

JUST-JACC-VICT-AG-2019

Action grants to support transnational projects to enhance the  
rights of victims of crime

**JUSTICE PROGRAMME**

GA No. 878593

Enhancing PROfessionals' capaciTy to  
dEal with Child – vicTims  
E-PROTECT II

WP2: Capacity building-on spot

D2.8 International Capacity Building  
Workshop in Thessaloniki, Greece

WP2 Leader: DCI - Italy



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Project co-funded by the European Commission within the JUST Programme		
Dissemination Level:		
PU	Public	X
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	
EU-RES	Classified Information: RESTREINT UE (Commission Decision 2005/444/EC)	
EU-CON	Classified Information: CONFIDENTIEL UE (Commission Decision 2005/444/EC)	
EU-SEC	Classified Information: SECRET UE (Commission Decision 2005/444/EC)	
Document version control:		
Version	Author(s)	Date
Version 1	Developed by: Elina Ketikidi and Faye Ververidou, SEERC	3/04/2021
Version 2	Reviewed & updated by: Daniela Ilieva, LIF	13/04/2021
Version 3	Updated by: Faye Ververidou, SEERC	13/04/2021



## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	- 4 -
<b>1. Preparation</b> .....	- 5 -
1.1 Date and medium .....	- 5 -
1.2 Interpretation.....	- 5 -
1.3 Agenda and speakers.....	- 6 -
1.4 Dissemination .....	- 7 -
<b>2. Implementation</b> .....	- 11 -
2.1 Summary of the workshop .....	- 11 -
2.2 Main highlights .....	- 13 -
2.3 Aftermath .....	- 15 -
<b>3. Concluding remarks</b> .....	- 18 -
<b>Appendix I – Communication material</b> .....	- 19 -
<b>Appendix II – Online dissemination campaign</b> .....	- 29 -
<b>Appendix III – Screenshots from the International Workshop</b> .....	- 32 -
<b>Appendix IV – List of participants &amp; interpreters</b> .....	- 37 -
<b>Appendix V – Speakers’ presentations</b> .....	- 50 -



## Introduction

The current deliverable constitutes a report on the successful delivery of the first International Capacity Building Workshop of the E-PROTECT II project, titled “Preventing secondary and repeat victimisation of child victims of crime: Risk assessments and solutions in the best interests of the child”.

E-PROTECT II continues the work of the E-PROTECT I project, which critically and comparatively studied the transposition of the Directive 29/12/EU (or Victims’ Directive) into the national normative context of several EU Member States with emphasis on the child victims’ rights. Its main output is the development of a comprehensive methodology for the individual needs assessment for child victims, which puts forward a child-friendly approach of child victims within the traditionally stiff justice system, based upon uniform protocols of operation, interdisciplinary and interagency cooperation and promotion of the best interests of the child.

Drawing upon the results of this first phase, E-PROTECT II has envisaged a rich series of activities with different formats (MeetUps, workshops, twinning visits), geographical scope (local-national-international) and thematic focus. In this framework, the first International Capacity Building Workshop invited child professionals across Europe to participate in a cross-national forum on the risks of second or repeat victimisation, to discuss common challenges and share best practices for the support and protection of child victims’ rights.

This report consists of two main parts: the preparatory stage of the workshop, where the objectives, logistics and dissemination activities are discussed, and the implementation of the workshop, including a summary of the event, the participant engagement and the main highlights. All materials used for the purposes of the workshop are embedded in the Appendixes of this deliverable.





## 1. Preparation

### 1.1 Date and medium

The first International Workshop of E-PROTECT II, titled “Preventing secondary and repeat victimisation of child victims of crime: Risk assessments and solutions in the best interests of the child”, was originally planned to take place between January-March 2021 (M11-M13 of the project) in Thessaloniki, Greece. The organiser of the workshop was the South East European Research Centre (SEERC), in close cooperation of the WP2 Leader, DCI Italy, and with the support of the remaining project partners. The initial proposal envisaged the workshop as a full day event, where invited speakers from the EU Justice Programme Member States would travel to Greece to share their experiences on child victim protection in person. This format was selected in order to ensure the delivery of speeches in a more direct fashion, enable networking and facilitate a productive discussion among panellists and participants.

Nevertheless, the strict social distancing measures, imposed in several countries due to the COVID-19 pandemic, rendered any face-to-face gatherings impossible. Therefore, it was unanimously decided by the consortium that the workshop would take place online, acknowledging both the strengths and weaknesses of this format. In terms of outreach, digital events offer a unique opportunity to achieve wider participation, not only in volumes but also in territorial coverage. Likewise, this format is more attractive to international speakers, as it is less time consuming and does not require travelling away from daily engagements. On the other end, however, online events are deprived of the networking and interactive character of real-life discussions.

The shift into an online format required further adjustments in the duration, structure, and technical aspects of the event. In search of an online venue to host the event, parameters such as reliance, popularity among prospective speakers and participants, as well as a plurality of available formats and integrated tools, led to the selection of the ZOOM platform. As online activities have generally proven to be significantly more effective when they remain short and focused, the original full-day plan was altered into two online seminars, of 3,5 hours of duration, scheduled to take place at the same time on two consecutive Wednesdays, namely on 17 and 24 March 2021, at 13.30-17.00 GMT+01.

### 1.2 Interpretation

To encourage professionals across Europe to take part in the workshop, the possibility to provide simultaneous interpretation was considered. Along with a solid and user-friendly environment, the ZOOM platform also offers the option to enable language interpretation in live events. Admittedly, not all official languages of the EU could be included in this already challenging task. Therefore,



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interpretation was made available in the four national languages of the partner countries, namely Greek, Italian, Bulgarian, and Romanian, from and to English – which was the working language of the workshop.

The interpretation tool proved to be valuable in more than one way. Invited speakers from the partner countries, who did not feel confident in sharing their thoughts in English, also benefited from this alternative. In three occasions, relay interpreting was employed to convey the information provided by the speaker in their native language (Italian and Bulgarian) into English and the rest of the national languages. Besides, participants had the ability to pose their questions or comments in any of the languages, thus removing the linguistic barrier and any hesitance or reluctance to engage in the discussion arising from that.

### 1.3 Agenda and speakers

The initial draft of the agenda was produced by DCI Italia, who suggested panel topics and identified possible speakers for every panel. Consistent with the two-day implementation of the workshop, a common structure was followed on each day, entailing a welcome speech, two panels divided by a 10-minute break and a concluding session (Appendix 1). The agenda was revisited multiple times by SEERC and DCI Italy and finalised with the valuable contribution by all partners, who activated their networking mechanisms to approach and invite prospective speakers. The invitation was addressed to professionals with extensive experience in the advocacy of child victims' rights, child protection and child friendly justice, both from partner countries and across Europe. The role of moderator for each panel was assumed by members of the partner organisations.

Ultimately, the event hosted 14 speakers from 9 EU Member States. Upon confirmation of their willingness to participate in the workshop, all speakers received an official welcoming email by the host, which embedded relevant information and a set of guidelines for the smooth delivery of their speech. The entire list of speakers is as follows:

- **Mr. Bragi Gudbrandson**, Member of the UN Committee of the Rights of the Child, former Director of the Iceland Government Agency for Child Protection and Pioneer of the Barnahus model in Iceland
- **Dr. Astrid Helling-Bakki**, Executive Director of the World Childhood Foundation Germany, Expert in the field of child protection
- **Mr. Fotis Tegos**, Social Worker and Juvenile Probation Officer, Office for Protection of Child Victims "Spiti tou Paidiou" in Thessaloniki, Greece
- **Ms. Claudia de Luca**, Juvenile Prosecutor, Prosecutor's Office for Minors in Naples, Italy



- **Ms. Ivanichka Slavkova**, Judge in Varna's Court of Appeal, specialized in the field of juvenile justice, Bulgaria
- **Ms. Roberta di Bella**, Lawyer, Member of the Juvenile Chamber of Genoa and Member of the National Union of Juvenile Chambers, Italy
- **Ms. Theoni Koufonikolakou**, Greek Deputy Ombudswoman for Children's Rights, chairperson-elect of the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC)
- **Dr. Maria Andriani Kostopoulou**, Member of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), Chairperson of the Council of Europe Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF)
- **Mr. Benoit Van Keirsbilck**, Director of Defence for Children International, Belgium and Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
- **Ms. Isabella Mastropasqua**, Director of Office II of Juvenile and Community Justice Department, Ministry of Justice, Member of the European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN), Italy
- **Dr. Stella Karapa**, Psychologist and child psychologist, expert at Forensic Psychology, Greece
- **Dr. Taina Laajasalo**, Chief Specialist and Forensic Psychologist from the Finnish Institute of Health, Finland
- **Ms. Sabrina Reggers**, Coordinator of the Family Justice Centre in Limburg, Belgium
- **Ms. Ruxandra Popescu**, Programme Director at Romanian Center for European Policies (CRPE)

#### 1.4 Dissemination

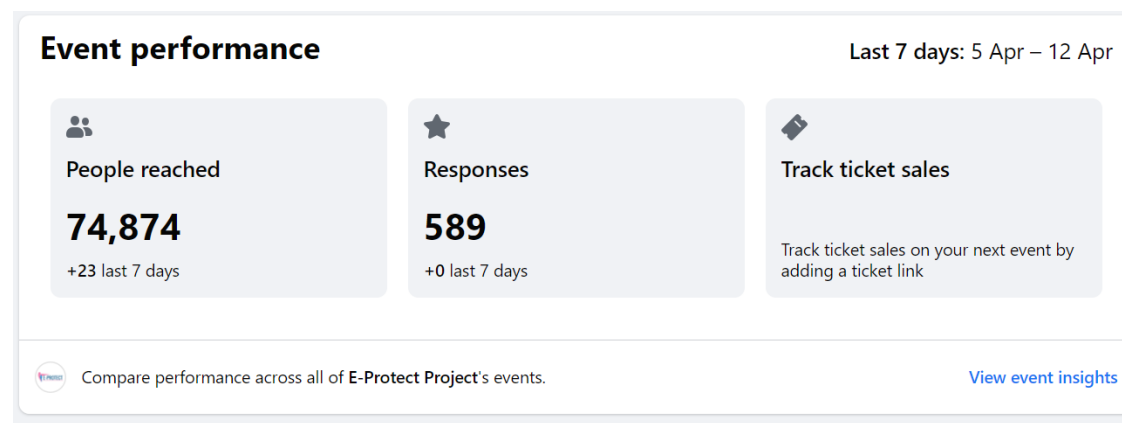
The Dissemination and Communication Strategy developed in the context of E-PROTECT II sets out an array of dissemination tools, both offline (such as posters) and online (such as social media posts), available to partners for the promotion of the project's activities.

Considering the online format and international character of the workshop, it was natural to launch a purely digital dissemination campaign in this occasion. The campaign was devised upon two main objectives: first, to target and secure the engagement of a large number of professionals working in criminal justice and the field of child protection; second, to attract participation beyond the partner countries, from the broader EU environment. Towards this end, the event was launched and promoted via the project's platform and social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn), as well as via the communication channels of the partners (Links to all dissemination activities can be found in Appendix II). The SEERC team designed the poster used for dissemination and enriched the social media and website posts with details on the whereabouts and objectives of the workshop, as well as links to the agenda and the registration form integrated in ZOOM (Appendix II).

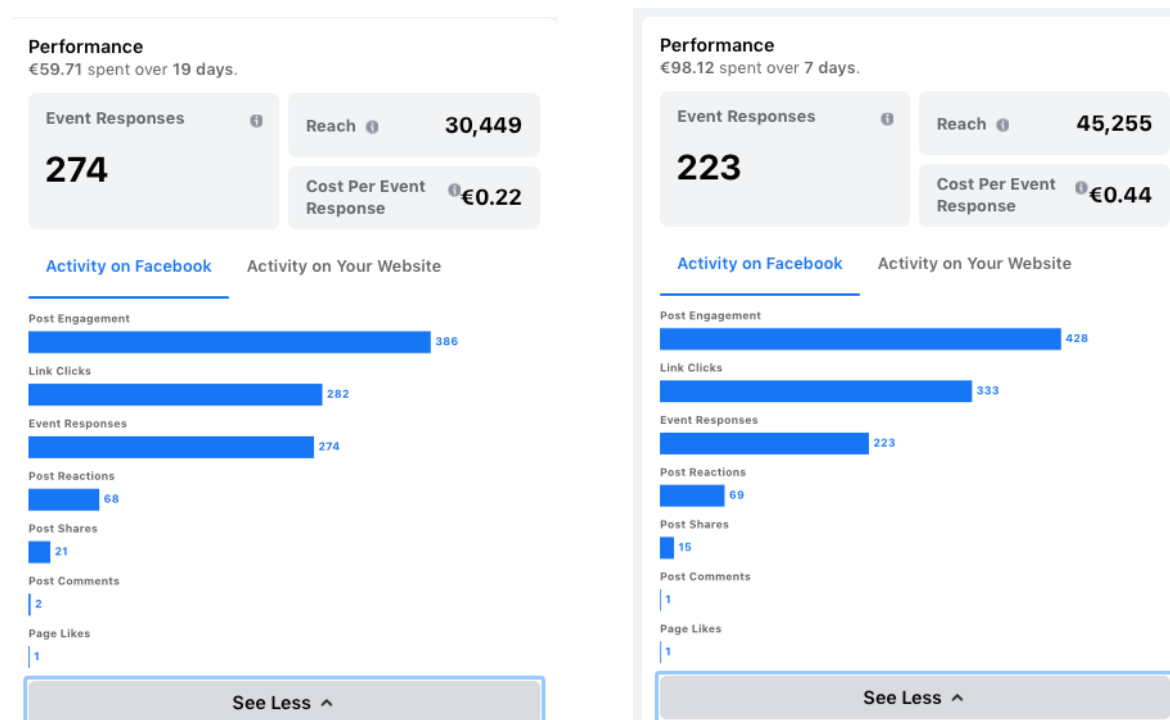


The Facebook event created for the first day of the International Workshop gathered in total **589 responses** and the outreach climbed to **74,874** (Figure 1). The event for the first day was boosted as a paid ad twice, as illustrated in the double screenshots analytics below (see Figures 2-3).

**Figures 1**



**Figures 2-3**



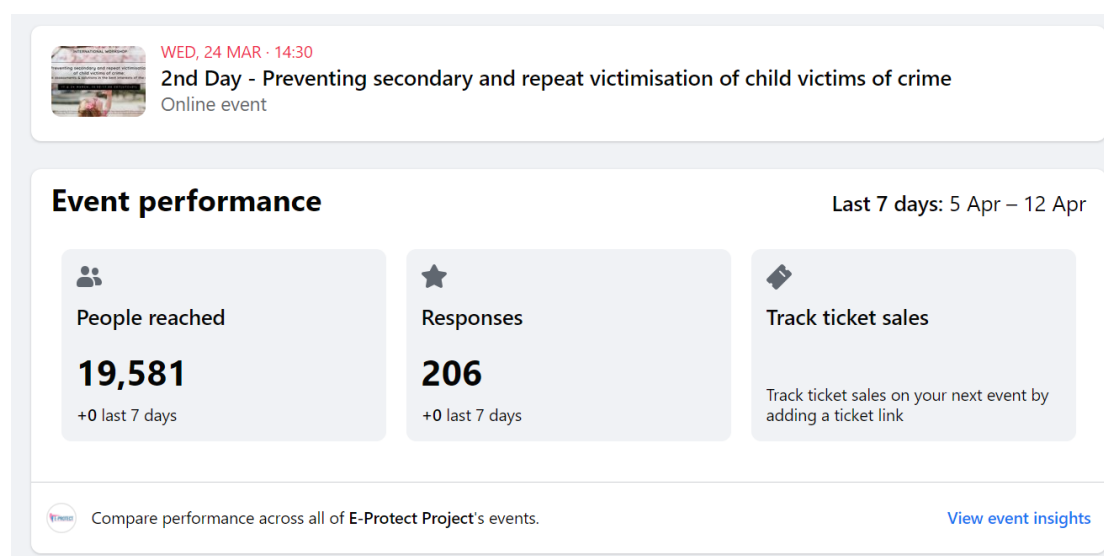
The Facebook event created for the second day of the International Workshop gathered in total **206 responses** and reached **19,581** targeted users (Figure 4). The lower number of responses compared to



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the first day is justified for two reasons. First, the registration form that participants had to complete in order to take part in the workshop was common for both days and, consequently, the majority of individuals who wished to join in the second day of the workshop had already been registered for both days from the beginning of the dissemination campaign. Second, the paid ad for the 24<sup>th</sup> March session had to be launched after the end of the first day of the workshop to avoid confusion. So, the paid ad for the second day was running only for seven days, whereas the one for the first day was running for 26 days (see Figure 5).

**Figure 4**

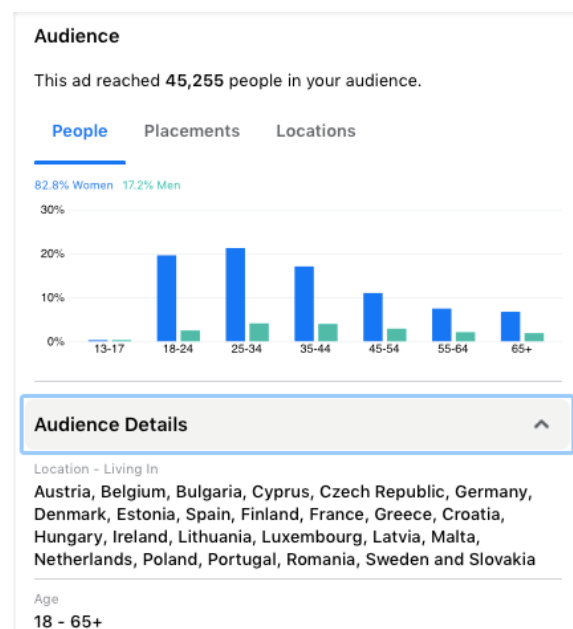


**Figure 5**



Regarding the audience, the target was people from all European countries (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Finland, France, Greece, Croatia, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden and Slovakia), who had the following interests: Human rights, Forensic science, ECPAT, Bar association, Judiciary, Volunteering, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Child protection, International Federation of Social Workers, Psychology, Parenting, Criminal justice, The Police, Children's rights, Psychologist, Child care, Child, Sociology, Lawyer, Childhood, Initiatives to prevent sexual violence, Professional Social Workers' Association, Network of Professional Social Workers, Health care, Forensic psychology, National Association of School Psychologists, UNICEF, National Association of Social Workers, Politics, Nursing, SOS Children's Villages, Child psychotherapy, Law, Teacher or Victims' rights, School: World Health Organization (WHO), Field of study: School psychology, Employers: Sociology, National Association of Social Workers, High School Teacher or UNICEF, Job title: Middle School Teacher, Child Protective Services Social Worker (CPS Social Worker) or Sexual Assault Social Worker and Parents: Parents (All), Parents with preschoolers (03-05 years) , Parents with early school-age children (06-08 years), Parents with teenagers (13-17 years) or Parents with preteens, aged 9-12 years (see Figures 6-7).

**Figures 6-7**



## 2. Implementation

### 2.1 Summary of the workshop

The first part of the workshop, which took place on 17 March 2021, was kicked-off by the host, Ms Faye Ververidou, Research Associate of SEERC on E-PROTECT I and II. In his welcome speech, SEERC's Director, Mr Nikos Zaharis, warmly thanked the speakers, the partners and the audience for their participation, made a short introduction of the mission and contribution of the E-PROTECT project, and highlighted the significance of a discussion on child victimisation in view of recent developments at national and European level.

The first panel of the day, moderated by the host, looked into the comprehensive approach of the Barnahus model for preventing secondary and repeat victimisation. As a key speaker Mr. Bragi Gudbrandson, Member of the UN Committee of the Rights of the Child and a former Director of the Iceland Government Agency for Child Protection, revealed the historic milestones that led to the development of the Barnahus model more than 20 years ago and its application across Europe. Following Mr. Gudbrandson's presentation, another expert in the field of child protection, Dr. Astrid Helling-Bakki, Executive Director of the World Childhood Foundation Germany, provided a comprehensive overview of the implementation of the Barnahus model in Germany, explained the details of effective management of such a challenging project and underscored the growing need for specialists in the area of child-friendly justice.

The second panel of the workshop was dedicated on the experience from the partner countries promoting solutions in the best interests of the child in the context of preventing secondary and repeat victimisation. The panel was moderated by Ms. Snezhana Krumova, Project Coordinator of E-PROTECT II. The session involved 4 experts in the field of juvenile justice who shared their practical experience. Firstly, Mr Fotis Tegos from the Office for Protection of Child Victims "Spiti tou Paidiou" at Thessaloniki shared some valuable insights on the challenges regarding the implementation of the Barnahus model in Greece, and the recent efforts to promote the operation of the structure in Thessaloniki, the second largest city in the country. Afterwards, Juvenile Prosecutor Claudia de Luca from Italy shared her thoughts on the challenges she has faced while working with minor victims, emphasizing on the cases where juvenile perpetrators carry also the victim's identity.

The panel discussion continued with Judge Ivanichka Slavkova from Varna's Court of Appeal in Bulgaria, who focused on the national methodology with respect to preserving the best interest of the child victim. The speaker also revealed some interesting aspects regarding the operation of the so called "Blue Rooms" which are used for hearings of child victims, raising questions on their value in the implementation of the national methodology. The last panellist Roberta di Bella, Member of the Juvenile Chamber of Genoa and Member of the National Union of Juvenile Chambers in Italy, looked



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at the role that lawyers play in the child protection system, underlining relevant provisions of the Italian legislation which guarantee the adequate representation of the child before the court. Upon concluding with their intervention, panelists were invited to answer questions or address comments expressed by attendees or other discussants, in order to engage in a fruitful dialogue and draw valuable conclusions before the end of the first day.

