on the best interests of the child in cross-border conflicts.

Key components of the training include:

- **Legal Frameworks:** An in-depth exploration of international legal instruments such as the 1980 and 1996 Hague Conventions and the Brussels IIb Regulation, which govern cross-border family matters
- **The MiKK's 4B Model:** A structured approach to mediation that addresses the specific challenges of bi-national family disputes.
- **Interdisciplinary Techniques:** Training in co-mediation practices, trauma-informed mediation, and strategies for incorporating the child's voice into the mediation process
- **Practical Application:** Engagement in role-plays and case studies based on real-life scenarios to develop practical mediation skills.

The CBFM training is conducted annually in different locations (including Berlin, Madrid, Singapore, and Osaka) and is available in [German](#), [Spanish](#) and [Ukrainian online](#). Participants who complete the training may join MiKK's international network of specialised mediators, gaining access to ongoing professional development and case referrals.  [Explore past and future training opportunities and offer from MiKK's.](#)

3.4 Trafficked Children

Child victims of trafficking are exposed to acute harm, being exploited in many ways, amongst them, for sexual exploitation, labour exploitation and different forms of criminal activities.

The number of children trafficked into and within Europe is thought to have increased in the past few years. Comprehensive data is difficult to compile, as many children remain under the radar of any authorities.

Trafficking is an offence that may occur internally within a State or internationally, with children being transferred between countries. It may involve children who are EEA nationals moving within the EEA or it may involve third country national children being moved into the EEA or circulated within the territory. For example, children involved in street crime and begging may in fact be controlled by criminal gangs. They may have been moved from country to country for the purposes of criminal exploitation. Several countries may also be involved where children in one country are trafficked and exploited online by individuals located in other countries. Criminal proceedings and child protection action involving a trafficked child may involve several countries, including countries of origin, transit countries, and the destination countries where children are exploited. [Guidance on Transnational Child Protection Cases in Europe, p. ...].



Practical Resources

Key tools to support professionals handling cases of child victims of trafficking

FRA, Children deprived of parental care found in an EU Member State other than their own - A guide to enhance child protection focusing on victims of trafficking, 2019. This Guide provides EU Member States with practical suggestions on how to respond step-by-step from the moment of identification of the child until a lasting solution in their best interests is found. It also provides a brief overview of the relevant international and EU legal framework, especially in criminal justice, victims' rights and cross-border cooperation among EU Member States. [!\[\]\(3e2231b1ad3ca8da8658228c00dd08e0_img.jpg\) Consult the FRA Guide.](#)

FRA, Practical guide to enhance transnational cooperation: EU child victims of trafficking or in need of protection, 2019. This guidance provides EU Member States with practical suggestions on how to respond step-by-step from the moment of identification of the child until a lasting solution in their best interests is found. It also provides a brief overview of the relevant international and EU legal framework, especially in the area of criminal justice, victims' rights and cross-border cooperation among EU Member States.  [Consult the FRA Guide.](#)

Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) & Child Circle: Creating a Cycle of Protection - Guiding Principles and Key Considerations for Developing Comprehensive, Child-centred Cooperation to Identify, Support and Assist Trafficked Children, 2024.

Published by the CBSS and Child Circle as part of the [PROMISE TRM project](#), this Guidance is intended to help States meet their obligations to trafficked children. It highlights relevant international legal frameworks, regional tools, and promising practices to inspire enhanced cooperation and concrete action.

This Guidance seeks to promote the development and enhancement of integrated, child-focused cooperation between anti-trafficking and child protection systems across States. It emphasises Member States' responsibilities to identify, support, and assist trafficked children throughout both criminal justice and child protection processes, as well as to take proactive measures to prevent child trafficking. The Guidance builds on the report [In Need of Targeted Support](#), commissioned by the CBSS and produced by Child Circle, which explored how Barnahus and similar models could contribute to better identification, support, and assistance for trafficked children, while also aiding criminal investigations.

Its creation was shaped by national dialogues held in six countries around the Baltic Sea, where key stakeholders convened to discuss barriers and opportunities for improved collaboration.  [Consult the Guide, the resources and the national promising practices presented in the Guide.](#)

CBSS & European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control (EUNI), Handbook for forensic child interviews in presumed cases of trafficking, 2024.

Within the EU-funded [Promise TRM project](#), this was developed to support professionals in carrying out investigative interviews, including investigations

that take place in Barnahus. The Handbook is based on research and experiences of practitioners. It provides case examples and interview excerpts. Drawing on evidence-based interview protocols, it also introduces general core principles and features likely to be particularly relevant when investigating suspected cases of trafficking in children.  [Read and download the handbook.](#)

CBSS, ISA: Acute Crisis Intervention, 2024. This paper aims to be a support for child victims of sexual exploitation, trafficking for sexual purposes, and online sexual abuse during the first critical days after disclosure or an investigative interview. It introduces an approach for acute crisis support, “ISA”, for child victims of trafficking for sexual purposes, sexual exploitation, and technology-facilitated sexual abuse. The “ISA” approach is developed to address the specific needs for crisis support that may arise with child victims in the immediate aftermath of disclosure and/or being in contact with authorities – especially in the context of a criminal investigation. It can be used by any professional who works with the child at these moments.

While the approach is specifically developed to address crisis as a result of sexual violence, it can also be adapted and used to support children who are victims of trafficking for other forms exploitation.  [Read and download the paper.](#)

CBSS, Handbook for Embassies and Diplomatic Missions on How to Assist and Protect Victims of Human Trafficking, 2023. This handbook is developed as a tool for staff at embassies and diplomatic missions to prevent, identify and assist victims of human trafficking. It contains sections on the definition of human trafficking, the international legal framework, risk assessment, chains of assistance and safe return. It has a victim-centered and child-rights approach with a particular focus on the gendered aspects of human trafficking. We hope that you will make use of this handbook when you deal with a situation that you suspect could be a case of human trafficking.  [Read and download the handbook.](#)

CBSS & Child Circle, In need of targeted support – The role of Barnahus in identification and investigation of child trafficking and the support and assistance provided to victims, 2021.

This report focuses on whether Barnahus, or Barnahus like services, do or might play a role both in enhancing the identification, support and assistance provided to children who may have been trafficked and in supporting criminal

investigations into cases of child trafficking. The orientations and recommendations for future action arise out of findings from a short study and consultations with key experts in six countries in the region.  [Read the report.](#)

UNICEF Resources. UNICEF plays a crucial role in shaping international and regional responses to child trafficking through research, advocacy, and the development of child-centered policy guidance. Some research resources in particular, with focus on Europe, illustrate this:

 [Guidelines on the Protection of Child Victims of Trafficking \(2006\)](#) provide detailed, practical recommendations for professionals working with trafficked children, and outline standards for identification, referral, care, and durable solutions.

 [Child Trafficking in Europe: A Broad Vision to Put Children First \(2008\)](#), which provides the key concepts and data for a common understanding of the scope and complexity of child trafficking across Europe. It advocates for holistic strategies that address prevention, protection, and reintegration, urging governments to place the rights and needs of children at the center of all anti-trafficking efforts.

 [Child Trafficking in the Nordic Countries: Rethinking Strategies and National Responses \(2011\)](#) examines how child trafficking manifests in a specific regional context. It evaluates national frameworks and proposes ways to strengthen systems, highlighting the importance of coordination and the need for more effective victim identification and protection measures

OSCE – National Referral Mechanisms: Joining Efforts to Protect the Rights of Trafficked Persons, Practical Handbook (Second Edition), 2022.