The second part of the workshop started with a warm welcome and some introductory words from Professor Panayiotis Ketikidis, Vice Principal for Research and Innovation in the University of York Europe Campus. Professor Ketikidis greeted all participants and underlined the great importance of conducting such events on the topic of child friendly justice in the context of the need for sustained and continuous efforts in the field.

After the introduction, the first panel, moderated by the host Ms Ververidou, was devoted to the International, European and National standards concerning the risk assessment of child victims of crime. Ms Theoni Koufonikolakou, Deputy Ombudswoman for Children's Rights in Greece, initiated an inspiring discussion by elaborating on the institutional gaps in the Greek practice and recommending concrete legislative, administrative and structural reforms to safeguard the best interests of child victims of crime in the country. Adopting a European perspective, the second panelist Dr Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou, Member of GREVIO, delivered a staggering speech on risk assessment in cases of gender-based and domestic violence against women, emphasizing the need for the elaboration of a common procedure and the promotion of multiagency cooperation.

From an international viewpoint, the presentation of Mr Benoit Van Keirsbilck - Director of Defense for Children International in Belgium and Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child-, yielded insights on the normative framework and the practice of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, with a focus on the existing risks with respect to child victims of intra-family and gender-based violence as well as the possible solutions in the best interests of the child. Finally, Ms. Isabella Mastropasqua from the Juvenile and Community Justice Department of the Ministry of Justice – Italy presented the national perspective on the implementation of international standards, underlining the role and the responsibility of the social services in conducting the risk assessment in cases of child victims of crime.

In a twist, the final panel of the workshop, moderated by Ms Ruxandra Popescu from the partner organisation CPRE, which focused on approaches and methods during risk assessment of child victims of violence, followed a slightly different, circular structure. Dr Stella Karapa, who is a child psychologist and expert in forensic psychology, walked us through the stages of an intriguing recent case study from Greece in the course of criminal proceedings. The second panelist Dr Taina Laajasalo, Chief Specialist and Forensic Psychologist from the Finnish Institute of Health, introduced a holistic





multi-professional risk assessment method from Finland, which aims at the improvement of information flow among professionals involved in cases of child victims of crime. Following Dr Laajasalo, Ms Sabrina Reggers from the Family Justice Centre in Limburg, Belgium, acquainted us with an innovative approach regarding the multidisciplinary risk assessment in the context of a Family Support Centre, pointing out its key advantages and sharing interesting facts about its implementation. Drawing upon the Finnish and Belgian paradigm, Dr Stella Karapa revisited the case study to comment on the potential implementation of these best practices in the Greek context, sharing her final thoughts on the concept of a child-friendly justice system. The workshop was concluded with the enlightening presentation of the methodology on the Individual Needs Assessment, developed in the framework of E-PROTECT I, by Ms Ruxandra Popescu. Screenshots of all speeches can be found in Appendix III of this report.

## 2.2 Main highlights

**- The legal framework on children's rights should be coherent and updated to remain in line with the European and international standards.** The first step to reconstruct a flawed system on child protection is to revisit the relevant legislation and introduce necessary reforms. The adoption of regional and international legal instruments related to the rights of child victims of crime, such as the Victims' Directive of EU, the Istanbul Convention of the Council of Europe or the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child should naturally be accompanied by amendments in pertinent laws to avoid ambiguities, waive conflicting provisions and offer a solid institutional framework.

**- Practice in the domain of child protection should be uniform and harmonised with the existing legislation.** Even in countries where a concrete body of legal norms is in place, huge discrepancies between law and its implementation continue to exist. This inevitably leads to a plurality of initiatives, uncoordinated practices and provision of services at local or national level, such as the case of Greece and Italy.

**- The Barnahus concept addresses institutional fragmentation by embracing all child victim support services under the umbrella of one structure.** Barnahus is a multi-agency and interdisciplinary response to the flawed existing approaches to child abuse and has since evolved to be recognised as a best practice to child victim support in Europe. The establishment of a Barnahus-inspired unit is founded upon the cooperation of key local and national stakeholders, who may share their experience and assume tasks and responsibilities related to their field of expertise. These structures



cannot operate without a clear mandate, sufficient funding, appropriate technical equipment and organisation at administrative level.

The model has been successfully transferred to other countries, with certain adjustments to be integrated in the relevant cultural, societal and economical context. As a striking example discussed in the workshop, the ‘Blue Rooms’ in Bulgaria, which share characteristics of Barnahus structures, have significantly reduced the risk of secondary or repeat victimisation to the minimum.

**- Reporting should be facilitated via a common, mandatory, and child-friendly procedure.** It has been observed that crimes against children often remain unnoticed, especially in cases of domestic violence. Dependency on the family, within which the offence may be taking place, immaturity of age, difficulty in identifying abuse are some of the reasons linked to the low volumes of reports on child victimisation. Anyone who suspects foul behaviour of any degree against children should be obliged to file a report to the competent authorities, as is already the case in countries like Finland. Also, the reporting channels should be well-established, easy to follow and child-friendly.

**- The right to information for child victims of crime should be respected and fulfilled.** Secondary victimization of children is frequently induced by a lack of knowledge with regards to reporting a crime and being involved in a criminal case. The Victim’s Directive explicitly stipulates that children are entitled to information on their rights during and after the judicial proceedings, as well as on the documents related to their cases, translated with no charge if needed. Information should be provided in a comprehensible, child-friendly language, in accordance with the age and educational level of the child, with a view to convey a clear idea of the process. Apart from traditional practices, countries such as Italy have employed novel means to raise awareness of young people, through the design of a website that thoroughly explains child victim’s rights, offers a mapping of available support services and navigates the user into the criminal justice system.

**- Multi-disciplinary and multi-agency cooperation is the underpinning of a system promoting the best interests of the child.** In unanimity, all discussants in the international workshop highlighted that multi-agency collaboration is a decisive factor for improving the information flow and avoiding overlapping activities (such as repeated interviews) which are likely to lead to secondary victimization. Solidifying a network of communication and cooperation also offers solutions in cases of uneven distribution of workload among different child support services.



- **All professionals in the field of child protection must have relevant experience and be granted access to systematic, mandatory, and specialized training.** The obligation is not limited to those who maintain a regular contact with child victims, such as social workers and psychologists. Law enforcement authorities, judiciary, journalists who are following a child victim case and every person involved under any authority should be obliged to receive such training.

- **Procedural secondary victimisation is linked to shortcomings in the criminal proceedings.** Discussants raised concerns regarding the lengthy and at times multiple interviews of child victims by multiple professionals; frequent delays in the evaluation of the child's needs, the pre-trial stages and the date of the court hearing; and the lack of follow-up on the child victim after the conclusion of the judicial proceedings.

- **A uniform protocol for the personalised needs assessment procedure of the child should be put forward.** Individual needs assessment should take into account the personal characteristics of the child and the circumstances of the crime and culminate in the identification and classification of the potential risks. The procedure should follow a common structure, and it should be completed promptly, placing emphasis on the principle of the best interest of child.

- **Mapping the phenomenon of child victimisation is key in its prevention and attenuation.** The lack of data on the extent, nature and common elements of crimes against children has been identified as one of the major constraints in tackling the phenomenon. Thus, several discussants underlined the importance of allocating sufficient funding in research and activating an official mechanism to collect, analyse and compare statistics on child victims of crime in the national context.

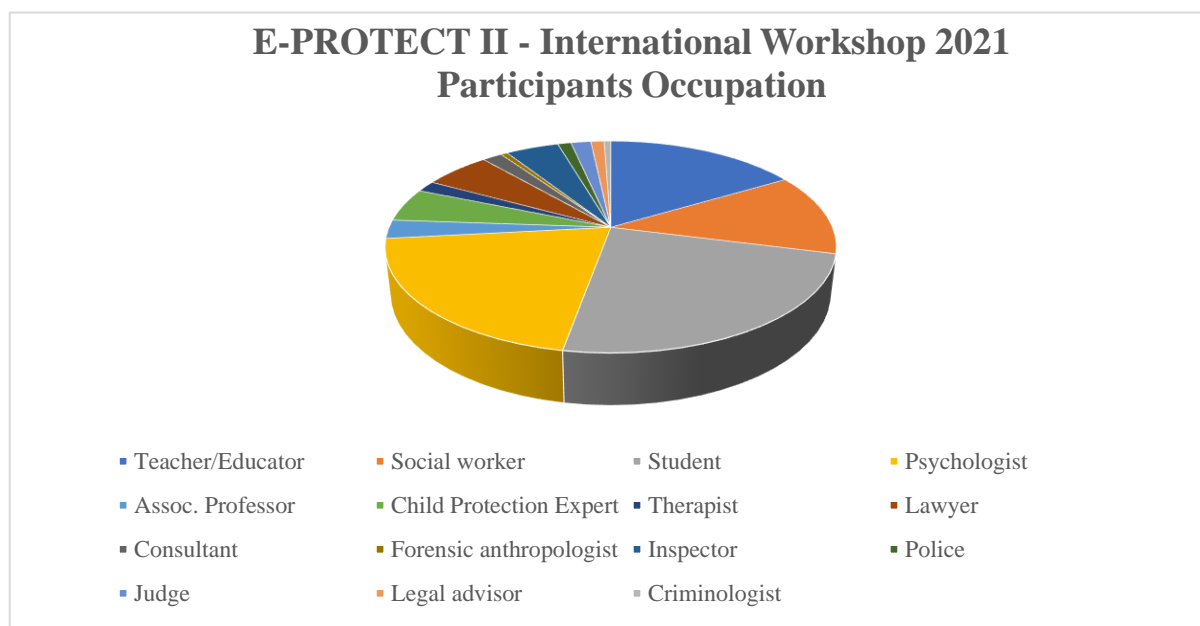
## 2.3 Aftermath

The turnout in the first international workshop was unprecedented. An outstanding number of 340 individuals attended the first day, while the second day gathered more than 260 attendees. The participants cover a wider range of occupations related to child protection, such as psychologists/therapists, social workers, teachers and academics, lawyers and legal advisors, judicial and law enforcement authorities and other child protection experts (See figure 8).

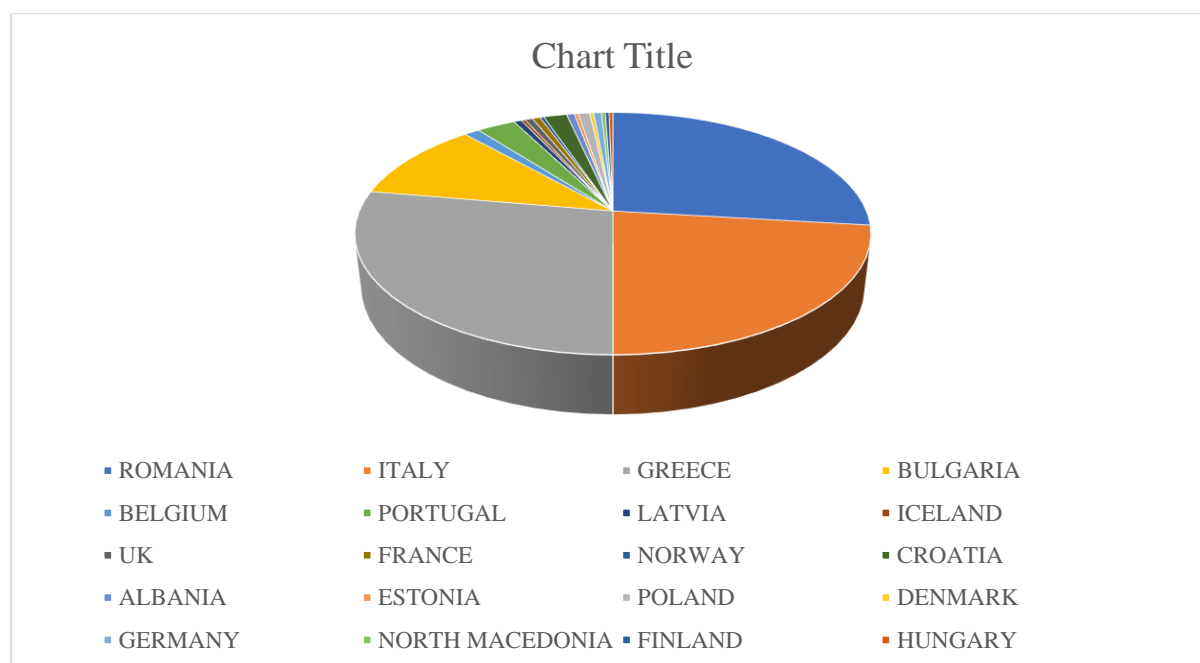
From a territorial scope, the workshop accomplished to engage participants from 20 European countries, attesting to its labelling as an international event (Figure 9).



**Figure 8**



**Figure 9**



After the end of the workshop, personalised certificates of attendance were sent to participants upon request (Appendix 1). All participants received the presentation slides of the speakers who provided a relevant consent, and they were encouraged to complete the evaluation form of the workshop. While a few participants wished there was more time to address questions, the overall feedback was



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overwhelmingly positive, with numerous comments praising the multi-disciplinary and interstate approach, the profound presentation of the Barnahus model, as well as the added value of the interpretation tool in better understanding complicated concepts and legal terminology.



### 3. Concluding remarks

At the core of the E-PROTECT II project lies the concept of adopting a holistic approach in the support of child victims before, during, and after the conclusion of the judicial proceedings. To accomplish this, there is a dire need of establishing a coherent child protection network at national and supranational level. The EU can foster an ideal environment for the development of such a network among Member States, through initiatives that promote a dialogue among professionals and raise general awareness on the phenomenon beyond national borders.

To that end, the International Workshop was an overtly ambitious and highly successful event. On its two-day course, it resulted in gathering more than 330 participants on the first day and more than 260 participants on the second, and it hosted 14 high-profile and inspiring discussants, who exchanged stimulating ideas on child protection structures, risk assessment procedures and prevention of secondary victimisation. In this way, the workshop achieved to bring together key stakeholders from the EU region, to strengthen the E-PROTECT brand and to leave an imprint on the promotion of the best interests of the child across Europe.



## Appendix I – Communication material

### Agenda



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### **Preventing secondary and repeat victimisation of child victims of crime: Risk assessments and solutions in the best interests of the child**

E-PROTECT II International Workshop – Agenda

**17 and 24 March 2021**

*The event will be held in English and organised on a zoom platform with simultaneous translation in the languages of the project partners (Bulgarian, Greek, Italian, Romanian)*

*Times in CET (UTC +01)*

**Registration is open at:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/joining/register/tZcuceCvrzkrHtz-ekwZa2lFA4mKpRiFpqU5>

#### **First Day – 17 March 2021**

- 13.30      **Joining the conference**
- 13.45      **Welcome and introduction to the webinar**  
Nikos Zaharis, Director of the South-East European Research Centre, Greece

#### **Panel 1: Safeguarding child victims of crime in the criminal justice system: The comprehensive approach of Barnahus for preventing secondary and repeat victimisation**

- 13.55      **Introduction to the panel by the Moderator**
- The Barnahus model for child-sensitive justice: A comprehensive approach to prevent risks of secondary and repeat victimisation - Introduction to the Nordic Barnahus model**  
Bragi Guðbrandsson, Member of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, Founder of Barnahus and former Director of the Government Agency for Child Protection of Iceland
- Challenges and solutions in setting up the "Childhood-Haus": Experience and lessons learned from the implementation of the Barnahus concept in Germany**  
Astrid Helling-Bakki, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation Germany
- 14.45      **Discussion**
- 15.00      **Break**



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ORGANIZATION FOR CHILD PROTECTION



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**Panel 2: Preventing secondary and repeat victimisation of children in the criminal justice system:  
Experience from partner countries promoting solutions in the best interests of the child**

15.15 Introduction to the panel by the Moderator

**The transition process to the Office for the Protection of Child Victims "Spiti tou Paidiou" in Thessaloniki**

Fotis Tegos, Social Worker-Juvenile Probation Officer, Office for the Protection of Child Victims "Spiti tou Paidiou" at Thessaloniki, Greek Ministry of Justice

**How risks of secondary and repeat victimisation, intimidation and retaliation create challenges for the prosecution of perpetrators of violence against children, Experience from Naples, Italy**

Juvenile Prosecutor Claudia de Luca, Italy

**Experience with the blue rooms in Bulgaria: Strengths and challenges**

Judge Ivanichka Slavkova, District Court Varna, Bulgaria

**The role of lawyers to reduce risks of secondary and repeat victimisation, intimidation and retaliation of child victims of crime in the context of criminal investigations and proceedings: Introducing an initiative of the Juvenile Chamber in Liguria to train legal professionals and law enforcement services on these matters.**

Roberta di Bella, Lawyer, President of the Juvenile Chamber of Genoa, Member of the National Union of Juvenile Chambers, Italy

16.30 Discussion

16.45 Concluding remarks and closure of the meeting



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## Second Day – 24 March 2021

13.30 **Joining the conference**

13.40 **Welcome and introduction to the webinar**

Panos Ketikidis, Vice Principal for Research and Innovation, CITY College, University of York Europe Campus

### **Panel 1: International, European, and National standards guiding the risk assessment of child victims of violence**

13.55 Introduction to the panel by the Moderator

**Institutional gaps and recommended reforms and policies to safeguard the best interests of child victims: The Greek Ombudsman's perspective**

Theoni Koufonikolaki, Deputy Ombudswoman for Children, Greece

**The work of GREVIO in promoting risk assessments in accordance with the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention**

Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou, Member of GREVIO

**Risks of child victims of intra-family and gender-based violence and solutions in the best interests of the child: Experience from the monitoring work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child**

Benoit Van Keirsbilck, Director of Defence for Children International – Belgium, Member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

**National perspective on the implementation of international standards guiding risk assessments for child victims of violence:**

Isabella Mastropasqua, Director Office II, Juvenile and Community Justice Department, Italian Ministry of Justice: The role of the social services within the criminal justice system (in Italian)

15.00 **Discussion**

15.20 **Break**

### **Panel 2: Risk assessment of child victims of violence: Approaches and methods**

15.30 Introduction to the panel by the Moderator

**Case study SK: Methods for risk assessment throughout the criminal procedure**

Stella Karapa, Forensic expert witness, Psychologist-Child Psychologist (MSc, PhD) Addiction Treatment Counsellor, Greece

**LASTA – A multi-professional risk assessment method from Finland**

Taina Laajasalo, Chief Specialist and Forensic Psychologist, Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare

**Multi-disciplinary risk assessments in the context of a Family Support Centre**

Sabrina Reggers, Family Justice Centre in Limburg, Belgium

**Case study SK: How best practices from Finland and Belgium could have inspired a more effective approach: final thoughts towards a child friendly justice system**

Stella Karapa

16.20 **Discussion**



LAW AND LIBERTY  
FOUNDATION



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- 16.40 **Individual assessment of child victims of crime: Methodology E-PROTECT**  
Ruxandra Popescu, Romanian Centre for European Policies (CRPE)
- 16.50 **Concluding remarks and closure of meeting**

#### About E-PROTECT II:

E-PROTECT II fosters collaborative multi-stakeholder action in support of the full transposition and application of the EU Victims' Rights Directive (2012/29/EU) in relation to child victims of crime. The main objective is to promote a child-centred and rights-based methodology for the individual assessment of child victims of crime, in accordance with articles 22-24 of the Directive.

From 2020 to 2022, the E-PROTECT partners are rolling out a series of events at national, bilateral and European levels to promote a child rights-based approach to the individual assessment of child victims of crime. In a partnership learning exercise, this series of webinars and meetings engage officials and professionals providing services for child victims of crime in law enforcement and the judiciary, social welfare and child protection, health care and education services and other relevant fields.

#### Information and contacts:

E-PROTECT website: <http://childprotect.eu>

**Resources for download:** The methodology for the [individual assessment](#), European and national reports on the individual assessment and [other resources](#), including translations in Bulgarian, German, Greek, Italian and Romanian. The [E-PROTECT video](#) introduces the individual assessment of child victims.

Visit the [project website](#) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) for further information.

Join the [E-PROTECT network](#) of child protection professionals on the project's virtual platform!

E-PROTECT II is implemented from 2020 to 2022 by [the Law and Internet Foundation in Bulgaria](#); the [South East European Research Centre](#) in Greece; [Defence for Children International – Italy](#) in collaboration with the [Department for Juvenile and Community Justice of the Ministry of Justice](#), Italy; and the [Romanian Centre for European Policies](#)



LAW AND INTERNET  
FOUNDATION  
FOR CHILD PROTECTION



CENTRAL BOARD  
OF EUROPEAN  
POLICIES  
**CRPE**  
RESEARCH, POLICY, ANALYSIS, COOPERATION



  
*Ministero della Giustizia*  
DIPARTIMENTO PER LA GIUSTIZIA MINORILE E DI COMUNITÀ



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## **Emails to participants**

### ***1. Greek version email to participants***

Καλησπέρα σας,

Στο πλαίσιο του έργου E-PROTECT II, το οποίο πραγματοποιείται με τη χρηματοδότηση της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής και έχει ως στόχο την ενίσχυση της προστασίας ανηλίκων θυμάτων εγκληματικότητας, έχουμε την χαρά να σας προσκαλέσουμε **στο πρώτο διεθνές μας συνέδριο με θέμα "Preventing secondary and repeat victimisation of child victims of crime: Risk assessments and solutions in the best interests of the child"**, το οποίο θα λάβει χώρα διαδικτυακά δύο διαδοχικές εβδομάδες, την **Τετάρτη 17 Μαρτίου** και την **Τετάρτη 24 Μαρτίου, 14.30-18.00 (ώρα Ελλάδος)**.

Στο συνέδριο συμμετέχουν εξέχοντες επαγγελματίες στον χώρο της παιδικής προστασίας, προερχόμενοι από διάφορα κράτη-μέλη της ΕΕ, οι οποίοι θα μεταφέρουν τις εμπειρίες τους για την δημιουργία ενός διεθνούς, πολυδιάστατου και πολυτομεακού διαλόγου αναφορικά με την προστασία των ανηλίκων θυμάτων από τη δευτερογενή και επαναλαμβανόμενη θυματοποίηση τους. Για περισσότερες πληροφορίες σχετικά με το πρόγραμμα, αλλά και με τους ομιλητές που θα λάβουν μέρος στο συνέδριο, παρακαλώ βρείτε [εδώ](#) την ατζέντα του συνεδρίου, όπως έχει διαμορφωθεί μέχρι σήμερα. Το συνέδριο θα λάβει χώρα **στα αγγλικά, με ταυτόχρονη παροχή διερμηνείας στα Ελληνικά**, καθώς και σε άλλες τρεις γλώσσες (Ιταλικά, Ρουμάνικα, Βουλγάρικα).

Το συνέδριο είναι δωρεάν, απαιτείται όμως εγγραφή [εδώ](#).

Σας αναμένουμε στο συνέδριο.

Με εκτίμηση,

E-PROTECT II



## **2. English version email to participants**

Dear participant,

This is a kind reminder for the upcoming International Workshop titled "Preventing secondary and repeat victimisation of child victims of crime: Risk assessments and solutions in the best interests of the child", the first session of which shall take place tomorrow, Wednesday 17 March, at 13.30-17.00 (GMT+01 Rome). Please note that this is 14.30-18.00 (GMT+02 Athens, Bucharest, Sofia). The workshop is organised in the framework of the E-PROTECT II project, funded by the Justice Programme of the European Commission, whose main objective is to promote a child-centred and rights-based methodology for the individual assessment of child victims of crime, in accordance with EU Victims' Rights Directive (2012/29EU).

Please find enclosed the final agenda of the event. We would like to encourage you to log in five minutes earlier, as the workshop will start exactly at 13.30.

You may join the workshop by using the link that has been sent to you in the confirmation email upon registration.

### **Interpretation process (please read carefully)**

On the bottom of your ZOOM window, you will find the meeting controls. There, you shall see the globe icon for Interpretation. Please click on it and choose the language that you wish **to hear** throughout the event. Make sure that you choose the language of your preference.

If you do not wish to hear the original audio at low volume on the background, click on Mute Original Audio, right below the language options (please find attached the instructions in visual version).

Please make sure that you keep your microphones and cameras off for the duration of the workshop. In the end of every panel there will be a Q&A session, during which you are strongly encouraged to address your questions or comments to the speakers. You may do so in the chat or by requesting permission to open your microphone and pose the question orally. If you wish to pose a question in a language other than English, please do so in writing, so that a member of our team can translate the question in English. Finally, certificates of attendance can be provided upon your request, after the end of the workshop.

Feel free to contact the SEERC team of E-PROTECT for any further information to: [fververidou@seerc.org](mailto:fververidou@seerc.org) or [elketikidi@seerc.org](mailto:elketikidi@seerc.org)

Looking forward to seeing you tomorrow!

Kind regards,

E-PROTECT Team



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### ***3. Email to participants for evaluation form***

Dear participant,

The E-PROTECT Team would like to warmly thank you for your participation on the International Workshop titled "Preventing secondary and repeat victimisation of child victims of crime: Risk assessments and solutions in the best interests of the child".

Powerpoint presentations will be sent to all the participants. Certificates of attendance will be sent to those you have sent a request through email at [eprotect@seerc.org](mailto:eprotect@seerc.org)

We would like to kindly ask the participants who took part in the workshop to fill in the evaluation form [here](#). Your contribution is very important in order to improve our work.

We will be very happy to see you again at E-PROTECT upcoming events in the future.

If you want to learn more about the E-PROTECT project and receive information about future webinars and activities, follow us on social media.

[Website](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

Kind regards,

E-PROTECT Team



## **Email and guidelines for speakers**

### ***1. Email to speakers***

Dear speaker,

It is a particular pleasure for us to welcome you to the International Workshop Preventing secondary and repeat victimisation of child victims of crime: Risk assessments and solutions in the best interests of the child. The workshop is hosted by the South-East European Research Centre in Greece and takes place on 17 and 24 March 2021 in the context of the E-PROTECT II project. Thank you very much for accepting our invitation to speak at this event!

Please find attached the agenda of the workshop.

We would like to ask you to kindly register your participation at the following link <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/ztZuuceCvrzkrHtz-ekwZa2lFA4mKpRiFpqU5>, as we require the informed consent of all speakers and participants to enable the video-recording of the event. The recording is merely for documentation purposes considering the online format of the workshop and will not be shared or published. Thank you very much in advance for your understanding and collaboration.

We have allocated .... minutes for your speech on 17/24 March 2021. The event offers simultaneous interpretation in the languages of the four project partner countries (Bulgarian, Greek, Italian, Romanian). To facilitate the work of the translators, we would like to ask you to speak slowly during your presentation, to make sure that your microphone is set at maximum volume and to kindly share with us in advance your PowerPoint presentation, if you use one, or any other written material that you may wish to use during your speech as early as possible and ideally by 15/22 March.

In addition, we would also like to ask you to kindly send us a short biography to facilitate your introduction during the panel.

If we can do anything to facilitate your participation and speech, or if you have any questions, please do let us know.

We look forward to seeing you soon online!

Kind regards,

Faye Ververidou



## 2. Guidelines for speakers

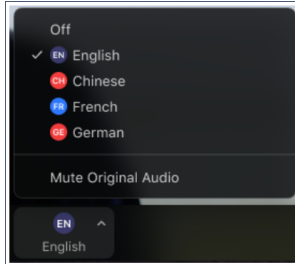
### Interpretation

The event offers simultaneous interpretation in the languages of the four project partner countries (Bulgarian, Greek, Italian, Romanian). In the meeting controls on the bottom part of your window, there is the globe icon for *Interpretation*. Please click on the language you wish to hear and speak to. Do not choose the option Off.

1. In your meeting/webinar controls, click **Interpretation**.



2. Click the language that you would like to hear.



3. (Optional) To hear the interpreted language only, click **Mute Original Audio**.

**\* Please make sure that you have downloaded the latest version of ZOOM in your device, and that you log in from the application, not your browser, in order to have access to the interpretation feature.**

### Presentation

To facilitate the work of the interpreters, we would like to encourage you to do the following:

- Send us your powerpoint presentation or any other visual material/text you intend to use during your speech at your earliest convenience, in order to forward it to the interpreters.
- To help keep background noise to a minimum, make sure you mute your microphone when you are not speaking.
- Please speak slowly during your speech and set your microphone at maximum volume.
- We encourage all speakers to use a headset with integrated microphone (or a USB desktop microphone if they have it) when delivering their speeches. This is to ensure that the sound quality interpreters receive is good enough to provide an accurate translation and to get less tired.
- We recommend that you use an Ethernet instead of WiFi connection, where possible, as it is much more stable and also contributes to sound and video quality.
- In the end of every panel, there is a discussion-Q&A session, during which the moderator will encourage participants to pose questions on the speakers, either orally or in writing. In case there are questions in national languages, the respective interpreter shall translate the question in English, and the answer back to the national language.
- Finally, we would like to kindly ask that you log in 15 minutes before the beginning of the workshop, to make sure that there are no technical issues.



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## Certificate of attendance template



It is certified that

participated in the virtual event of the E-PROTECT project

**"Preventing secondary and repeat victimisation of child victims of crime:  
Risk assessments and solutions in the best interests of the child"** implemented within the framework of the EU Justice Program  
which took place on

17 & 24 March, 2021



Nikos Zaharis  
Director, South East European Research Centre



Funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



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## Appendix II – Online dissemination campaign

### Event poster



### Project's website and social media accounts

#### **E-PROTECT website**

<http://childprotect.eu/#/en/news/140/save-the-date-e-protect-international-workshop>

<http://childprotect.eu/#/en/news/142/day-1-of-the-international-workshop-e-protect-ii-was-held-and-it-was-inspiring>

<http://childprotect.eu/#/en/news/143/2nd-day-of-the-e-protect-ii-international-workshop-was-held-on-the-24th-of-march>



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<http://childprotect.eu/#/en/events/141/international-workshop-preventing-secondary-and-repeat-victimisation-of-child-victims-of-crime>

### **Facebook**

<https://www.facebook.com/events/887909185396375/>

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1176275079457993/>

<https://www.facebook.com/eprotectproject/posts/3749808168466485>

<https://www.facebook.com/eprotectproject/posts/3774903095956992>

### **Twitter**

<https://twitter.com/eprotecteu/status/1366462540298018816>

<https://twitter.com/eprotecteu/status/1372205403753361411>

<https://twitter.com/eprotecteu/status/1374031572756742146>

<https://twitter.com/eprotecteu/status/1376498448321679360>

### **LinkedIn**

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6770716258460565504>

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6777970489454301186>

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6779796122702491648>

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6782263477823139840>

### **Partners' communication channels**

#### **SEERC**

<https://www.seerc.org/new/component/entities/?view=event&layout=details&id=417>

<https://www.seerc.org/new/component/entities/?view=news&layout=details&id=578>

<https://www.facebook.com/SOUTHEASTEUROPEANRESEARCHCENTRE.SEERC/posts/1404967596521995>

<https://www.facebook.com/SOUTHEASTEUROPEANRESEARCHCENTRE.SEERC/posts/1418127391872682>

#### **LIF**

<https://www.facebook.com/NetLawBG/photos/a.1832967080322536/2988546984764534/>

<https://www.facebook.com/NetLawBG/posts/2993903970895502>

<https://www.facebook.com/NetLawBG/posts/3004271036525462>

<https://www.facebook.com/NetLawBG/posts/3009179609367938>

<https://www.facebook.com/NetLawBG/posts/3010670709218828>

<https://www.facebook.com/NetLawBG/posts/3013543138931585>

<https://www.facebook.com/NetLawBG/posts/3015972878688611>

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<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6778646738472329216>

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6775758270670901248>



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<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6770720726665203712>  
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<https://twitter.com/NetLawBG/status/1374752336787206144>  
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<https://twitter.com/NetLawBG/status/1372214381338066944>  
<https://twitter.com/NetLawBG/status/1372169707386769413>  
<https://twitter.com/NetLawBG/status/1369968017476620292>  
<https://twitter.com/NetLawBG/status/1366694821176426503>

### **DCI- Italy**

<https://www.facebook.com/DefenceForChildrenItalia/posts/3672822112839208>  
<https://www.facebook.com/DefenceForChildrenItalia/posts/3682924608495625>  
<https://www.facebook.com/DefenceForChildrenItalia/posts/3690354691085950>  
<https://www.facebook.com/DefenceForChildrenItalia/posts/3705642182890534>  
<https://www.facebook.com/DefenceForChildrenItalia/posts/3705651216222964>  
<https://www.facebook.com/DefenceForChildrenItalia/posts/3725372887584130>  
[https://www.linkedin.com/posts/defence-for-children-international-italia\\_eprotect2-activity-6780486170301222913-Gabu](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/defence-for-children-international-italia_eprotect2-activity-6780486170301222913-Gabu)  
[https://www.linkedin.com/posts/defence-for-children-international-italia\\_victimisation-child-victims-activity-6770747472382881792-WBKV](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/defence-for-children-international-italia_victimisation-child-victims-activity-6770747472382881792-WBKV)  
[https://www.linkedin.com/posts/defence-for-children-international-italia\\_eprotect2-activity-6777975505078497280-7vly](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/defence-for-children-international-italia_eprotect2-activity-6777975505078497280-7vly)  
[https://www.linkedin.com/posts/defence-for-children-international-italia\\_eprotect2-rightsofthechild-childprotection-activity-6776077586461274113-vQli](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/defence-for-children-international-italia_eprotect2-rightsofthechild-childprotection-activity-6776077586461274113-vQli)  
[https://www.linkedin.com/posts/defence-for-children-international-italia\\_eprotect2-childprotection-rightsofthechild-activity-6773568866183454720-G0e7](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/defence-for-children-international-italia_eprotect2-childprotection-rightsofthechild-activity-6773568866183454720-G0e7)  
[https://www.linkedin.com/posts/defence-for-children-international-italia\\_save-the-date-workshop-internazionale-e-protectii-activity-6775015526461657088-SQFp](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/defence-for-children-international-italia_save-the-date-workshop-internazionale-e-protectii-activity-6775015526461657088-SQFp)



## Appendix III – Screenshots from the International Workshop

Ms. Ruxandra Popescu



**E-PROTECT**

**E-PROTECT – “Enhancing Protection of Children – victims of crime”**

**International workshop**

**24<sup>th</sup> of March 2021**

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Ms. Sabrina Reggers



**Vlaanderen is zorgzaam samen**


**Family Justice Center Limburg**



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**Dr. Taina Laajasalo**



**thl**

**LASTA - Multi-Professional Risk Assessment Method implemented in Finland**

E-PROTECT International Workshop 24.3.2021

Taina Laajasalo, Chief Specialist, Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare

**Ms. Theoni Koufonikolakou**



**Institutional gaps and recommended reforms and policies to safeguard the best interests of child victims**

—

The Greek Ombudsman's perspective



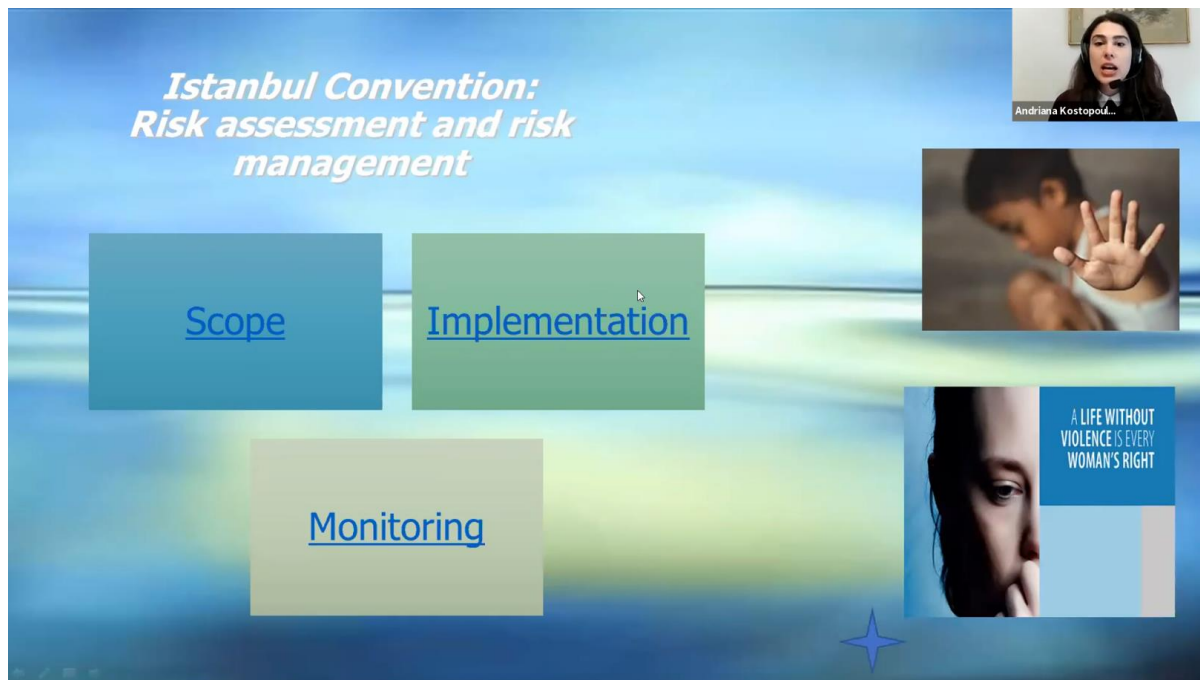


ΣΥΝΗΓΟΡΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΠΟΛΙΤΗ  
Συνήγορος του Παιδιού



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Dr. Adriana Kostopoulou



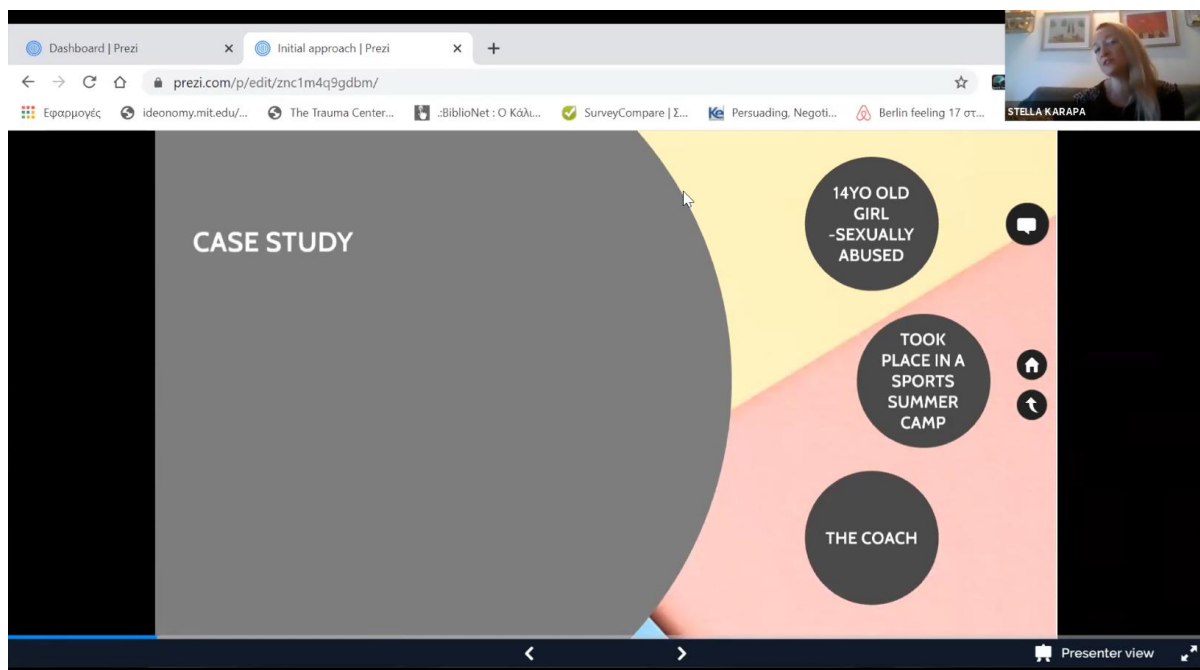
***Istanbul Convention:  
Risk assessment and risk  
management***

Scope      Implementation

Monitoring

A LIFE WITHOUT VIOLENCE IS EVERY WOMAN'S RIGHT

Dr. Stella Karapa



Dashboard | Prezi      Initial approach | Prezi

prezi.com/p/edit/znc1m4q9gdbm/

Εφαρμογές      ideonomy.mit.edu/...      The Trauma Center...      :BiblioNet : Ο Κόλι...      SurveyCompare | Σ...      Persuading, Negoti...      Berlin feeling 17 στ...