This handbook offers practical guidance for developing and implementing National Referral Mechanisms (NRMs). It outlines the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders, procedures for victim identification and assistance, and strategies for inter-agency cooperation. The handbook aims to standardise responses to trafficking, ensuring that victims receive comprehensive protection and support services. It includes specific guidance on addressing the needs of child victims of trafficking. This updated handbook introduces dedicated sections focusing on children, emphasising the importance of child-sensitive approaches within National Referral Mechanisms (NRMs). It provides practical tools and assessment guides designed to assist practitioners in identifying and supporting child victims effectively.  [Read the summary and the full report.](#)

CoE Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA).

GRETA is the independent monitoring body of the Council of Europe responsible for evaluating how countries implement the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. It conducts country evaluations, publishes detailed reports with recommendations, and promotes human rights-based, victim-centred approaches—paying particular attention to the protection of trafficked children, including in transnational contexts. The GRETA group assesses how countries implement the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, including protections for trafficked children, and provides recommendations for improvement. It promotes child-sensitive procedures and the best interests of the child in anti-trafficking measures, including identification, assistance, and legal proceedings.

 **More on the** [GRETA's work](#), [general reports](#), and the [Trafficking in children - Thematic Chapter of the 6th General Report on GRETA's Activities \(2018\) in English](#) and [French](#).

CBSS, Listen up! Creating conditions for children to speak and be heard, 2018.

This guidance is a resource aimed at enhancing child participation in matters affecting their lives. Developed within the framework of the '[PROTECT Children on the Move](#)' project, this guidance emphasises the importance of creating safe and supportive environments that empower children, especially those who have experienced exploitation or trafficking, to share their stories and perspectives. Central to this guidance is a storytelling method piloted by CBSS, designed to facilitate meaningful conversations with children who have faced challenging situations. This method enables professionals to gather insights and recommendations directly from children, ensuring that their voices inform policy and practice at both national and regional levels. The guidance also underscores the need for professionals to receive specialised training in child-sensitive communication. It highlights that effective communication is crucial for identifying risks, providing appropriate support, and making decisions in the best interests of the child. By adopting the approaches outlined in this resource, service providers and policymakers can better understand and respond to the needs of children, fostering a more inclusive and responsive child protection system.  [Read and download the Guidance.](#)

**International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)
– Guidelines for the Development of a Transnational Referral Mechanism
for Trafficked Persons in Europe (TRM-EU), 2010.**

These Guidelines outline the development and implementation of Transnational Referral Mechanisms (TRMs) as a key tool to protect trafficked persons, particularly in cases where assistance must be provided across borders. The TRM-EU Guidelines aim to bridge national anti-trafficking systems and promote a coordinated, human rights-based approach to cross-border response. The guidelines present step-by-step procedures for the identification, referral, assistance, return, and reintegration of trafficked persons, with a strong emphasis on safety, voluntary participation, and informed consent. Particularly relevant is the guidance on safeguarding vulnerable groups, including trafficked children, who require additional protections. The document advises tailored support measures and child-sensitive approaches, ensuring that all actions prioritise the best interests of the child. It advocates for proper risk assessments before return, durable solutions, and mechanisms to avoid re-trafficking.  [Read and download the Guidelines.](#)

UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) publishes the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons biennially, as mandated by the [2010 United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons](#). This report provides a comprehensive overview of human trafficking patterns and responses at global, regional, and national levels. The report aims to inform policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and civil society by analysing data on detected trafficking cases, victim profiles, and criminal justice responses. It covers a wide range of topics, including trafficking flows, forms of exploitation, the effectiveness of legal and institutional frameworks, and a focus on child victims of trafficking. UNODC compiles the report using data collected from 156 countries, focusing on cases detected over recent years. Every report includes global and regional overviews of trafficking patterns, analysis of victim demographics and exploitation types, assessment of criminal justice responses, including prosecutions and convictions, and identification of emerging trends and challenges in combating trafficking.  [Read the latest report 2024 or consult the court cases summaries from 2024; and look for previous reports.](#)

2.5 Emergency displacements - Children from Ukraine

Events such as wars or other crisis in countries may lead to emergency displacements of children. In recent years, many children have been suddenly displaced from Ukraine because of the Russian invasion and the ongoing war.