**CASE STUDY**

14YO OLD GIRL -SEXUALLY ABUSED

TOOK PLACE IN A SPORTS SUMMER CAMP

THE COACH

Presenter view



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Mr. Bragi Guobrandsson

## Child abuse – Adult justice



- 1) **Multiple interviews** in different locations and the corresponding re-victimization of the child-victim
  - Repeated interrogation within the justice system, in police stations and court settings adds to the traumatic experience
- 2) The months, even years of **waiting for the trials**, with one or even more appeals, puts the life of the child victim at halt and constant distress
- 3) **Hostile cross-examination**, intimidating, degrading, oppressive and traumatic to the child-witness, often in a language incomprehensible to the child and in an un-friendly environment
- 4) Lack of appropriate **therapeutic services** for the child victim and his/her family and non-availability in cases that don't meet the criteria of the burden of truth
- 5) Lack of expert knowledge and technology for **medical evaluation**, esp. in child sexual abuse cases

Bragi Guðbrandsson - Member of the UN CRC - bragi@uncrc.is

Dr. Astrid Helling-Bakki

### Challenges and solutions in setting up the „Childhood-Haus“

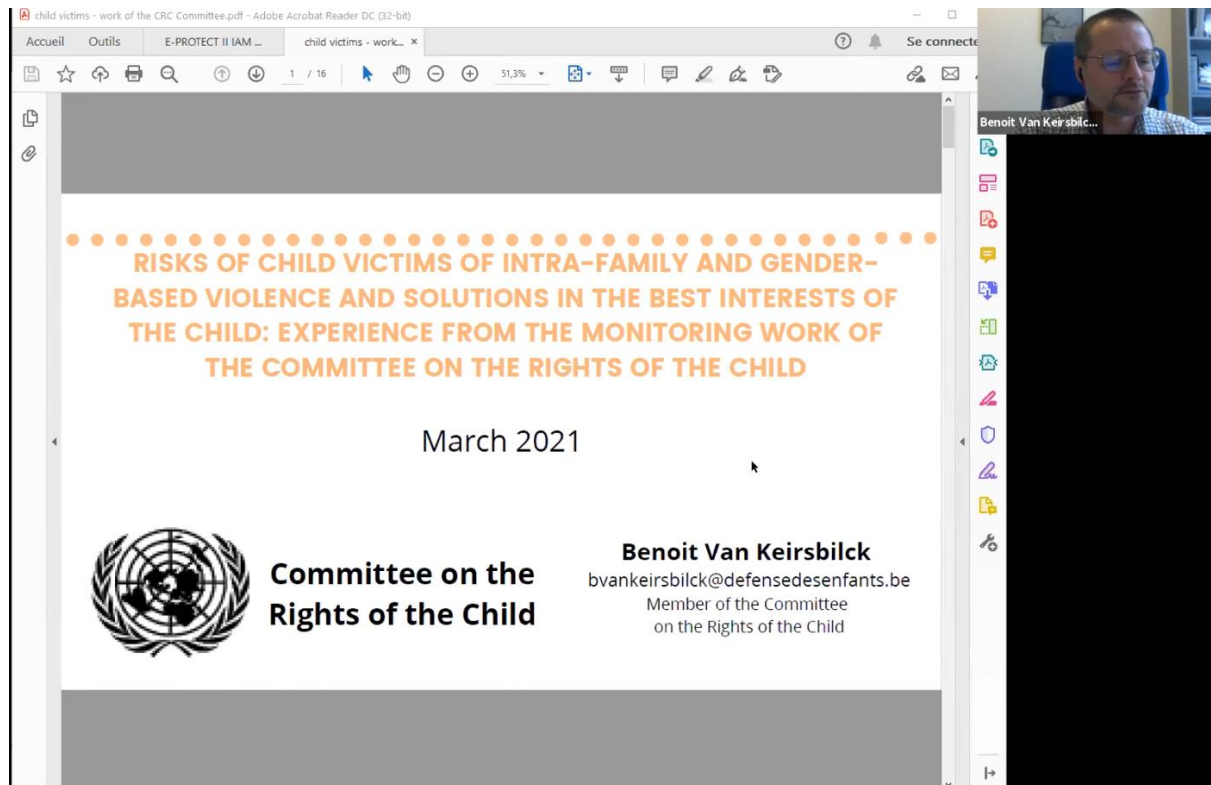
Experience and lessons learned from the implementation of the Barnahus Concept in Germany

17.03.2021  
Childhood Deutschland  
Dr. Astrid Helling-Bakki



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**Dr. Benoit Van Keirsbilck**



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## Appendix IV – List of participants & interpreters

No	Name	E-mail address	Occupation	Affiliation	Country
1	Gabriela Loredana Hrițcu	lory_hritcu@yahoo.com	Teacher	Liceul Regina Maria	Romania
2	Nadia Maria De Luca	nadiamaria.deluca@giustizia.it	Funzionario della professionalità di servizio sociale	U.S.S.M. di Catanzaro	Italy
3	Olga Tzouramani	tzouramani_olga@outlook.com	Criminologist, Psychologist & Psychotherapist	N/A	Greece
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This deliverable was funded by the European Union's Justice Programme (2014-2020) under Grant Agreement 878593. The content of this report represents the views of the author only and is his/her sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

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## Appendix V – Speakers’ presentations

The presentations are attached in the following order:

- 1. Bragi Guðbrandsson**, Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
- 2. Astrid Helling-Bakki**, Executive Director of the World Childhood Foundation Germany
- 3. Fotis Tegos**, Social Worker, Office for Protection of Child Victims "Spiti tou Paidiou", Greece
- 4. Claudia de Luca**, Juvenile Prosecutor, Prosecutor's Office for Minors in Naples, Italy
- 5. Ivanichka Slavkova**, Judge in Varna’s Court of Appeal, Bulgaria
- 6. Roberta di Bella**, Lawyer, Member of the Juvenile Chamber of Genoa, Italy
- 7. Theoni Koufonikolakou**, Greek Deputy Ombudswoman for Children’s Rights
- 8. Maria Andriani Kostopoulou**, Member of GREVIO and CDENF
- 9. Benoit Van Keirsbilck**, Director of Defence for Children International, Belgium
- 10. Isabella Mastropasqua**, Director of Office II of Juvenile and Community Justice Department, Italy
- 11. Stella Karapa**, Psychologist and child psychologist, expert at Forensic Psychology, Greece
- 12. Taina Laajasalo**, Chief Specialist and Forensic Psychologist, Finnish Institute of Health, Finland
- 13. Sabrina Reggers**, Coordinator of the Family Justice Centre in Limburg, Belgium
- 14. Ruxandra Popescu**, Programme Director at Romanian Center for European Policies (CRPE)



# Barnahus and it's proliferation in Europe

E-project II, Italy, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Bragi Guðbrandsson, Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

# Abstract

- Barnahus as a response to the shortcomings of traditional approaches to Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) in the European Justice system
- The foundation of Barnahus:
  - the child's narrative
  - the child-friendly and multidisciplinary approach
- Balancing the human rights principles of “fair trial” and the “best interest of the child”
- The proliferation of Barnahus in Europe



# Child abuse – Adult justice

- 1) **Multiple interviews** in different locations and the corresponding re-victimization of the child-victim
  - Repeated interrogation within the justice system, in police stations and court settings adds to the traumatic experience
- 2) The months, even years of **waiting for the trials**, with one or even more appeals, puts the life of the child victim at halt and constant distress
- 3) **Hostile cross-examination**, intimidating, degrading, oppressive and traumatic to the child-witness, often in a language incomprehensible to the child and in an un-friendly environment
- 4) Lack of appropriate **therapeutic services** for the child victim and his/her family and non-availability in cases that don't meet the criteria of the burden of truth
- 5) Lack of expert knowledge and technology for **medical evaluation**, esp. in child sexual abuse cases

# Child Abuse - Uniqueness of the Crime

- ✓ The **vulnerability** of the child victim
  - ✓ Child victims do not normally bring charges against their offenders
  - ✓ The “silent” crime, secrecy of the abuse
  - ✓ Child victims difficulties in disclosures
- ✓ The Perpetrator most often in the **Circle of Trust**
- ✓ **Lack or absence of evidence** other than the child's disclosure in child sexual abuse cases
  - ✓ Medical evidence in less than 10% of cases and only conclusive in less than 5% of all cases
  - ✓ Other hard evidence or witnesses other than the child victim's rarely exist

# Uniqueness of the Intervention

- ✓ Addressing Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is not only a judicial issue but requires multiagency intervention
- ✓ The child's victim's **disclosure** is the key for:
  - ✓ Ensuring the safety of the child
  - ✓ Providing assistance to the child victim with the aim of physical and psychological recovery
  - ✓ Uncovering the crime in terms of criminal investigation, prosecution and sentencing
  - ✓ Preventing the perpetrator from reoffending

# Multiple interviews — Harmful to the Child Victim

- ✓ All the different agencies: the Child Protection Service, the Medical Profession, the Police, Prosecution etc. need to have the child's account
- ✓ Repetitive interviews by many professionals in different locations can have very harmful effect for the child victim
- ✓ **Retraumatization — re-victimization**
  - ✓ Refers to painful/stressful re-experiencing of trauma as a consequence of sexual violence

Multiple interviews –

## Harmful for the Criminal Investigation

- ✓ Repetitive and unstructured interviews can distort the child's narrative
  - ✓ Suggestibility and leading and misleading questions
  - ✓ The child's disclosure becomes contaminated
  - ✓ Discrepancies in the child's story
  - ✓ The evidential value of the narrative diminishes
- ✓ Absence of a child-friendly facilities exacerbates the harmful experience of the child
  - ✓ High level of stress precludes optimal expression
  - ✓ Police stations or Hospitals: Wrong messages!

# The Emergence of Barnahus Concept

- ✓ Barnahus Iceland founded in 1998 rooted in the principles of child-friendly, multiagency and interdisciplinary features of the CAC model in the US with the overt aim of integrating:
  - ✓ The US - longstanding tradition of investigative approach in child protection and criminal justice
  - ✓ The great legacy of the Nordic welfare model and the principles of the UN CRC
  - ✓ And now promoted by the CoE, EU

# The UN CRC – guiding principles

The UN CRC,

## ✓ Article 3.1

“In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, **the best interest of the child** shall be a primary consideration”

## ✓ Art 12.2

“..the opportunity **to be heard in any judicial** and administrative proceedings affecting the child .....a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law”

# Multiagency collaboration- Under one roof

- ✓ The Gov. Agency for Child Protection
- ✓ The State Police
- ✓ The State Prosecution
- ✓ The Police Dep. in Reykjavik
- ✓ The University Hospital – Dep. of Pediatric and Dep. of child Psychiatry
- ✓ Association of the Directors of Local Social Services
- ✓ The Child Protection Services in Reykjavik





# The Barnahus in Reykjavik



# On arrival at Barnahus





# Child-friendly waiting rooms



# Barnahus

Medical Exams and Evaluation	Joint Invest. Interviews: court statements/ CPS interviews	Victim Therapy
Family Counselling/ Support	Consultation and advice to local CPS	Education, training and research

# Barnahus -

## Addressing the judicial adversities for children

- ✓ Harmonize the principles embodied in the **UN CRC** on the one hand and the Human rights principle of a “**fair trial**” on the other
- ✓ A child friendly arrangement for eliciting the child narrative at the **pre-trial stage**, enhancing **the evidential value** of the child’s testimony by avoiding **unduly delay** and applying evidence-based **interview protocol**
- ✓ By **audio-visual recording** the child’s testimony with the aim of avoiding repeated questioning during court hearings
- ✓ Under conditions required to ensure “the due process”, i.e. by representation of **the defence** and allowing for **cross-examination**

# Hearings (forensic interview) at the pre-trial stage

- ✓ The Court Judge ( **prosecutor** or **police**) is in charge of the procedure – the “**due process**”
- ✓ **The Defence**
- ✓ **The Prosecution**
- ✓ **The Police**
- ✓ **The Child Protection**
- ✓ **The Child’s Legal Advocate**



# Different legal framework

## ✓ The one interview model

- ✓ The interview is carried out under the auspice of a court judge
- ✓ Observed by the multi-agency team, the defence and the legal advocate for the child
- ✓ **Cross-examination** following the investigative interview

## ✓ The two interviews model

- ✓ Under the auspice of the prosecution
- ✓ The first interview with the multi-agency team without the defence
- ✓ **Supplementary interview** following the interrogation of the accused, including the defence and **cross-examination**



# Pros and Cons

## ✓ One interview

- ✓ **Pros:** a) only one interview for the child; b) presence of the judge
- ✓ **Cons:** a) police and the defence get the evidence at the same time; b) increased workload for judges

## ✓ Two interviews

- ✓ **Pros:** Accommodates better investigation because a) more information and b) more effective interrogation of the accused
- ✓ **Cons:** a) the child needs to give two interviews; b) lack of evidential immediacy due to absence of the judge

# Forensic interviews and cross-examination

- ✓ Forensic interviews – “evidence in chief”
  - ✓ Goal: maximize reliable information, minimize stress and contamination
  - ✓ Structured interview protocols, e.g. NICDH
  - ✓ Evidence based, e.g. suggestibility, memory, language - adapted to age and developmental stage of the child
  - ✓ Designed to enhance evidential validity of the child's narrative
- ✓ Trained forensic interviewers (child experts, police)
- ✓ Cross-examination: intermediated by the forensic interviewer in a neutral language and age appropriate language exploring alternative explanations
- ✓ Audio-visual recording, for use at main hearing

# Exploratory interviews

for the child protection services

Guidelines:

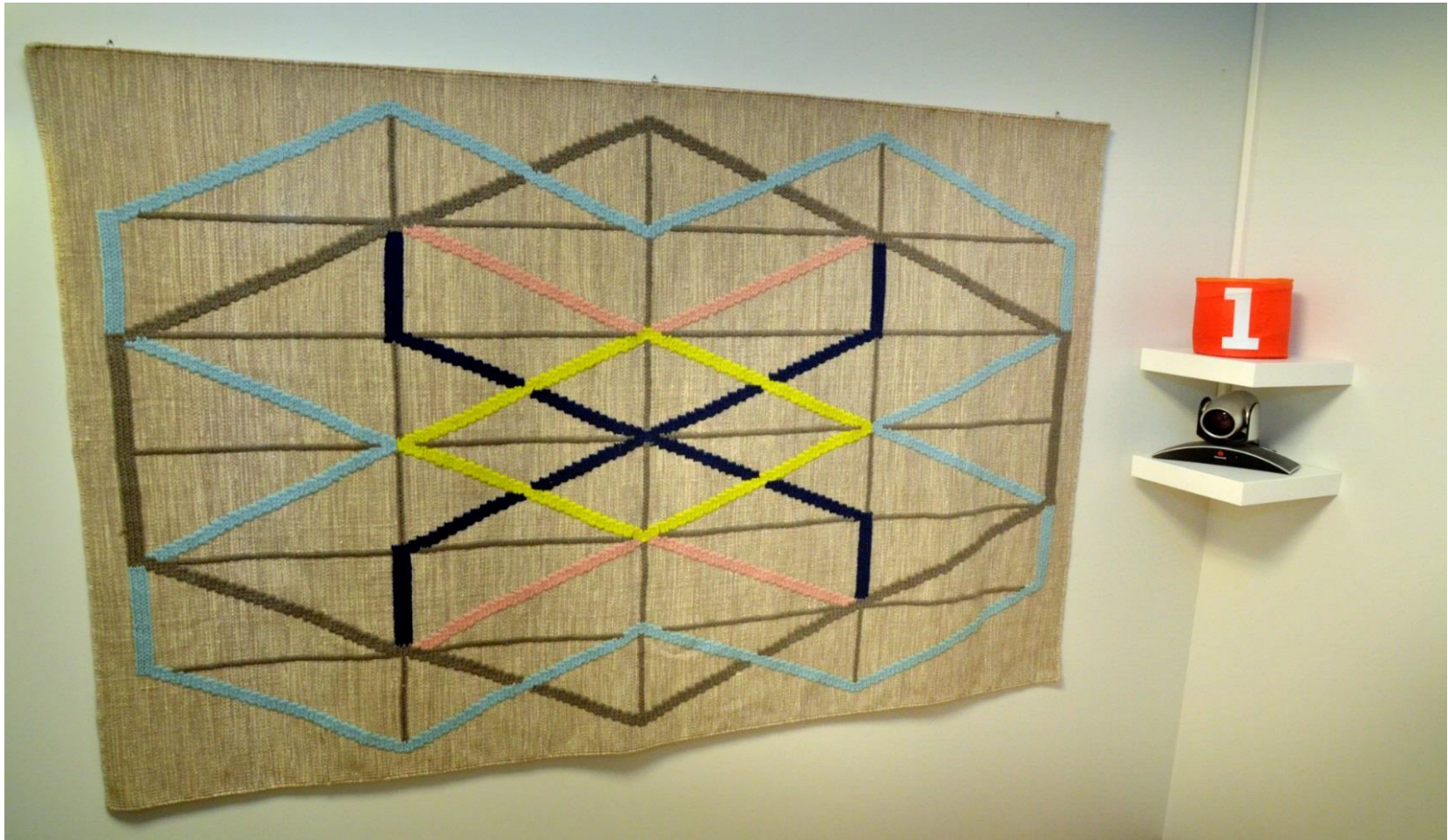
- ✓ Suspected abuse, e.g. inappropriate sexual behavior
- ✓ Disclosure is absent or very weak/ambiguous
- ✓ Offender has not been identified
- ✓ Offender is below the age of criminal responsibility(15 years)

# Interviewing room





# Camera in the interviewing room



# The monitoring room



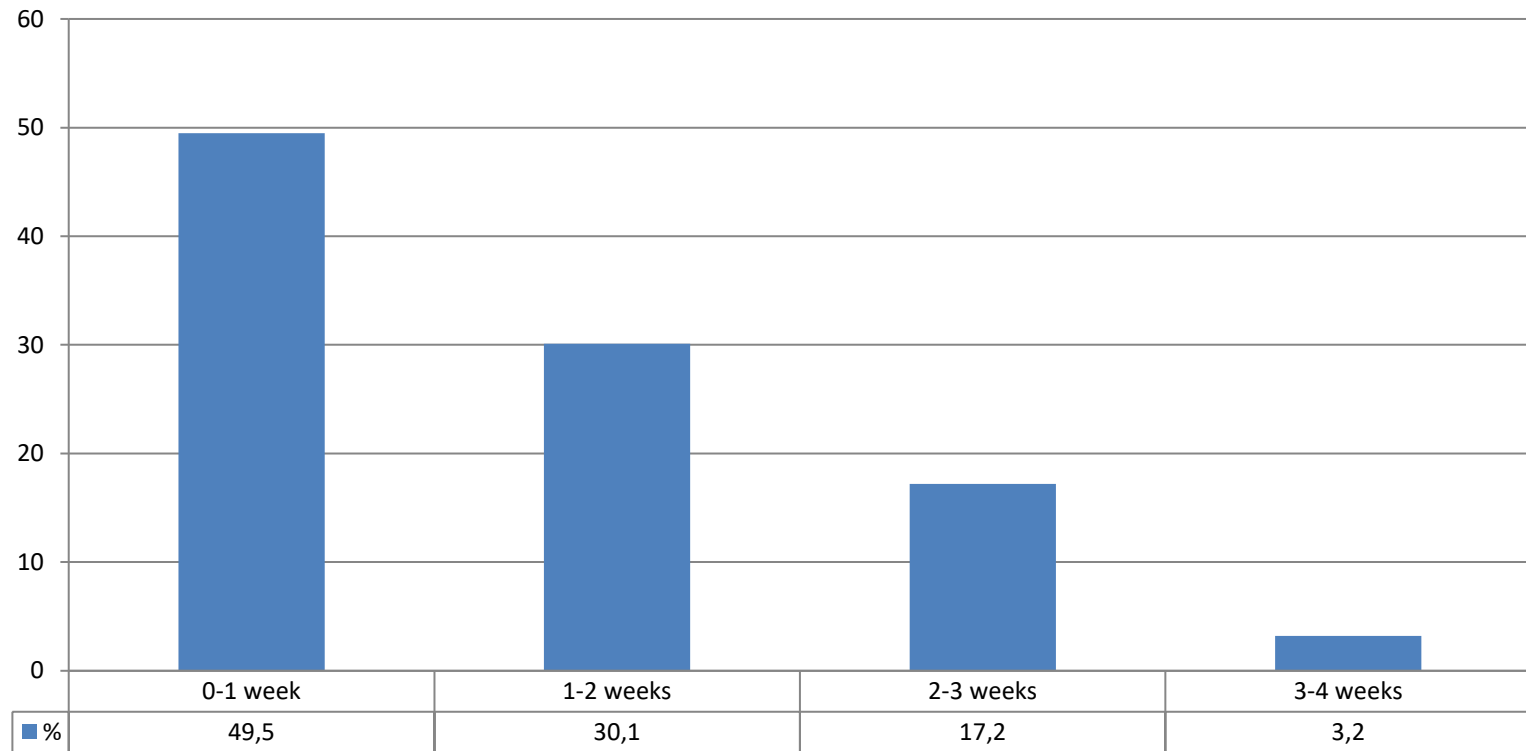


# Court session via IT - technology



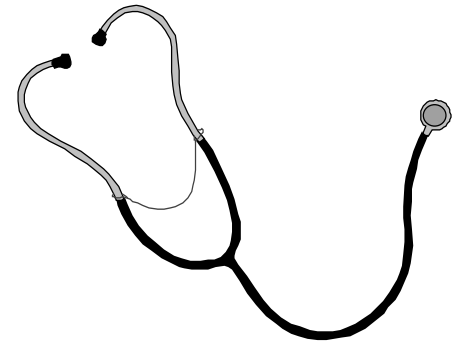


# Iceland: duration from the time a request is made for court testimony until it takes place



# Medical examinations – historical sexual abuse

- ✓ At the request of the Police, the CPS, the Child or the Parents
- ✓ Implemented by experienced paediatrician, a gynaecologist and a trained nurse
- ✓ A child friendly examination room
- ✓ The use of “video-colposcope” and it’s therapeutic value by active participation of the child
- ✓ Anaesthesia exceptional
- ✓ Acute forensic medicals performed at UH



# The Medical room



# Victim therapy - family counselling

- ✓ The child and the non-offending parent(s) receive (legal) counselling after the investigative interview
- ✓ Victim therapy can start soon after
- ✓ The dual role of interviewer/therapist excluded in individual cases
- ✓ The videotaped child's disclosure is used for initial assessment and treatment plan
- ✓ **TFCBT** (Trauma Focused Cognitive-behavioural) therapy – group therapy under way
- ✓ The therapists are generally required to submit reports and testify in court proceedings

# Barnahus, evolving approach

- ✓ Barnahus has assumed a key role in the Justice as well as Child Protection System of the Nordic Countries
- ✓ Allowing for difficulties of definitions, Barnahus can be found in 70 locations in Iceland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland the Baltic Sea States, Hungary, Cyprus, England, Ireland, Spain, and Germany and potentially more
- ✓ Recommended by international and professional bodies *inter alia*:
  - ✓ **Council of Europe**: the **Lanzarote Committee** and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Guidelines of Child-friendly justice (2010) etc.
  - ✓ Implementation supported by the **EU** through the **Promise project**
  - ✓ **ISPCAN**, the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect: The multidisciplinary award 2006; Save the Children 2002

# Barnahus in the European context:

## Diverse paths and implementation

- ✓ Paths of coming into being
- ✓ The role of the state, regional- and the local authorities
- ✓ The legislative framework
- ✓ Affiliations: social services/police
- ✓ Juxtaposition: responsibilities of partners
- ✓ Collaboration: from being structured to informal
- ✓ Target groups: victims sexual abuse or CAN generally
- ✓ Investigative interviews, arrangements, protocol
- ✓ Medical examination
- ✓ Treatment strategies

# Barnahus and legal reforms

- Voluntary or mandatory
- In all the Nordic states child statements are taken outside court setting and in practice in Barnahus
- Denmark, specific legal provision which mandates testimonies in Barnahus
- Iceland, the law stipulates testimonies to be taken in „child-friendly“ facilities
- Slovenia, draft Act on Barnahus mandates court proceedings in Barnahus
- Baltic states (including Poland) at the Judge´s discretion
- Who conducts the interview, police vis-á-vis child experts



# Lessons learned

- ✓ Barnahus is **not a recipe for the cook shop of the future** but rather brings us evidence-based **ingredients** to avoid re-traumatisation of child victims by child-friendly and multiagency response to child abuse
- ✓ Barnahus has proved to be **transferable across borders** and viable in different cultural, legal and social environments
- ✓ Evaluation studies have shown enhanced level of social awareness, prosecution and convictions as well as **better outcomes for child victims and their families**

# A milestone in evolution of Barnahus:

## The Promise Project:

- The first systemic attempt to bring together European states for the purpose implementing Barnahus
- **The European Barnahus Standards**
- The project has brought together professionals who have been generous in sharing their experience, wisdom and knowledge to develop strategy for the has enriched the conceptualization of Barnahus and deepened our understanding of how to ensure the transferability of the model accross cultures
- Created a professional network into the future
- Website: [www.https//barnahus.eu](https://barnahus.eu)



Thank you very much!

# Challenges and solutions in setting up the „Childhood-Haus“

Experience and lessons learned from the implementation  
of the Barnahus Concept in Germany

17.03.2021

Childhood Deutschland

Dr. Astrid Helling-Bakki

CHILDHOOD-HAUS

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# Agenda

Presentation 17.03.2021

## 1 – CHILDHOOD-HAUS IN GERMANY



## 3 – SOLUTIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED



## 2 – CHALLENGES



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# Development in Germany

From Barnahus to „Childhood-Haus“

- **Childhood as expert in Germany**  
**Partner in Promise 1+2**  
**Member of the European Barnahus Network**
- Childhood was founded in 1999  
as foundation against child sexual abuse and violence
- Childhood partners with local institutions to  
establish „Childhood-Haus“ centres all over Germany
- Financing via Childhood, other foundations,  
institutional partners and public funds
- Childhood as advocate for the Barnahus concept  
nationally and internationally



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# What is a „Childhood-Haus“?

## Trauma-informed approach

Childhood-Haus is the implementation of the Barnahus concept into the German system, following a multidisciplinary and trauma-informed approach.

- Centre for children that have experienced sexual and physical abuse
- Offers „under one roof“:
  - + medical/forensic investigation
  - + judicial proceedings
  - + psychological counselling
  - + consultations and support by social pedagogues
- Professionals working in the Childhood-Haus are representatives of: medicine, legal system, police, youth welfare, and psychology

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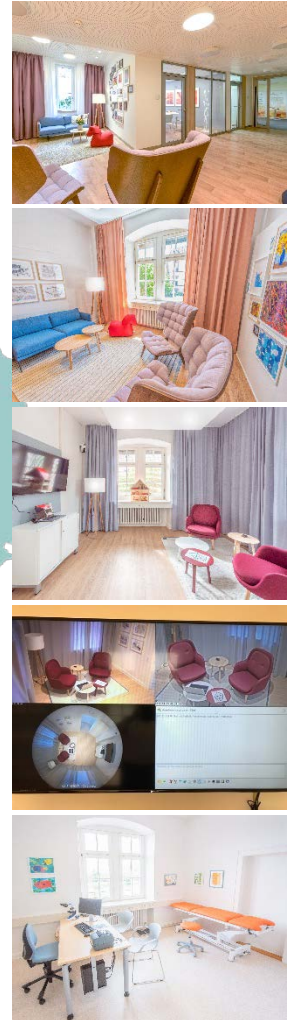
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# Childhood-Haus

## Status Quo of Implementation of Barnahus Concept

- Childhood-Haus opened:
  - in Leipzig in 09/2018
  - in Heidelberg in 09/2019
  - in Berlin in 09/2020
  - in Düsseldorf in 11/2020
- **Multiple additional openings** planned:
  - 2021: + 3 houses
  - 2022/23: + 10 houses
- Networking in 15 federal states (15/16)
- Projects are initially financed through funding by WCF, regional partners and federal state support



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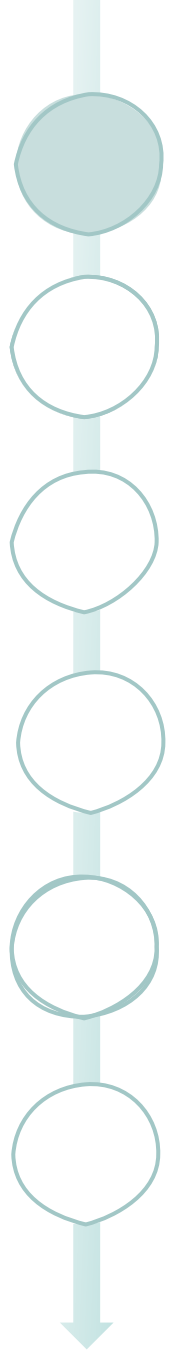
# Multi-Stage Model

in Implementation Process of Barnahus Model  
in German System

# Multi-Stage Model of Project Implementation

How to implement a Barnahus in Germany?

1. How did the **initial interest** evoke?  
*(existing structures, quality assurance of network,...)*



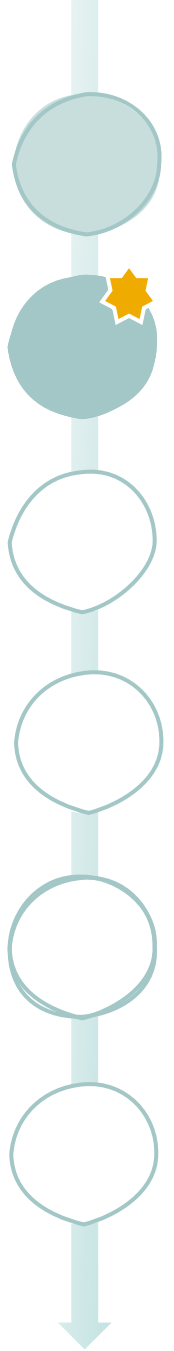
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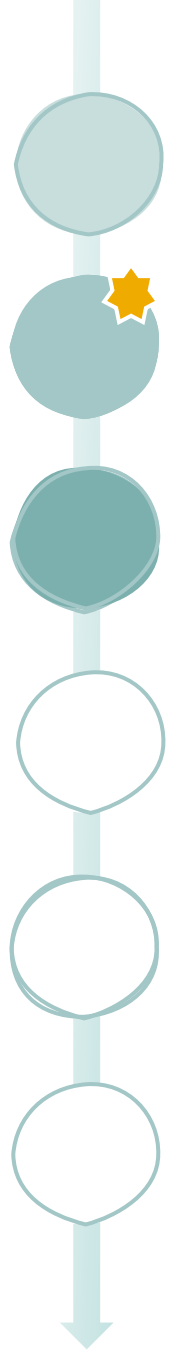
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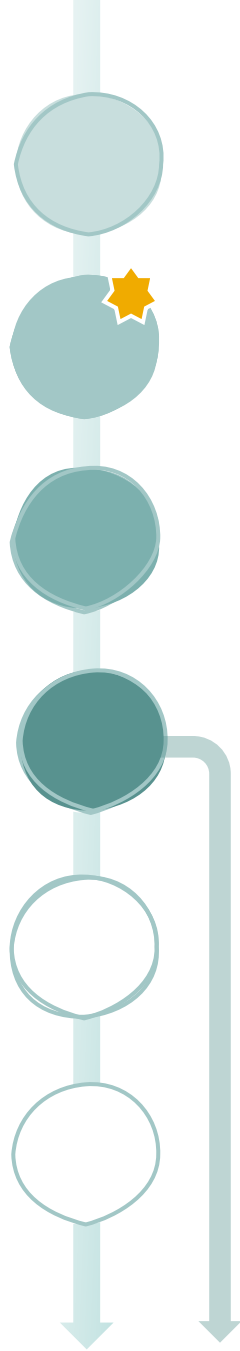
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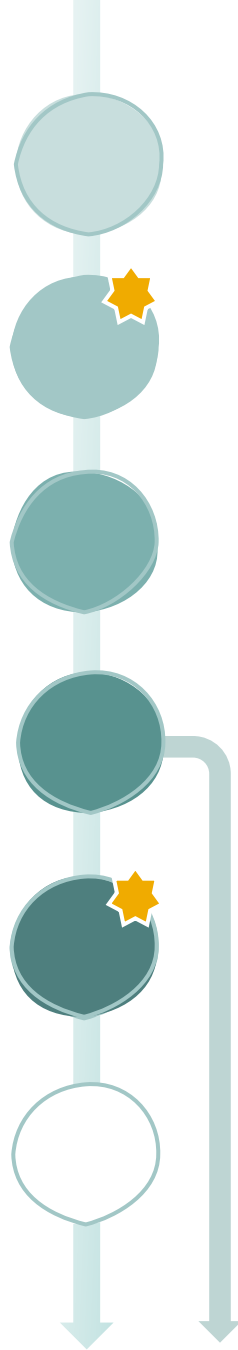
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5. **Budget** planning: e.g. **start-up financing through WCF**  
stakeholder: who is responsible for what?  
**roles and responsibilities**: institution in charge and responsible project coordinator?



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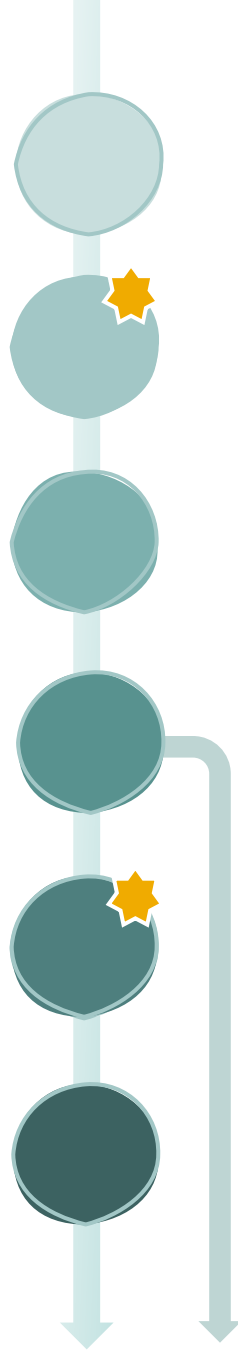
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(such as: national budget, public/private subsidies or municipal funds)
5. **Budget** planning: e.g. **start-up financing through WCF**  
stakeholder: who is responsible?  
**roles and responsibilities**: sponsorship and project coordinator?
6. **Last step into specific implementation**:  
Architectural decision: building found? Any conversions necessary?  
Establishing working groups and panels for implementation.

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# Value Added

Faster, quicker and better



Close Proximity



Clear Communication



Transparency for all Involved



Fast Access  
to Professional Experts



Better Mutual Understanding  
(Cross-professional)

**CHILD IN THE  
VERY CENTRE**



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# From Concept into Implementation

Where to start and how to proceed?

- National and regional child protection networks and legal systems  
**Status Quo!**
  - What do we have, what do we need, what do we want?
  - *Huge regional differences to start with!*
- **Building on existing structures:**
  - grouping experts and pooling know-how
  - strong networks are an important resource
  - integration and formalization of good local practice

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# From Concept into Implementation

Where to start and how to proceed?

- **Clarification of responsibilities**
  - Engagement of professionals
  - Institutional support
  - Existing resources (qualification, logistics, structures)
  - Involvement of municipal and federal structures
  - **Which support is mandatory, which is helpful?**
  
- **What is the assignment and regional responsibility?**
  - Clear definition of assignment, target group and region

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# Basic National Challenges

## German System

- German federalism  
this system poses big challenges:
  - different legal norms
  - different structures and standards
  - different political agendas
- No obligation to notify a case of child sexual abuse for professionals in contact with children
  - ▶ thus, cases primarily via consulting services, youth welfare, very low percentage via prosecution
- Data protection law challenges data transfer within the procedures in Childhood-Haus (hence, DSGVO)
- Through separation of systems:

Barnahus Model not fully implementable in German system?

- **adaptations to existing structures and common proceedings**
- **Legislative adjustments for ideal implementation are still necessary!**

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# Solutions and Lesson Learned

## In Implementation Process

### Knowing the limits – and trying to exceed them:

- Practitioners act within their norms of action, following Barnahus standards
  - ▶ encouraged by implementation phases and thought-leadership of WCF
- Legal proceedings for timely audiovisual hearing do exist but they are not mandatory
- Despite DSGVO:
  - Data exchange for cause of child protection is possible but restricted in daily cooperation
- Cross-professional networking and lobbying for initiative enabled implementation in national structures

However, we are already experiencing clear limits of interconnectability of national structures and different professions, important for the Barnahus model.

**The focus on the child and its reality of live has to be strengthened further!**

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# Challenges

## Action Required

- ❖ **Insufficient resources**  
especially in youth welfare,  
such as trauma-sensitive care
- ❖ **Lack of professionals**  
low accessibility of trained staff
- ❖ **Lack of profound professionalizing**  
in training of many professionals  
in basic topics of child support or  
trauma-sensitive approach
- ❖ **Lack of action-orientated legislation** for  
child protection and trauma-informed  
criminal proceedings concerning child victims
- ❖ Childhood-Haus as a **quality standard** and  
not an exception of good practice in some regions.



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**Yes, it is still a way to go  
- but we are on our way!**

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# Contact



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Executive Director

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Facebook: childhood.deutschland

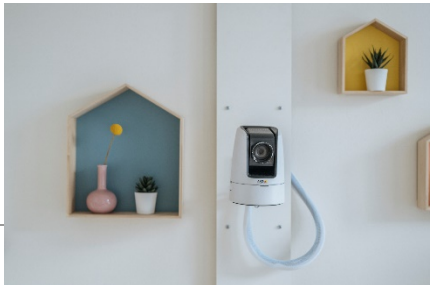
[www.childhood-de.org](http://www.childhood-de.org)

[www.childhood-haus.de](http://www.childhood-haus.de)

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**Disclaimer:** The pictures with children, depicted in this presentation, are staged with children models.  
 (© Michael Bader, Childhood Deutschland)

# Office for the Protection of Child Victims “Spiti tou Paidiou” Thessaloniki Ministry of Justice (Greece)

Fotis Tegos,

Social Worker - Juvenile Probation Officer,



The European Directive 2012/29/EE for the implementation of minimum standards concerning the rights, the support and the protection of victims of crime came in to force by the Greek Law 4478/2017.

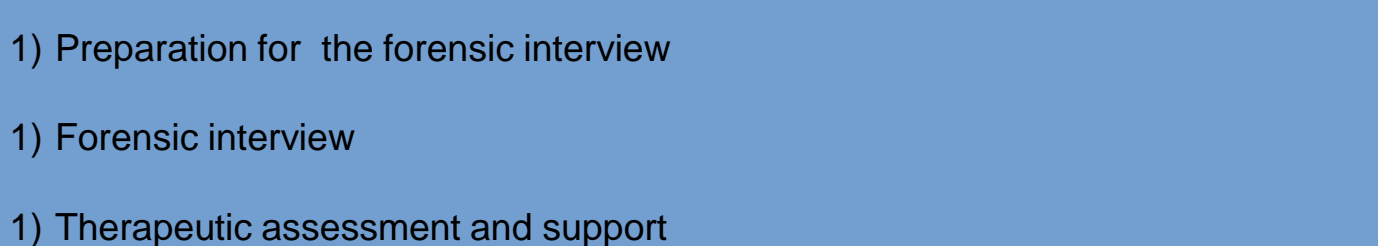
The same legislation established Offices for child victims of crimes “Spitia tou Paidiou” (children houses) in 5 towns (Athens, Thessaloniki, Pireus, Patra and Iraklio).

Also a ministerial decision was taken (7320/2019) regarding the function and services of those offices including the protocol for the forensic interview for minors.

**Target Group:** Minors (under 18, special needs or from other origin), victims of crimes (sex crimes mainly, terrorist actions and trafficking)

**Purpose:** To protect children rights, to avoid further abuse (secondary victimisation), to avoid alteration of testimony.

## Main functions:

- 1) Psycho-social support of the minor victim and his/her caregivers
  - 1) Individual assessment for protection reasons for minor victims of crime
  - 1) Formation of appropriate conditions, places, and safety rules for the interview in such cases
  - 1) Support of pro – interrogation, interrogation, prosecution and court authorities
  - 1) Assessment of the perceptual and mental state of minor victims
- 
- 1) Preparation for the forensic interview
  - 1) Forensic interview
  - 1) Therapeutic assessment and support



Today 3 of the offices have personnel (Athens, Thessaloniki and Patra) which consists of psychologists (4) and social workers-juvenile probation officers (5).

All psychologists were trained in Children Advocacy Center (CAC) in Alabama USA for a week on the protocol for the forensic interview.

Till now no office has the appropriate building to house our services and there is no place for the forensic interview (blue rooms or rooms with the technical support for transmission and recording reasons of the interview).

In Athens the Office is hosted in the Ministry of Justice and in Thessaloniki and Patra in an office of the court buildings.

We also face major administrative difficulties.

We are going to speak about what happens in Thessaloniki.

First of all we introduced ourselves personally and written to the Juvenile Prosecutors Office, the Interrogation Judges and the Police (Sub Division for Minors).

Also we signed a cooperation contract with the Community Mental Health Center for Children and Youth of the “Papanikolaou” Hospital of Thessaloniki.

So far we were involved in:

1 case from the Prosecutor Office and

13 cases from the Interrogation Judges

Total of 21 minors that came to court either as victims or as perpetrators of sex crimes mainly.

All of the cases were interrogated by the Police and more or less after six months were called again by the Interrogate Judge to testify again.

What we did with in these cases:

### Concerning the Victims

Perception and mental assessment

Preparation for the testimony procedure and escort

Family and Social investigation

Assesment for the need of therapy and treetment (3 of the minors victims are in a therapy treetment TF -CBT by our office today ).

Coordination of the social services that were or will be involved in the case.

Cooperation with the school.

Social and psychological suport to the caregivers.

### Concerning the Perpetrators\*

Preparation for the testimony procedure and escort

\*According to a greek law before the witness testimony of minor perpetrators of sex crimes

## Findings:

### POSITIVE

The Interrogation Judges are happy to have our cooperation (specific, direct, fast and complete cooperation, with no list of experts assignment).

The minors are informed for the procedure are accompanied and have less anxiety.

The minors can adress to someone issues of support (psychosocial) and get focused treetment.

The minors and their families can deal issues of stigma and clarify misunderstandings.

## NEGATIVE:

For various reasons there seems to be a lack of therapy treatment for victims (pressed mental health system by the covid-19 situation, not specific trauma focused treatment etc).

There is no cooperation from the Police as they work alone in order to fulfil the 48hours arrest in the act.

The minors give more than one testimony and there is no regarding of that (secondary victimisation, alteration of testimony).

We are not working in cooperation with medical services (forensic or not)

There is no procedure of translators for our services so we had to ask for cooperation from NGOs

## **Conclusion**

The state has to decide how these offices should address the issue:

As a total holistic service by the Court or by the Police.

As a task force which will come together and coordinates the situation when a case comes along.

Either the decision, this agency – office has to work, escort the minor and his/her caregivers from the first contact with the police or the judicial services and should be the last that the minor should see..



Thank you for you attention.

## Claudia de Luca presentation

Secondary victimization is "*The exacerbation of the victim's conditions of suffering for the way the institutions operated during the post-complaint procedure and in the process, due to the unconscious inattention resulting from the routine treatment of facts that require a differentiated and individualized path*".

There are two types of s.v.: the substantive type refers to the risk that, after reporting, the victim will be subjected to the same violent and abusive behavior suffered up to that time; the procedural one, instead, relates to the harmful consequences that the injured person may suffer as a result of the criminal proceedings generated by his complaint.

The origin is the same and, in Italy, the cause is the same, and it's the lack of a uniform model of support for victims at national level, that allows the timely and simultaneous taking charge of them by the different and necessary actors who come in contact with them.

We do not have a virtuous Barnahus model as in Northern Europe countries, and we proceed with local protocols and projects, but it is desirable that the legislator intervenes to bring order to this matter and to create specialized services at ministerial level, so to coordinate legal assistance, protection and safe participation in the process.

The most obvious effect of secondary victimization is the loss of the complaint by the victim, who feels not understood and not protected by the institutions.

The individualized treatment of the victim, which must take care of the specific needs of the minor on the basis of his experience of suffering as well as his personal characteristics by age, culture, ethnicity, social context, religious origin, gender identity, and which is needed to offer the victim a precise and understandable explanation of what will happen after his complaint, cannot ignore a simultaneous multidisciplinary assessment, in which each actor does his part and becomes a stable point of reference for that minor.

This is the only system that avoids the risk of secondary victimization of a minor, victim of a crime or even a witness.

I am referring to the fact that, whether -in criminal proceedings- the protection provided to the victim comes after the assessment of the damage suffered by the victim himself or by his family members, this is not if the intervention of the institutions takes place, as it should, before the commission of a crime, in a view of concrete prevention.

We all know that the factors underlying deviant behavior are well known and are linked to mental illnesses, family dysfunctions, school dysfunctions, or even to those of the group of peers as well as to models of organized crime.

We all know that these factors, that affect the lives of minors who commit crimes, are the same of those who suffer for the same crimes; the difference is the approach to those same living conditions and, sometimes, it even lacks the possibility of choosing one way - and one life - over another.

I like to say that a victim is:

1. the person - even a minor - who suffers from direct or indirect harm from a crime and who becomes aware of multiple important rights to act and react against the wrong suffered;
2. the person - even a minor - who, living in sick contexts, acts out committing even serious crimes;
3. the person - even a minor - who does not yet have the awareness of this painful identity and who is not able to react to the pathological context of which he is a part.

The problem in this case is related to the emergence of the victim's condition.

This is a very important concept for me, because in juvenile legislation the process focuses on the possible recovery of the young offender for the purpose of his healthy re-integration into the civil community; otherwise, it is a small failure of the system and in most cases we see that, when a minor commits a crime, prevention has not worked as it should.

I'd like to tell you the story of a guy I've personally been dealing with recently: I'm thinking of a boy, whose name is Samuel, who was put in a community at 9 because of his mother's drug addiction and the absence of his father, who was married and had another family, so he gave up this son since his birth.