Their situation has unique features in that children arriving from Ukraine have largely been provided immediately with temporary protection in the EEA. They have freedom of movement within the EU and often retain close ties with family members who remain in Ukraine. In some cases, parents remaining in Ukraine made care arrangements for them, the scope and duration of which were initially provisional, and which may with time be reviewed or replaced. Equally, groups of children who had been deprived of parental care in Ukraine were sometimes moved together, with caretakers, to EEA countries, where they are hosted in facilities, whilst remaining under the care of the caretakers appointed under Ukrainian law and employed by Ukrainian institutions.

The children's displacement from Ukraine has become more protracted than originally envisaged, and the question of what the future looks like for these children, and the procedures that apply to decide this, may change, when temporary protection systems end.

Ukrainian authorities have remained actively involved in seeking to put in place appropriate measures for the protection of children and engaging with States and regional bodies on issues concerning their reception and care. [Guidance on Transnational Child Protection Cases in Europe, p. ...].

See chapter 3.5 of the Guidance on Exploring Transnational Child Protection Cases in Europe.



Practical Resources

European Commission, Unaccompanied and Separated Children fleeing from war in Ukraine – FAQs on Registration, Reception and Care, 2022.

This document provides guidance through a question-and-answer format on how EU Member States should respond to the arrival of unaccompanied and

separated children from Ukraine. It addresses issues such as registration procedures, placement in appropriate care settings, and the legal and practical aspects of safeguarding their rights, aiming to harmonize national practices in line with EU standards and child protection principles. [🔗 Check the document.](#)

EUAA and FRA, Practical Tool for Guardians, Temporary protection for unaccompanied children fleeing Ukraine, 2022.

Jointly developed by the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), this tool supports guardians in their role of assisting and representing unaccompanied children fleeing Ukraine. It explains the Temporary Protection Directive, outlines guardians' responsibilities, and provides step-by-step guidance on how to advocate for children's rights and ensure access to essential services, education, and legal assistance. [🔗 Download the Practical Tool.](#)

The Council of Europe's Consultation Group on the Children of Ukraine (CGU) has examined the cross-border dimensions of child protection, particularly regarding unaccompanied and separated children displaced by conflict. This resource reflects on how transnational cooperation mechanisms can be managed to protect children's rights and ensure that decisions about their care and legal status are made in a coordinated and child-sensitive manner. The CGU was established in 2023 as a dedicated body to coordinate and strengthen the protection of Ukrainian children affected by the war, particularly those displaced across borders. It brings together representatives from member states, international organizations, and civil society to support child rights-based responses in line with European and international standards. The CGU was set up to ensure practical implementation of the 2023 Reykjavík Declaration, to facilitate dialogue and the exchange of information, in a multilateral setting, on applicable legal standards and policies regarding Ukrainian children residing in Council of Europe member states. The CGU's focus will be on developing a common understanding of some of the most important legal and policy issues member states are dealing with as a result of the arrival of Ukrainian children on their territories. [🔗 Read more here on the CGU work and updates on its activities.](#)

UNICEF & Child Circle Report: Fulfilling the Rights of Children without parental care displaced from Ukraine – An analysis of International and European Law, 2023.

This report explores how national child protection systems can uphold the rights of unaccompanied and separated children displaced by the war in Ukraine. It reviews applicable legal standards, policy responses, and promising practices in host countries, while identifying key areas for improvement. The report offers actionable recommendations to ensure that care arrangements, legal representation, and durable solutions are guided by the best interests of the child. Chapter 6 of this report in particular is focused on “Future planning: Ensuring comprehensive, secure and sustainable solutions through best interests procedures, supported by transnational cooperation”, and the bibliography offers a rich collection of relevant resources for professionals working with this group of children.

 Explore the [report](#) and the resources included.