Samuel had come back home with his mother and lived there with his grandfather, who had never considered him a nephew because he was born from his daughter's relationship with a married man. At the age of 16, Samuel took a handgun built by him and pointed it at his mother, who fell on her knees, and forced her to ask him for forgiveness, laughing hysterically like Joker.

Samuel is a violent boy and certainly he could have been subject to a precautionary measure for this painful and dangerous affair.

But, is Samuel just an aggressor, or is he also a victim? If we'd just punished Samuel for his crime, wouldn't we have risked secondary victimization of this boy? The crime exists, there is no doubt about it, but how should the juvenile magistrate behave in such a situation?

If I had thought only at the criminal trial, I would have had to send Samuel away with a precautionary measure to avoid the recurrence of serious behavior against his mother, but Samuel, in my point of view, is also the victim of a painful past and not overcome due to the behavior of his family: an absent father, a frail mother and a despot grandfather.

In this case, I felt it was more correct to remove Samuel from his mother by placing him in a community with a protective measure, in order to help him to understand his suffering with the support of a serious psychological path.

This solution has made possible to protect both the mother and the child, without risking the further impairment of the bond between them, and, at the same time, to consider both victims of a wrong behavior, ensuring that each of them keeps his specific role in the process.

In any case, it is clear to everyone that the mis-information to the underage suspect about his rights and what will happen in the process are unacceptable deficiencies and, in this sense, Directive 800/2016 provided for a series of rights and guarantees for the underage suspect on the model of those provided for the victim by Directive 2012/29.

So, the extension of the risk of secondary victimization even to the child who is the perpetrator of crime is a requirement also felt by Europe, which has introduced principles that are very important for the Member States.

What happens in the Italian reality... you see, when the offender is a minor and the victim as well, only the juvenile magistrate intervenes, who can coordinate the interventions to protect one and the other through actions in the civil and criminal field: in Naples, with the precious help of Defense for Children, we are trying to draw up a protocol to create a stable and effective network between ministerial and territorial social services, judicial police of the prosecutor's office and territorial police, for simultaneous listening of the child, each for his part of professional competence, and to teach the various actors how to listen to the victim, according to his specific needs.

This system, of course, also guarantees the success of the process.

In order to follow the suggestions of the Directive on the creation of a "child-friendly" justice system, we have decided - as part of another European project in which we have participated with the Ministry of Justice - to create in the juvenile office an information point, where the minor is addressed according to the problems that he briefly and informally exposes there, and a reception

point for the victim - who comes to our office to be heard by the police or to testify- to prevent him from meeting his attacker if he does not want to.

We also put a site online, which is named Blue Path, to give information to young people about their rights as victims of a crime and what to do when they are involved in all those situations that make they feel abandoned or unarmed. I hope you will visit it also because you can surf in your own language.

Problems are enormous when the perpetrator is an adult and the victim is a minor, because there are two judicial offices and the office that prosecutes adults, for cultural training, almost never remembers to protect the victim and does not always immediately forward the documents to the juvenile prosecutor for the adoption of measures to protect the underage victim.

The consequence is that the victim, after reporting, feels completely abandoned and, if not protected, first, he may be forced to return to the violent context that he has reported, with all the devastating consequences that we can imagine; then, he is forced to relive the situation of suffering several times because there are different listens to his story by multiple magistrates and police officers.

In Italy, the victim's investigative hearing is one of the most important causes of secondary victimization, despite the Treaty of Lanzarote, the Charter of Noto and all the recommendations we know at international level.

For minors who are victims of violent crimes:

- there is a law requiring the public prosecutor to listen to the victim within three days of the recording of the criminal proceedings, as the legislator has tried in this way to impose a deadline to ensure the adoption of protective measures for the victim; but there is no sanction in case of violation;
- there is a rule requiring prosecutor and the judge to listen to the victim during investigations with the help of an experienced psychologist, and such statements will also be valid and effective in the process so the victim will not be called upon to participate.

We feel the need to create a list of experts for listening to minors because it is not easy to create a relationship of empathy without knowing the victim, in those few minutes before his listening, and therefore it takes considerable professional experience and ability to get in touch with minors.

If the expert (who can be also the police officer) who makes questions doesn't get in touch with the minor, the exam will fail and there is a risk for the outcome of the trial: this is secondary victimization too.

Then think about what happens when two different prosecutors need to listen to the victims separately on the same fact with different experts.

A possible solution could be a joint videorecording of the victim's statements by the different prosecutors, but we need a specific rule.

The suggestions of Directive 2012/29 are clear and allow us to focus attention on all aspects necessary to avoid the risk that criminal proceedings become a boomerang against the victim:

- an awareness-raising campaign is needed:
  - ✓ to acquire resources for the study of the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency by acquiring all those data that are necessary for the analysis of deviance based on cultural, economic, geographical, ethnic origin and so on;
  - ✓ to acquire the availability of professionals (police, magistrates, lawyers, doctors) to change their approach to juvenile matters;
  - ✓ to make young people understand the importance of the complaint and what are the rights compromised by crimes against them: a kind of education in legality in schools, also with online engagement systems.

- we need attention and rules about these aspects:

- ✓ that professionals (medical, psychological, pediatricians) bring to the attention of the police without delay all situations in which there are clear signs of mistreatment or abuse of a minor;
- ✓ that the intervention times of the institutions, when a minor is a victim (suspect or offended person of a delict), must be very short, and so should be the trial too;
- ✓ that the minor involved in criminal proceedings as a victim is made immediately aware of what will happen after the complaint and until the end of the trial;
- ✓ that the minor who committed a crime is made aware of possible solutions to his case and invited to reflect on the significance of his unlawful conduct and the suffering caused to the victim; this may be the first step towards the enhancement of restorative justice;
- ✓ that legislator authorizes leaner knowledge mechanisms for crimes against minors, for example through anonymous reporting;
- ✓ that joint and multidisciplinary intervention mechanisms are necessary to increase the trust between institutions and victims and to consider that the protection of the victim is a priority in criminal proceedings;
- ✓ that lawyers assisting the victim/perpetrator of a crime have specialist training such as magistrates to ensure a correct approach with the minor and the best solution to his problem, aimed at his individual recovery and/or protection from retaliation. Lawyers often represent the minor in family conflicts and therefore their role is very important for the protection of the minor from the sick context and for the representation of his specific needs, but they also have an important role to give information to the minor about his rights and obligations after the complaint.

I think I've run out of time... I would like to thank the organizers of this meeting for the discussion on issues of fundamental importance and I think that a great deal of work still needs to be done.

**Presentation Ms. Ivanichka Slavkova**  
**Judge in Varna District Court**

**Topic:** Preventing secondary and repeat victimisation of children as well as intimidation and retaliation in the criminal justice system

Professional experience of a Bulgarian judge in criminal proceedings in which victims are children. Applicable Bulgarian criminal legislation and opportunities for implementation of the international standards in the field as well as Directive 2012/29.

Very short CV. I have been a magistrate for 28 years now, I am dealing with criminal cases, including cases where defendants or victims are children. In the last five years I have practiced as a specialized judge in the field of juvenile justice.

Such judges exist only in several courts in Bulgaria and one of them is the Varna District Court, in which I practice.

What is really happening in Bulgaria with children's rights in judicial proceedings and how the policies for juvenile justice are integrated not only within the legislation or in the court room, but in real life? My experience in the last few years has shown me that, despite all imperfections in our legal framework, through joint efforts and coordination between the institutions, good practices may be implemented at any local level. The aim is to ensure—non-discrimination, best interests of the child, right to life, survival and development of the child and its right to be heard in all proceedings affecting child's rights and interests / according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child/.

The new aspects in the criminal legal framework in Bulgaria, implementing **Victims' Rights Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime**, are the following -

Firstly, a possibility of interviewing minor witness avoiding contact with the accused person through using specialized premises and video conferencing. It is an obligation of the Court, when conducting judicial investigation, not to re-interview such witnesses, precisely because of the risk of secondary victimization. Repeated interview should be conducted only in exceptional cases, if the latter is particularly significant for the case. Child victims were equated to persons with specific protection needs – those for whom are needed additional means of protection from secondary and repeat victimization, intimidation, retaliation, emotional or psychological harm, including the preservation of dignity during the interview.

I would not focus on the shortcomings of these new legal provisions, but rather how the existing gaps can be filled by timely and appropriate actions of the judiciary, and especially the judge, within the criminal proceedings.

In practice, it is necessary for the Court to proceed with an interview of the child victim of crime at the very beginning of the proceedings while meeting all procedural requirements of the law. The purpose of this interview is to serve as evidence without the need for the child to undergo this procedure again as that is often considered as traumatic experience.



That procedural requirement is not explicitly provided under the Bulgarian Criminal Procedure Code, however it is possible to conduct an interview of a child witness who is victim of a crime before a judge immediately after the offence has been established or the victim has been identified, in order to conduct only one interview or the latter to be limited to a minimum. No mandatory protection for the child victims is provided in the pre-trial phase of the proceedings. Nevertheless, this omission is overcome to some extent by the mandatory participation of parent / when the child is under 14 years of age / and after that age – by the participation of an educator or psychologist. Yet, there is no mandatory legal requirement for provision of qualified and independent legal assistance for children who have entered into conflict with the law at this early stage of the criminal proceedings. Very often, the judge involved in the questioning explains the meaning of the procedure to the child, as well as its rights and why the interview needs to be conducted, in a manner which is easy understandable for the child, taking into account its age, education, social status, maturity and skills. However, that does not replace a lawyer, who ensures the comprehensive protection of the child.

There are no short deadlines enshrined for deliberation or for closing of these cases, but when they require the involvement of magistrates trained in the field of juvenile justice, such cases are prioritised. These magistrates shall take all measures to ensure the protection of the child – victim or witness of crime, within both the pre-trial and trial phases of the proceedings, so the latter is not endangered or put at risk of secondary victimization, and also to ensure that the procedures will not take too much in time.

Therefore, all actions are planned and carried out in a coherent manner and in a way which enables the child not to be traumatized. How does this work?

The interdisciplinary approach should be applied to the greatest extent possible. A major aspiration is all participants in the proceedings to have preliminary **specialized and psychological preparation/training for working with children**.

Thus, often the information goes, firstly, to the police authorities. Due to that they first face the problem. An initial one might be social services as well, in which cases two parallel checks are conducted. Finally, after an assessment of the seriousness of the case is carried out, an investigative officer and a prosecutor are involved. They have to coordinate all actions of the team. This is the way to overcome the fragmentation of the system and the multiple institutions which are responsible for the case. No actions conducted by one or another institution involving the child victim and its parents should be repeated.

Police authorities usually interview the child and other persons who are somehow connected to the case. Afterwards, the child might be called more than one time in the police station, the interrogation or the interview is conducted in one of its premises, often in the presence of many people. This is where police officers participate actively – inspector of children's pedagogical room, which are not only police officers, but also pedagogues by education.

That approach of parallel checks should be limited or avoided if possible. At the earliest stage, an initial individual assessment of the child victim should be conducted in cooperation with all authorities, which have powers and obligation to explore the circumstances surrounding the child, as well as informing him or her of his/her rights in the forthcoming procedures.

There are no explicit procedures or methodological instructions to guarantee the protection of the child from secondary victimization. The legal possibilities provided by the law ensuring an avoidance of the contact between the child victim and the accused are not mandatory. Still, when sufficient number of trained professionals are involved in the case, procedural safeguards are applied comprehensively so that the child victim is protected from all negative impacts of the criminal proceedings. First of all, the most important thing is to ensure that the child is interviewed before a judge, the only one in the case whenever possible. It should be carried out as described below. A specific time slot is set in coordination with all participants to conduct the interview in front of a judge in the so called "Blue Room". This is a room which is specially equipped for this purpose and is located in a residential building so the child is not stigmatized. Actually, it is usually a whole flat providing everything needed – a separate furnished room for the child, including children's play area, toys, paintings and other decorations in the room. Besides, there is a separate room, in which all participants in the process are set up and which is equipped with a Venetian glass. This way, potential physical meeting between the child and the accused is being avoided, as well as with all other participants in the proceedings. The child has contact only with a psychologist (in cases of sexual abuse – always with person of the same sex) and the whole interview is conducted only by the psychologist. Everything is explained to the child by the specially trained psychologist, and all questions by the other involved parties are asked by the psychologist using technical connection /wireless microphone/, but in the form of normal conversation. When the wording is inappropriate or contains a misleading or a closed question, the psychologist "rewrites" the question in accordance with the specialized methodology/approach appropriate for the child's age. A time for preparation of the child is provided so that he/she can be carefully informed what is coming up. This reduces the psychological tension over the child. By "mediating" the interview in a proper manner, the psychologist does not allow disrespectful or harmful treatment towards the child. The "Blue Room" is equipped, besides everything else, with both male and female dolls. It helps in cases of sexual assaults when a child can't tell or is ashamed to do so, explains what happened with the help of dolls.

By using "Blue rooms", the child is protected as much as possible and the risk of secondary victimization, intimidation is reduced to minimum. In order to avoid further interviews, the preparation for the interview should be precise, careful and based on the facts available to the current moment.

The general aim is to have a comprehensive and exhaustive interview, which would also be sufficient for the Court in the context of the criminal proceedings. Otherwise, if the judge leading the trial decides that the conducted interview was not exhaustive, it might lead to the undesirable effect of repeated interview, which may traumatize the child. Moreover, in cases of particularly observant children, or those with richer imagination or extremely shy children, there can be great contradictions between individual interviews. That will pose great difficulties in clarifying the case before the Court. The child, on the other hand, may feel lack of trust in his/her testimony and get confused or change what he/she said.

The interview is recorded – video and audio recordings. These recordings are applied to the case on optical data carriers and stored together with all case materials.

Another feature that has emerged as a serious challenge is the fact that the interview of the child victim should be conducted in the presence of the accused and his/her lawyer (to guarantee the rights of the accused are respected), so the interview is admissible in court before a judge. A coordination between the investigative authorities is necessary with respect to the timely bringing of charges against the suspect based only on the information provided by the child. Afterwards the actual interview in a “Blue Room” should be conducted, but with the participation of the accused and his/her lawyer.

In the best-case scenario, a repeated questioning of the child victim during the trial phase should be avoided. However, if such is necessary, the practice has shown that it is possible to resort to two possible options – conducting another interview in a “blue room” or conducting an interview through video conferencing. By using a video conference, you can achieve the same result, namely- conducting an interview in a separate room from which the child does not have visibility and access to the defendant or other parties in the proceedings, seeing only the judge whose questions he/she will be answering or, if necessary, the help of psychologist will be requested. This is done due to the fact that children are often worried and scared by the courtroom. Thus, in order to avoid unwanted meetings in the corridors of the court, a preliminary organization with regard to the entry of participants into the court building takes place.

The same rules apply where indirect child victims of crime are concerned. For instance, family member whose death is a result of the crime, as well as children who are eyewitnesses or crucial witnesses for solving specific cases. This includes even drug distribution cases etc., where intimidation or retaliation is highly likely as a consequence of their testimony.

Protective measures of the child victims are rarely applied, as usually the cases are for serious crimes. Then, the court determines “detention in custody” or “house arrest” as a coercive measure against the accused in order to prevent the danger of committing a crime against the child victim. This appears to be a more effective way to prevent repeat victimization or intimidation.

Undoubtedly the State is responsible for ensuring the means of exercising effectively the children’s rights and to protect their interests in judicial proceedings. In my opinion, in the context of the criminal proceedings this task is conferred to the judges. When there are not enough strict rules in terms of approaching a child victim or a child witness in the proceedings, magistrates may guide/lead the proceedings in a way to take into account the best interests of the child. Of course, they have to do that without violating the rights of the defendants or other parties in the criminal proceedings.

**Avv. Roberta di Bella – Camera Minorile di Genova**

***The role of lawyers to reduce risks of secondary and repeat victimisation, intimidation and retaliation of child victims of crime in the context of criminal investigations and proceedings: Introducing an initiative of the Juvenile Chamber in Liguria to train legal professionals and law enforcement services on these matters***

Thanks...

In Italy the 2012/29 / EU directive was implemented with the legislative decree of 15 December 2015, n. 2012 entered into force on 20.01.2016.

It codified the directive's wide-ranging and protection provisions, designed to guarantee the right to information, taking-part and representation of children as offended persons.

For example,

- definition of the "Particular vulnerability condition" of the injured person,
  - rules for ascertaining the minor age of the injured person that, in case of doubt, remains presumed for the purposes of the procedural provisions,
  - right to translation into one's own language or known language,
  - right to report of evasion or release of the offender,
  - the right to appoint interpreters, the right to free translation of documents containing information useful for exercising one's rights,
- were established.

About reducing the risk of secondary victimization, domestic law specifically provides for two institutions that can intervene significantly.

Pretrial Hearing for the purposes of taking the testimony of a child or of an injured person in a particularly vulnerable condition. It's conducted by the judge for preliminary inquiries, usually with the aid of a psychologist, in a dedicated room within the Court or, if necessary, outside the Court itself, such as in specialized assistance structures or, failing that, at the home of the person. The defendants of the parties can only formulate questions that the judge will ask the child in a protected hearing. Defendants usually, for the respect of an adversarial process, sit in a separate room connected with video and audio.

Pretrial hearing is one of the main tools we have to avoid children attending another hearing, in the courtroom, being asked questions from the Prosecutor's Office and defenders.

Another essential institution provides that, when in trials for serious crimes such as family abuse, stalking, enslavement and various cases of sexual violence, committed

to the detriment of a child or committed by one of the parents of a child to the detriment of the other parent, the public prosecutor shall notify the Juvenile Court.

Furthermore, the presence of parents or other suitable persons indicated by the child, as well as groups, foundations, associations or non-governmental organizations with proven experience in sector of assistance and support to victims in these types of crimes, ensure the emotional and psychological assistance of the child in every state and level of trials. They must be registered in a special list of subjects entitled to this purpose, and can stand by with the consent of the child and if admitted by the Judge.

In any case, minors are guaranteed the assistance of juvenile services, both of the Administration of Justice and of local authorities, which the judicial authority also makes use of in every state and degree of the procedure.

What I said is obviously simplified and summarized, but sufficient to make us think that risks are actually limited or modest.

Therefore children' lawyers have several tools to ensure the protection of the victim's rights and minimize secondary trial victimization.

But: is that enough?

Sincerely the practice as children defender, supporting minors who were and are victims of violent crimes, in particular of violent intra-family and sexual crimes, made me realize how **risks of secondary victimization, intimidation and retaliation fall into a much wider prejudice.**

Let me specify that I refer to experience concerning role of lawyer of the child in the three exceptions: defense lawyer of the injured person, special curator of the child appointed in the proceedings by the Judge for preliminary investigations, or guardian of the child.

Following the Strasbourg Convention of 25.01.1996 that in art. 3 recognizes the right of every capable of discernment child to receive any information pertinent to the trial, to be consulted and to express his opinion, the child has the right to appoint his own lawyer. Even more when, legal representation does not belong to the parents for different reasons or because of a conflict of interest.

In this case, in fact, dues of representation are guaranteed either by the guardian (if already appointed) or by the appointment of the special curator (special defender), who will therefore have all the procedural powers and duties including those to request technical advice from the office, appoint party consultants, indicate witnesses and claim for damages.

Lawyers therefore are called to play a very complex role, because if on the one hand there is a formal, codified procedural and legal representation task, at the same time they are called to a substantial representation of best interests of the child, which, as we know, are not always the same, they change for each child or young person. Best

interest must be investigated and identified with reference to every single story, to every single life, and so with respect to the suffered facts.

Defending and supporting children have taught us how "being a vulnerable victim" is a quite complicated condition of suffering. Often criminal facts take place within meaningful relationships (let's think of the sense of guilt of a child who accuses a parent of sexual violence), in addition to wounds and hurts there are feelings, and then, outside the courtroom, social and family lives go on.

In my opinion, risk of secondary victimization but above all intimidation and retaliation develop in this complexity: labeling? Exclusion? Sense of guilt? Having to tell your story again, for example to social workers who may change over time? The examples are endless.

We all know very well how in many situations, even for protection purposes, children are removed from home and placed in children – centres, where they have to introduce themselves again and built new relations.

In any case lawyers' role can become essential for communication, listening, information, understanding. A lawyer can become the voice of that child, in the trial such as with all people surrounding the child.

Of course this role must be built, through the acquisition of skills, care-capabilities and attitudes that come from personal factors, professional experience and a lot of training.

From all this, as matured the awareness of a wider need for children involved in trials, Camera Minorile di Genova, which is an association of highly specialized lawyers in children law and for children rights, has been involved over the years in the training of lawyers in legal and judicial field, but with a special attention to support and intervention networks that we know to be necessary and, by its nature, multidisciplinary.

Children lawyers needs to enrich the toolbox: for example with a child-friendly language capable of translating and making the judicial process understandable; they have to learn to listen to the actual requests and needs of that child; taking care of the meeting with the child as a legal talk but appropriate to age and person (i.e., settings are important); knowing how to understand and balance rights of the child and rights to defense of the accused; knowing how to be an active part of the support and coaching network of that single child, for example also by interfacing with the social services rather than the psychotherapist (quite often, for example, I contact psychotherapist of a child when the verdict is communicated, sometimes to read it together, sometimes to be sure that there might be immediate support), etc.

From this awareness and professional closeness with young victims, Camera Minorile worked on sharing and learning with the different actors of skills and specificities, in order to strengthen the support and intervention network, aware of that possibility of meeting between different voices and roles, as, if children are placed the center, they find themselves operating in the same direction.

For this reason, Camera Minorile is engaged in activities of study, comparison and training between lawyers, judges, prosecutors, social services, psychologists, schools, judicial police and law enforcement agencies, etc.

To give examples, let's think of standing guards like school, or of the Police, first to intervene, both in situations of flagrant and danger or at the beginning of investigations.