UNICEF & Child Circle, Fulfilling the Rights of Children without parental care displaced from Ukraine – Compendium of Law and Guidance, 2023.

This compendium serves as a detailed legal and policy reference tool for practitioners working with children displaced by the war in Ukraine who are without parental care. It brings together relevant international, European, and national laws, soft law instruments, and practical guidance to help align national practices with child rights obligations. The resource is intended to support decision-making, advocacy, and legal reform efforts in host countries.  [Consult the Compendium.](#)

Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG), Practical guidance for mediators to protect children in situations of armed conflict, 2020.

Developed by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, this guidance aims to assist mediators in integrating child protection considerations into peace negotiations and conflict resolution efforts. It outlines key actions and language that can be included in peace agreements to address recruitment, detention, attacks on schools and hospitals, and other grave violations of children's rights during armed conflict. The OSRSG guidance is relevant to children from Ukraine as it helps ensure that their rights are prioritised in any peace negotiations or ceasefire processes. It

offers concrete measures to address grave violations, particularly pressing in the context of the conflict. The guidance also supports accountability and the integration of child protection into broader efforts toward conflict resolution and recovery. [!\[\]\(21199eb166cc97331a0c54c649195dcc_img.jpg\) Read the Guidance.](#)

International Rescue Committee (IRC), Child protection monitoring report, 2024.

This report presents the findings of child protection monitoring conducted by the IRC in response to the displacement crisis caused by the war in Ukraine. It highlights trends in protection risks, such as family separation, exploitation, and access to education and mental health services. The report also includes recommendations for humanitarian actors and governments to strengthen protection mechanisms and ensure child-focused responses in both emergency and long-term contexts. [!\[\]\(dfbd6b3763a6d1d9afaa974f64e2e4b5_img.jpg\) Consult the monitoring report.](#)

2.6 Missing children, including runaway children, within the EEA

Where a child goes missing from their family or care arrangements, authorities may need to consider whether the child may have gone to another country and what action might be needed to locate them. Equally, where national authorities encounter a child in their jurisdiction, they may need to determine whether this child is in fact missing or a runaway from home or care arrangements in other countries.

A child may travel to another country, either independently or in the hands of adults who might exploit them. They may find themselves at risk of violence and in need of protection.

Every year, approximately 250,000 children are reported missing across Europe, equating to one child every two minutes, according to Missing Children Europe. In 2023, the 116000 hotlines network, which provide assistance in cases of missing children, received over 67,000 calls related to nearly 7,300 incidents. A significant proportion, about 66%, of these cases involved children who had run away, often due to challenges such as family conflict, abuse, or exploitation. Digital grooming has become a major concern, making children more vulnerable to exploitation and increasing cross-border risks. Migrant children traveling alone face particularly high risks of going missing: between 2018 and 2020, an estimated 18,000 unaccompanied migrant children went missing after arriving in Europe, raising concerns about their safety and protection. [Guidance on Transnational Child Protection Cases in Europe, p. ...].

See chapter 3.6 of the Guidance on Exploring Transnational Child Protection Cases in Europe.



Practical Resources

Key tools to support professionals handling cross-border cases of missing children

Missing Children Europe resources.

Missing Children Europe provides a collection of tools designed to assist professionals and broader audience in safeguarding children. These include apps, reports, and handbooks that offer guidance on preventing child

disappearances, supporting missing children, and understanding the challenges faced by unaccompanied children. 📎 [Explore the tools available](#), and check the [instruments available if a child is looking for help](#), if [a parent is looking for a mediator](#), or [to find the 116 000 hotline member across Europe](#).

Missing Children Europe, Guard-Up good practices guide 2025.

This guide provides practical guidance on preventing and responding to unaccompanied children going missing. It highlights good practices in guardianship systems across several European countries, aiming to enhance the protection of unaccompanied children through improved policies and practices. This Guide was developed within the framework of the GUARD-UP project, a collaborative initiative coordinated by the Centre for European Constitutional Law (CECL) and funded under the EU's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). This project aimed to enhance the effectiveness of guardianship systems for unaccompanied migrant children across several European countries, including Greece, Italy, Poland, Cyprus, Croatia, and Belgium. Building upon the findings of the earlier [SUMMIT project](#), which focused on safeguarding unaccompanied migrant children from going missing by identifying best practices and training actors on interagency cooperation, the GUARD-UP guide offers updated and practical guidance on preventing and responding to these cases.

The Guide serves as a valuable resource for professionals and authorities involved in the care and protection of unaccompanied migrant children, particularly in the context of preventing disappearances and ensuring appropriate responses. 📎 Learn more about the [project GUARD-UP](#) and [consult the Guide](#).

Missing Children Europe, Online Grooming & Going Missing: the Voices of European Survivors – CESAGRAM: Comprehensive European Strategy Against Grooming and Missing, 2024.

This is one of the main outputs of the [CESAGRAM project \(Comprehensive European Strategy against Grooming and Missing\)](#), coordinated by Missing Children Europe, which addresses the critical issue of online grooming and its link to children going missing. This report compiles insights and recommendations from 20 survivors across 11 countries. These firsthand accounts shed light on the tactics used in online grooming and the challenges survivors face, providing valuable guidance for policymakers and practitioners. In addition to the report, CESAGRAM developed innovative tools to combat

online grooming, including an AI-powered detection tool and [a gamified educational platform called CESAGRAMVILLE](#). An educational curriculum complements these tools, aiming to raise awareness and prevention strategies among young people. Furthermore, the project established the [CESAGRAM Knowledge Hub](#), a comprehensive resource center compiling all project deliverables and additional materials on the topic.  [Read the report](#) and explore the [CESAGRAM project, outputs and tools](#).

Missing Children Europe and ECPAT, Practical guidance on preventing and responding to trafficking and disappearances of children in migration, 2019.

This Guidance offers comprehensive strategies to address the challenges faced by unaccompanied children who may go missing. This guidance emphasises the importance of early identification of risk factors, effective communication, and coordinated responses among stakeholders to ensure the safety and well-being of these children.

The guidance was developed in the framework of the [INTERACT project](#) and it is particularly relevant for professionals working with unaccompanied children from conflict zones, such as Ukraine, as it provides insights into preventing disappearances and ensuring appropriate responses when children go missing.  [Learn more about the INTERACT project](#) and consult the [Practical Guidance in English, in French, in Dutch, in Greek, and in Italian](#).

FRA, Children deprived of parental care found in an EU Member State other than their own - A guide to enhance child protection focusing on victims of trafficking, 2019.

This Guide provides EU Member States with practical suggestions on how to respond step-by-step from the moment of identification of the child until a lasting solution in their best interests is found. It also provides a brief overview of the relevant international and EU legal framework, especially in criminal justice, victims' rights and cross-border cooperation among EU Member States.  [Consult the FRA Guide](#).

Missing Children Europe, RADAR's Free Online Course: Understanding and Responding to Children Who Run Away from Home and Institutions.

The RADAR project (Running Away: Drivers, Awareness, Responses) is a collaborative initiative aimed at enhancing the understanding of why children

run away and improving the care and protection offered to them across the European Union. Coordinated by Missing Children Europe, with partners including "The Smile of the Child" (Greece), Child Helpline International, and others, the project emphasises that running away is often a response to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) such as abuse, neglect, or family conflict, rather than merely a behavioral issue. A key component of the RADAR project is a free online course designed for professionals working with children. This course provides in-depth insights into the factors contributing to runaway behavior, strategies for prevention, and effective response mechanisms. It includes research findings, case studies, and practical tools to equip practitioners with the knowledge and skills necessary to support at-risk children effectively.