In Italy, or at least in Genoa, for example, a highly qualified Police Team has been created to protect children victims of violent crimes, with specific training for listening to children as offended persons. A dedicated and child-friendly room was also created for the audition, that takes place in the presence of child psychologists.

Personally, I was very grateful for the opportunities for meeting and training precisely with Police that traditionally could seem a bit the natural counterpart for a criminal lawyer.

But as I said, if we really move on to a child-centric vision, roles are never confrontational, but, although different, they are all oriented towards a common interest which is precisely that of the child.



# Institutional gaps and recommended reforms and policies to safeguard the best interests of child victims

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The Greek Ombudsman's perspective



# The source of our experience

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Complaints (submitted by children, parents, teachers, NGOs, even public services etc)

Advocacy (introduction of legal framework and implementation in compliance to UNCRC)

Inspections (institutions, prisons, hotspots, camps etc)

Discussing with children (in shelters, schools etc) and consultation with our Youth Council

Reports

Supervision and coordination of two Networks that consist of Organizations and NGOs

# UNCRC relevant articles

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Art. 3: Best Interests of the Child

Art. 4: General Measures of Implementation

Art. 19: Protection from any kind of abuse

Article 39: Physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim

Art. 20: Alternative care

Art. 16: Protection of Privacy

Art. 12: Taking into account the child's own views

# General factors and deficiencies that undermine the best interest principle in Greece (examining the situation macroscopically)

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Fragmentation of initiatives and the absence of a medium-long term coherent strategy for the Rights of the Child

Lack of coordination between the competent ministries

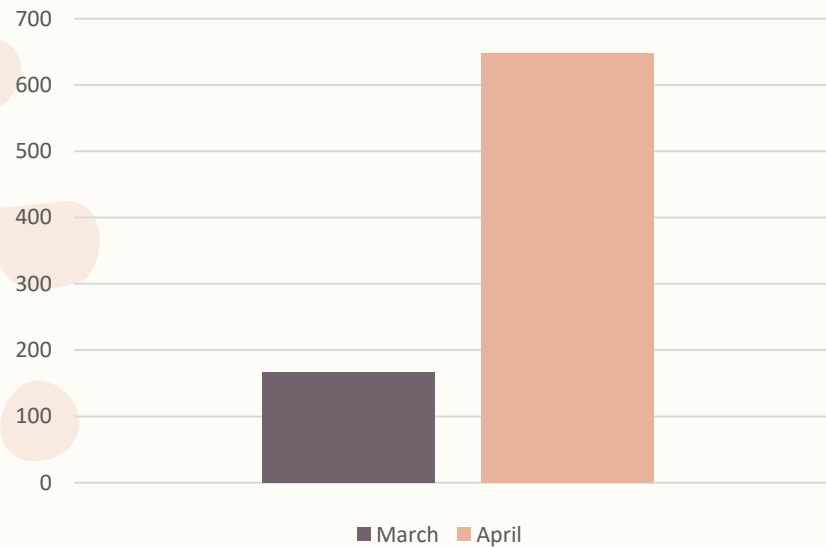
Underinvestment in social policy and education

Insufficient implementation of legislation

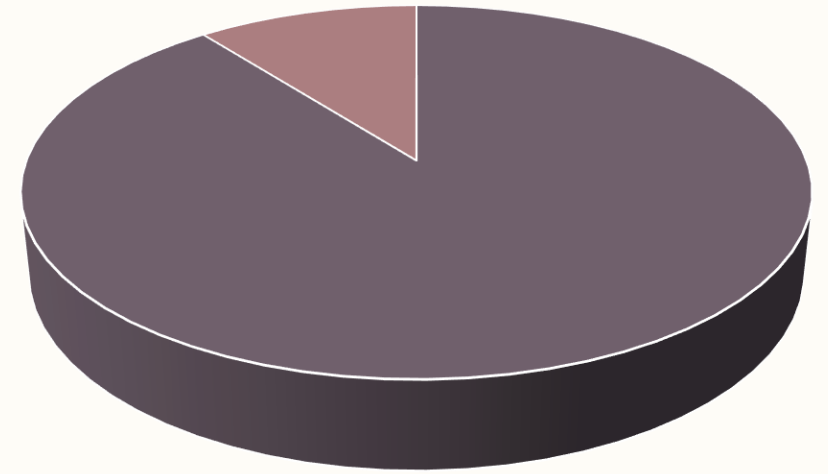
# Domestic Violence in covid19 context

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Calls to the helpline



The percentage of domestic child abuse



# The devious challenge of domestic violence

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- Official data indicate a significant increase, but do not correspond to the actual impact (especially for children)
- 7 out of 10 calls were made by victims (usually women). Children can not easily ask for help because they rarely identify abuse as such, and they depend emotionally from their parents and relatives.
- Reaching out is difficult with children in the context of the crisis when minors are not already trained on their rights and on necessary steps to take when violations occur

# The practice so far...(looking at one case)

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- The child's removal from the family is followed by its placement in a hospital (in some cases for several months)
- The child testifies several times to the authorities (up to 14)
- In the majority of cases the child ends up in an institution referred by the hospital social service that has no sufficient knowledge of the child's individual needs and therefore without proper assessment
- Especially in cases of sexual abuse there is also a high risk of media exposure



# Children's houses in Greece

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- They were first introduced by Law 4478/17 but because of several administrative obstacles and severe delays they do not operate yet
- The provision and ministerial decision that followed provided **for a child-friendly, interdisciplinary model of forensic interview of the child victim** to avoid multiple testimonies within the context of judicial procedures
- Instead of investing in and promoting these services the state still implements practices related to the status quo before the introduction of the new framework
- Children are traumatized and retraumatized by repeated examinations and testimonies and ultimately trapped in “victim’s” identity
- The Ombudsman has recently issued a report with its findings and recommendations (<https://www.synigoros.gr/resources/011020-porisma-spiti-toy-paidioy.pdf>)

# Institutions as the other aspect of systemic abuse and secondary victimization

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- In Greece, institutions are the main form of alternative care
- Institutions in Greece are either private, public or belong to the church
- No national standards have been established regarding their function
- Most of them are understaffed
- Supervision is generally considered to be poor
- No systematic, mandatory and continuous training for professionals working with and for children is provided
- Large part of society is not aware of the impact of institutions on children and approves their operation
- Family type alternative care and especially foster care is underdeveloped in Greece



# Can some institutions be “good”?

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- Young children placed in institutional care are at risk of harm in terms of attachment disorder and developmental delays in social, behavioral, and cognitive domains
- The lack of a one-to-one relationship with a primary caregiver is a major cause of harm to children in residential care
- The neglect and damage caused by early privation and deprivation is equivalent to violence (R Johnson, K D Browne and C E Hamilton-Giachritsis, 'Young children in institutional care at risk of harm', Trauma Violence and Abuse, 7(1): 1–26, 2006)
- Deinstitutionalization policies must be implemented in Greece
- The Ombudsman has recently issued a special report with its recommendations on the matter (<https://www.synigoros.gr/?i=childrens-rights.el.idrimatiki.689678>)

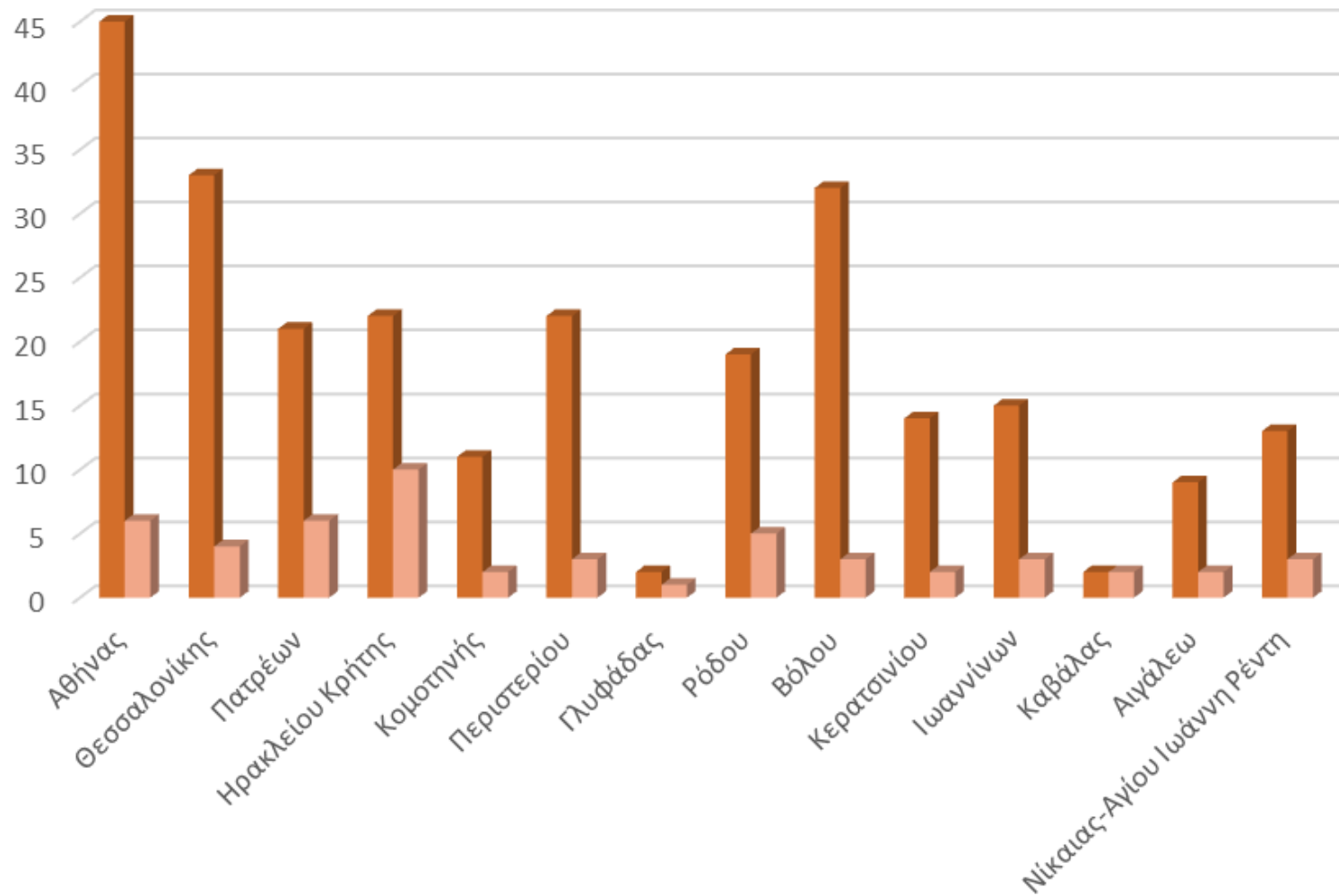




# The role of media in secondary victimization

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- Despite the fact that the legal framework exists (presidential decree 77/2003) it is often bypassed or violated.
- The Ombudsman has intervened several times (indicatively <https://www.synigoros.gr/?i=childrens-rights.el.kakopoiisi.627970>)
- Media often expose personal data regarding child abuse and therefore child is identified as “the victim” by its peers and the community and that undermines significantly its resilience and its ability to reconstruct its identity

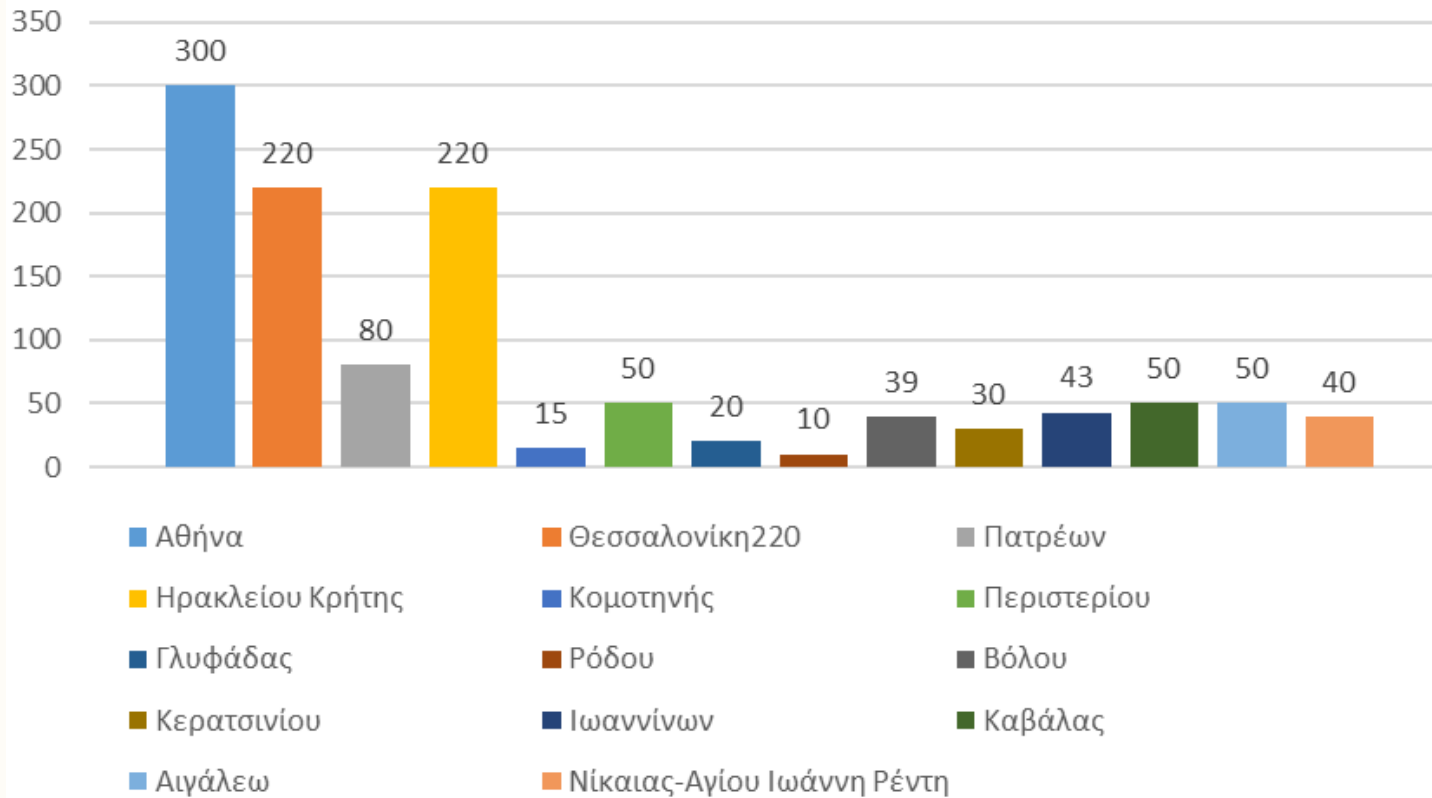


What about protection by community services?  
Number of social workers per municipality involved in children's protection

- Social services in Greece are understaffed and do not operate under a uniform framework of responsibilities and protocols
- Specialized systematic training is not provided to social workers

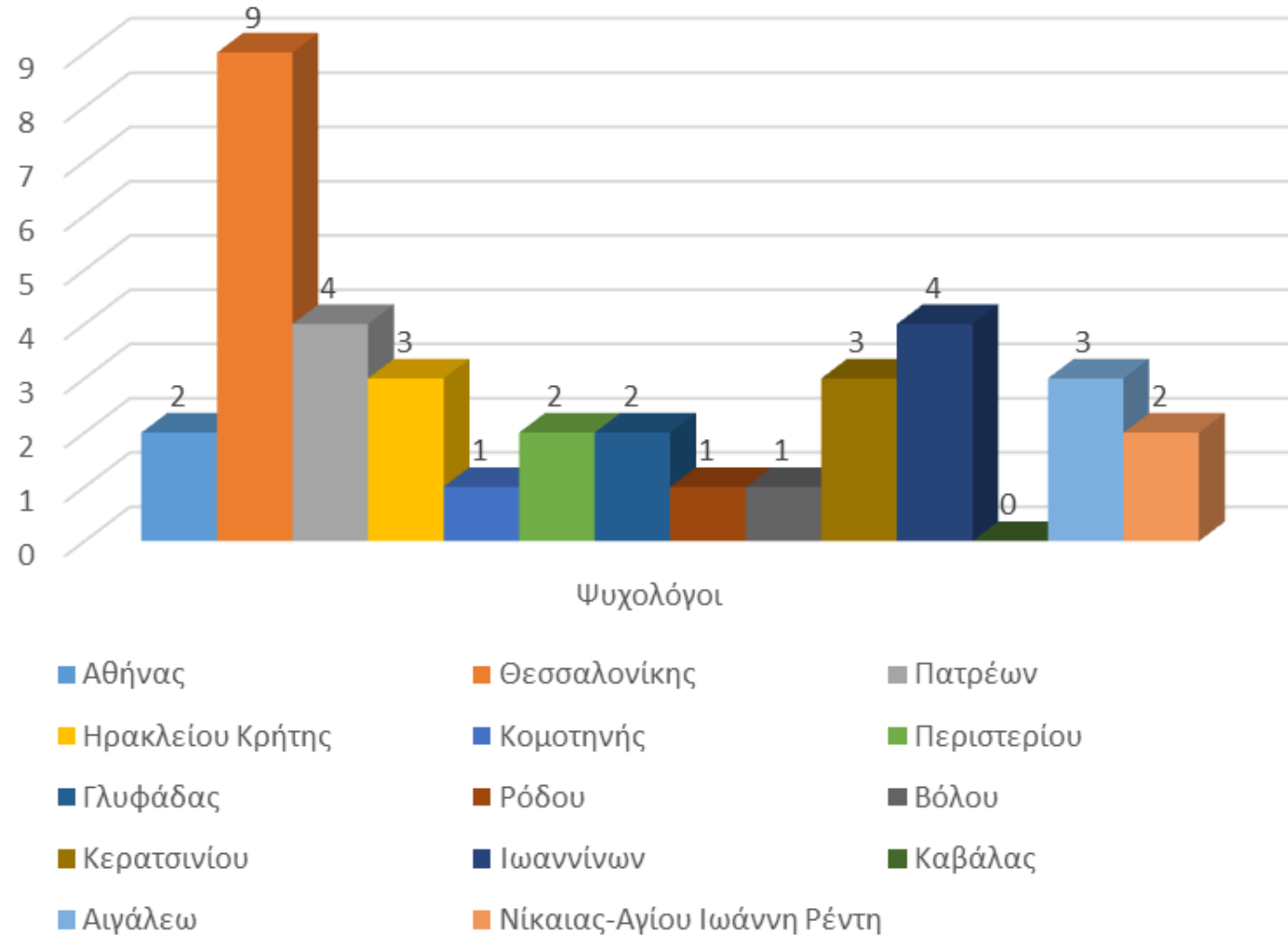
How do we support the family in need?