 [Learn more about the RADAR project and find out about the online training.](#)

3. Child-Friendly resources on children's rights

Informing children on their rights is a key element of fulfilling their rights in administrative and justice proceedings. In the following section, you will find examples of child-friendly resources, accessible online, that you may use as an inspiration to explain children's rights to children, or you may want to share with children you work with, for them to learn about their rights and freedoms in easy and entertaining ways. A number of these tools are also available in several languages other than English.

EUAA – Leaflet targeting children on the temporary protection directive to inform them of their rights may be useful. [🔗 What you need to know about temporary protection \(children\).](#)

European Commission – Information page for people fleeing the war in Ukraine. It provides detailed information on rights as well as contact information for the relevant authorities in all Member States. It includes information on the rights of children arriving from Ukraine and provides an overview of Child Helpline Numbers. [🔗 Information for people fleeing the war in Ukraine, available in English, Ukrainian and Russian.](#)

EUAA Booklet on Age Assessment: The age assessment booklet for children complements an animation produced by the EUAA on the topic of age assessment for children. The content in the booklet is prepared in a child-friendly manner to further inform young persons arriving in Europe who might have to take part in an age assessment.

[🔗 Check the Booklet](#) (will be revised in due course) – and the [animation video](#). The booklet is available in [Bambara, Dari, Pashto, Somali, Tigrinya, Arabic, Punjabi, and Wolof](#).

CoE leaflet on age assessment. It seeks to inform children about the age assessment procedures in an adapted way, so that they understand that the age assessment should be conducted in a manner that respects their human rights and dignity, with their informed consent, and that takes into account any

particular vulnerabilities, their gender and cultural background.  [Check the leaflet available in English and French.](#)

CoE Booklet “How to convey child-friendly information to children in migration”

Migrant and refugee children are one of the most vulnerable groups in Europe, especially since they often have poor access to information concerning their rights or procedures that affect them. This guidebook developed by the Council of Europe helps to improve information access by equipping professionals and volunteers to communicate in a child-friendly way with refugee and migrant children. The guidebook offers practical tips, points to consider, and golden rules for professionals and volunteers working with this group. It also includes examples of good practices implemented around Europe. Each thematic chapter features quotes and recommendations from children, as well as a list of questions that children may have on the topic.  [Check the Booklet](#)

UN leaflet on the rights of children on the move. The UN SRSG-VAC has produced this leaflet aimed at informing children who are migrating about their rights and the protections to which they are entitled. This child-friendly resource provides important information on safeguarding measures, access to services, and avenues for support, empowering children on the move to understand and assert their rights during their journeys. The leaflet is part of the SRSG-VAC's broader efforts to prevent and respond to violence against children in migration contexts.

 [Download the leaflet.](#)

Missing Children Europe: Application “Miniila”.

This app has been designed as a tool to help children who find themselves in a foreign country without a parental care nor a guardian. It is a child-friendly tool that will provide them with updated information about their rights, about the services available, the risks they are exposed to, and the potential procedures they might be involved in, across different countries in the EEA. The Miniila app connects users directly to critical helplines: the 116 000 hotline for missing children, facilitating immediate access to support in multiple languages. The app is available in several European countries and supports multiple languages.  [Learn more about the app and download it.](#)

Council of Europe: Resources for children on Sexual Abuse

For small children (4-7):

"Kiko & the Hand" (*The Underwear Rule – Booklet & Video*): Teaches body autonomy and personal safety  [Booklet](#) | [Video](#)

"Kiko and the Manymes" (*Storybook & Video*): Explains identity, consent, and safety in a child-friendly way  [Storybook](#) | [Video](#)

For older children (11-18):

"So This is Sexual Abuse" (*Booklet & Video*): Real-life stories & FAQs helping teens recognize abuse and seek help  [Booklet](#) | [Video](#)

UN Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) on Violence against Children, online resources. The UN SRSG on VAC has worked actively to involve children and young people directly in the efforts to sensitise the public on children's rights and protection. For this purpose, child-friendly materials and videos have been developed and are available to engage children and young people in understanding their rights. These resources aim to raise awareness on critical issues such as child trafficking, children in street situations, children on the move, and violence prevention—ensuring children are informed, empowered, and included in the global conversation about their protection.  [Consult these resources and find the one you need](#), including a Child-friendly leaflet on child trafficking.

ECPAT resources for children: "If you are under the age of 18 and someone has ... You May be a Victim of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse"  [Children's Bill of Rights](#).

Child-Friendly Justice European Network (CFJ-EN) resources: A Storybook about Child-Friendly Justice: A book of testimonies, poems and artwork by children in detention or with experience of the justice system.  [The Storybook](#).

Child-friendly version of the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, 2021. The [EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child](#) builds on previous Commission communications on the rights of the child and on the existing legal and policy framework. The strategy is anchored in the UNCRC and its three Optional Protocols, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and will contribute to achieving the United Nations Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs). It also links to the Council of Europe standards on the rights of the child, as well as with its Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021). This strategy has been developed for children and together with children. The views and suggestions of over 10.000 children have been taken on board in preparing this strategy. Children have also been involved in preparing its child-friendly version. This marks a new chapter and an important step for the EU towards genuine child participation in its decision-making processes.  [Download the child-friendly version of the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child.](#)

Child-friendly tools to learn about the EU, online. Children from primary or secondary school can find here games, competitions and activity books to help discover the EU. Teachers can also find teaching materials for all age groups, to teach their pupils to learn about the EU. This EU learner corner is available in all 24 official EU languages.  [Search the resource you need](#) and [learn more about the learning corner.](#)

Guide for children to the CoE Strategy on the Rights of the Child, 2022-2027. It is a guide for children and young people from 12 to 17 years old to understand the main objectives of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027).  [Find here the guide.](#)

The CoE also provides other **online resources for children 6-10 and 11-18, and for teachers**, on a variety of issues, including human rights, law, health, minority rights:  [Find your resource.](#)

Passport to your rights, CoE resource online. This is a child-friendly tool to explain to children their rights, available in several languages. This tool/passport accompanies the child, in an entertaining way, on a journey through some of their rights. The journey has six pit stops on the way to your final destination. At each stop, the child is asked to do a small exercise to verify their understanding.  [Download the passport.](#)

CoE Brochure on the rights of the child. With this other child-friendly leaflet, the CoE aims to explain to children their rights as provided by the UNCRC, in a way that is easy to understand, with illustrations and layman language. The brochure is structured following the main groups of rights as right to survival, protection and development; right to identity, private life and family; and to freedoms. It also offers an explanation of what the state and international

organisations do to protect these rights, and of what children can do when their rights are violated.  [Download the brochure on the rights of the child.](#)

Implementing the Barnahus Quality Standards throughout Europe

Projects under the umbrella of PROMISE have been supporting Europe to adopt the Barnahus model as a standard practice for providing child victims and witnesses of violence rapid access to justice and care. We undertake this work to fulfil the PROMISE vision: a Europe where all children enjoy their right to be protected from violence.

A Barnahus provides multidisciplinary and interagency collaboration to ensure that child victims and witnesses of violence benefit from a child-friendly, professional and effective response in a safe environment which prevents (re)traumatisation. With the formal support from national authorities, PROMISE projects provide opportunities to translate national commitment into action and engage internationally in the process. In addition, regular networking and strategic communications continually activate our growing network of professionals and stakeholders who are committed to introducing and expanding Barnahus services nationally.

In the early years, we established European standards, formalised the Barnahus Network, and expanded into University training and case management tools. We further laid the groundwork to establish a European Competence Centre for Barnahus and an accreditation system for Barnahus. Our current focus is on addressing gaps and specific needs identified by Barnahus in Europe. This includes strengthening inclusive and resilient child protection systems particularly in times of crisis, improving national systems' ability to effectively handle transnational cases, and enhancing the role of Barnahus within broader child protection systems.

Access the PROMISE tools and learn more at www.barnahus.eu



**Children
at Risk**



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