Prosecutor's orders for investigation per municipality



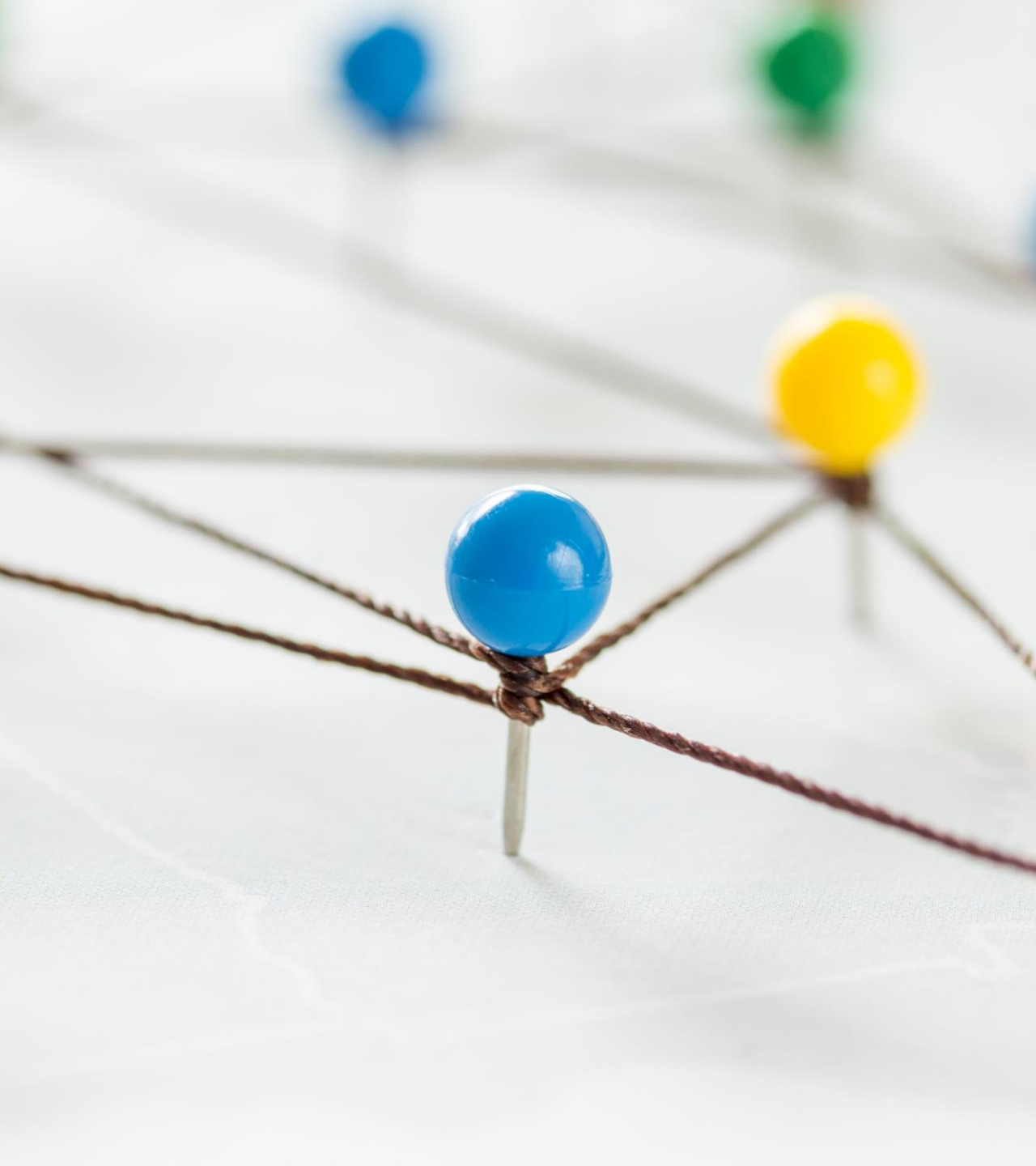
Follow up in cases of abuse, which is essential in terms of protecting child's best interests in often not feasible

## Number of psychologists per municipality in social services



- Their number in local government services is not sufficient
- Furthermore, mental health services are disproportionately distributed in the country and can not cover existing needs sufficiently





# Connecting the dots for a child centred approach and a new paradigm

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A coherent robust strategy for Children's Rights

Staffing, uniform protocols and training is services

Operation of Children's houses

Proper supervision and training of journalists and other media staff



Thank you very much! |



# Preventing secondary and repeat victimisation of child victims of crime:

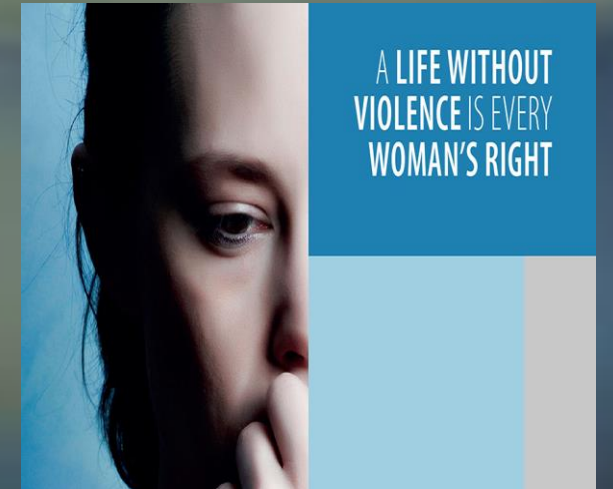
## Risk assessments and solutions in the best interests of the child

**E-PROTECT II International Workshop**  
**24 March 2021**



***The work of GREVIO in promoting risk assessments in accordance with the Istanbul Convention***

*Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou*  
*Member of GREVIO*



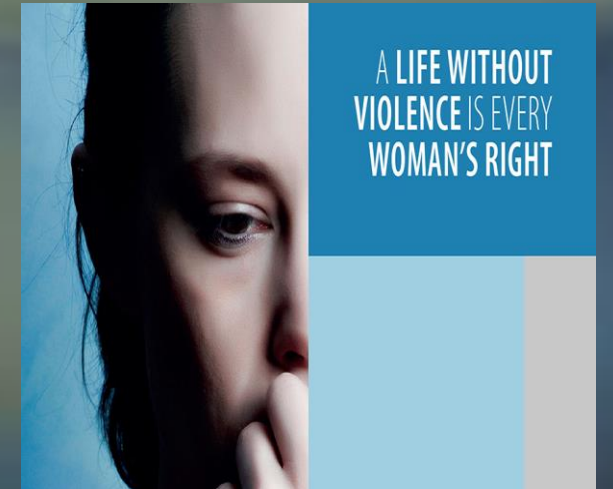


# ***Istanbul Convention: Risk assessment and risk management***

Scope

Implementation

Monitoring

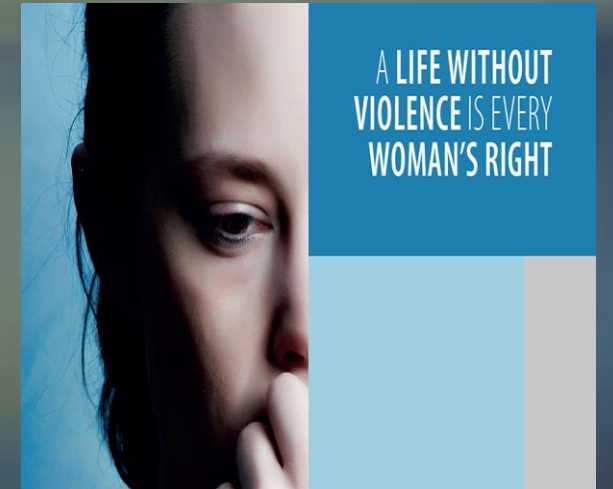


# ***Risk assessment and risk management: Scope***

Persons



Measures



Territory

# ***Risk assessment and risk management: Scope***

## Persons

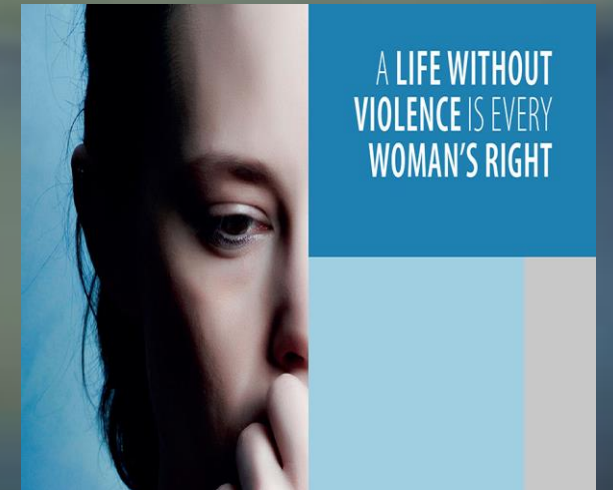
- All women and child victims
- Unconditional protection
- No discrimination
- No exclusion based e.g., on age limits



# ***Risk assessment and risk management: Scope***

## Measures

- Covering all forms of gender-based violence, including forced marriage and female genital mutilation
- Variety of types of available & appropriate protective measures, e.g., psychosocial support, protection orders



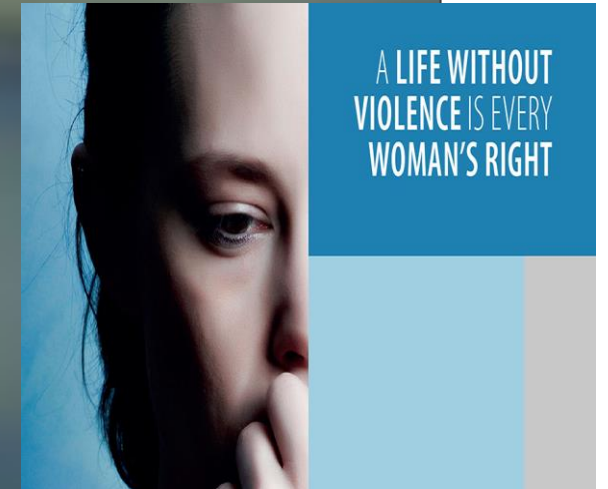




# ***Risk assessment and risk management: Scope***

## Territory

- Throughout the State
- All regions

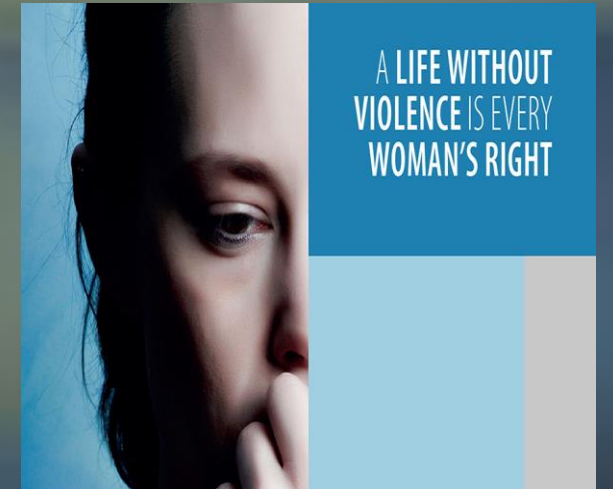


# ***Risk assessment and risk management: Implementation***

Substantive and procedural safeguards



Continuous assessments



# ***Risk assessment and risk management: Implementation***

## Substantive and procedural safeguards

Understanding of gender-based violence and its dynamics

Standardised procedures

Common criteria

Multiagency cooperation & coordination, including with victims' support services

\*\*\*\*\*

Individualised assessments

Pooling of information from various sources

Information on the possession of firearms

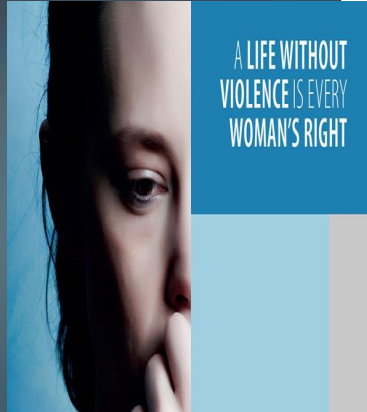
Focusing on human rights and safety of victims

Promptness of the procedure

Risk assessment of specific types & severity

VS

general risk assessment

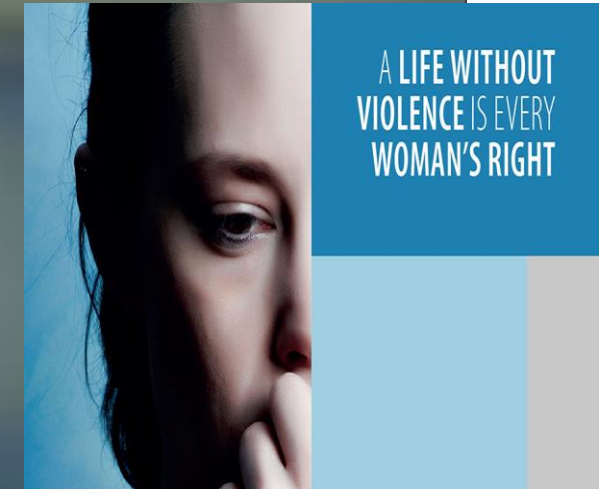


# ***Risk assessment and risk management: Implementation***



## Continuous assessments

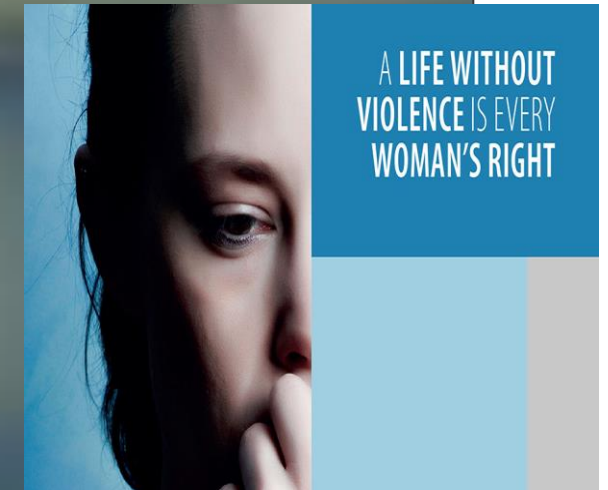
- What happens after risk assessment & risk management?
- Risk is dynamic
- Need for repeated assessments
- Aggravating factors and circumstances
- Involvement of victims in subsequent assessments
- Guidelines and training



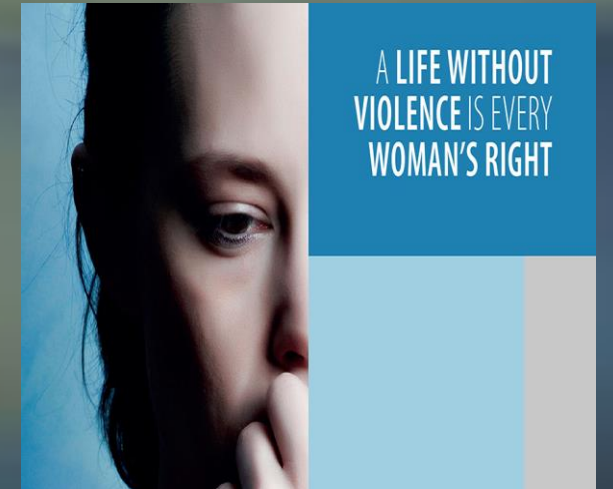
# ***Risk assessment and risk management: Monitoring***



- Inherent obligation to develop indicators and to monitor
- Measuring achievements and implementation problems
- Value of retrospective reviews into femicides
- Analysis should assess particularly:
  - Whether risk assessment had been carried out
  - Whether protective measures had been adopted (barring or protection order?)
  - The outcome of criminal proceedings
- Homicide review mechanism: prevent, protect and uphold accountability (see, inter alia, France and Portugal)



***Thank you !***





# March 2021



# Committee on the Rights of the Child

# Benoit Van Keirsbilck

bvankeirsbilck@defensedesenfants.be

Member of the Committee  
on the Rights of the Child

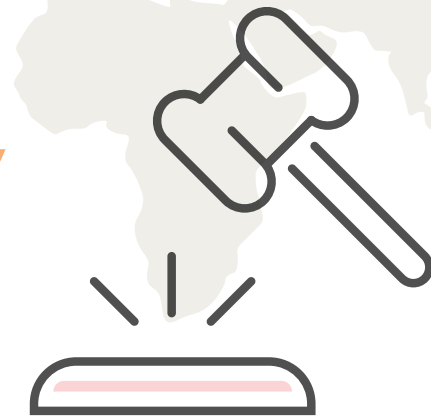


## T

The CRC protects the child from any form of violence (art. 19).

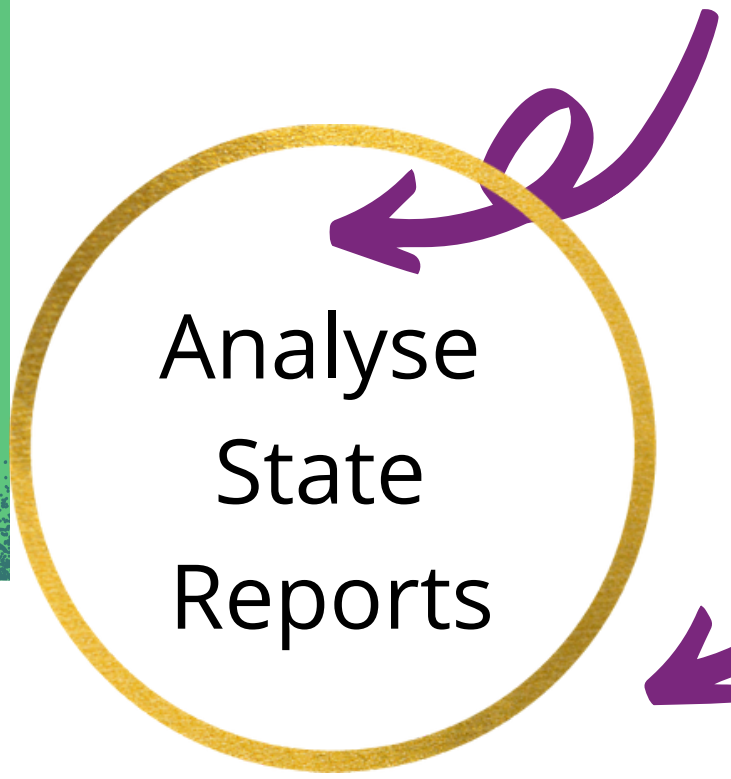
States have to promote recovery  
and reintegration (art. 39)

# OP on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography



+ all other articles

# Role of the Committee



Analyse  
State  
Reports



Draft  
recommendations



receive individual  
complaints

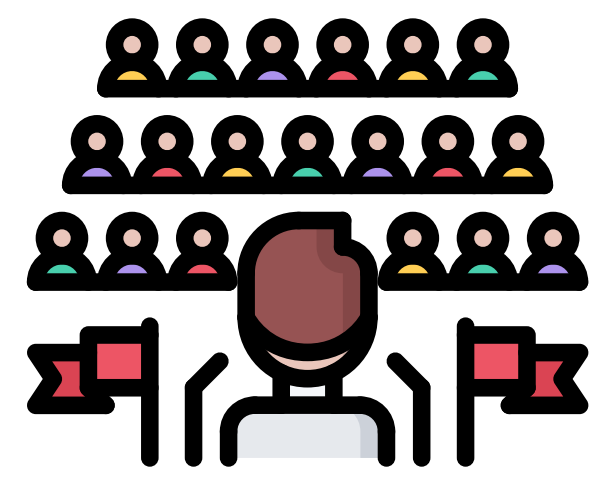


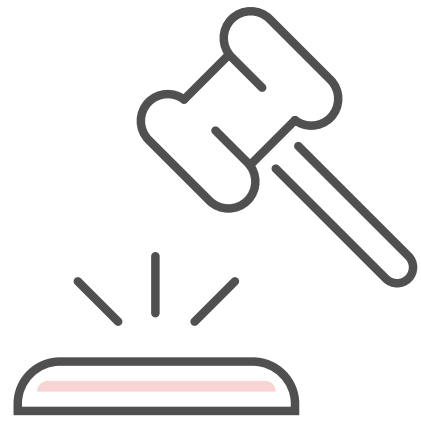
Conduct  
inquiries

adopt General  
Comments



Organise  
Days of  
General  
Discussion



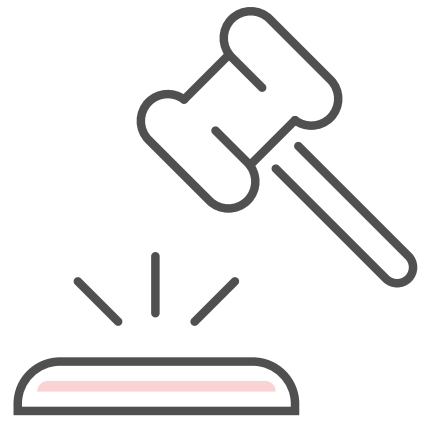


# 3

General Comment No. 13 (2011): The right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence :

- violence occur in the family
- Protection against all forms of violence
- All appropriate...measures
- Range of interventions -prevention, identification, reporting, referral, investigation treatment



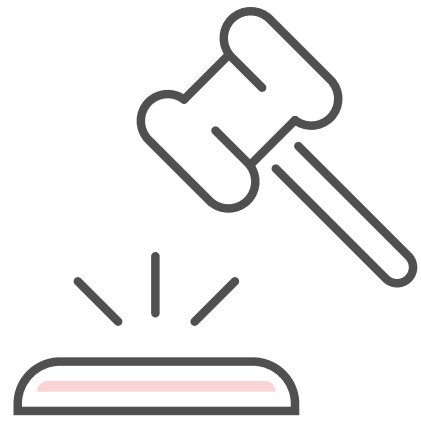


# 4

## General Comment No. 20 rights of the child during adolescence

- vulnerability of various groups of adolescence to violence and abuse (girls, LGBTI, migrants, roma, ...)
- Gender based violence / traditional concept of masculinity
- scaling up institutional programmes on prevention and rehabilitation, and the social reintegration of adolescent victims

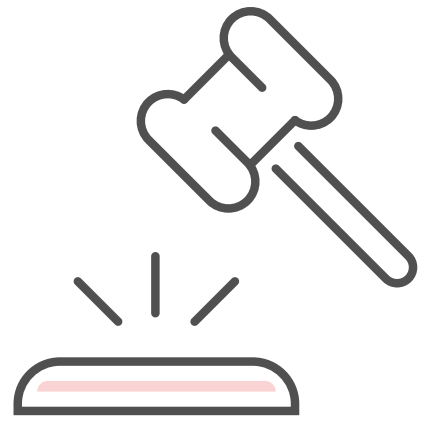




# 5

## General Comment No. 22 on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families :

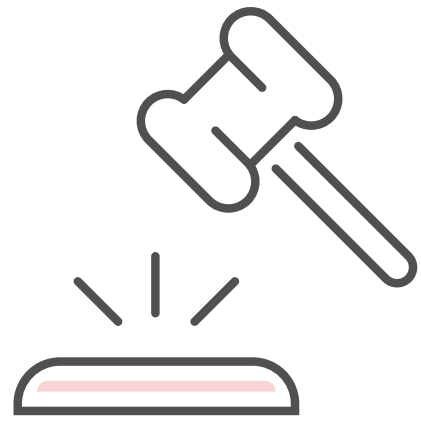
- protection against risks, such as gender-based, sexual and other forms of violence and trafficking for sexual or labour exploitation
- specific policies and measures, including access to child-friendly, gender-sensitive and safe judicial and non-judicial remedies



# 6

Recommendations on violence against children in the concluding observations concerning the CRC :

- Violence against children is identified as one of the nine clusters in the reporting guidelines
- Reference to the SDG (especially 16.2)
- inadequacy of legislation (prohibition of violence)

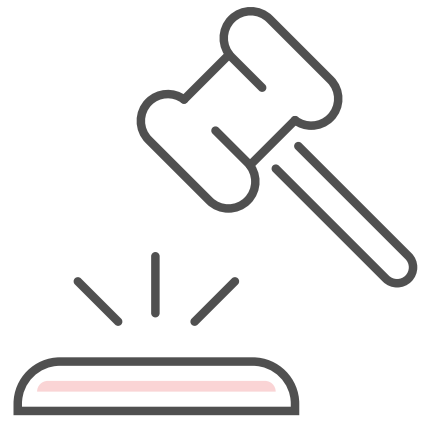


# 7

## COB :

- increase penalties for offences against children
- repeal legal provisions that excuse perpetrators of domestic violence
- repeal all legal provisions that authorize, condone or lead to child sexual abuse and criminalize marital rape
- minimum age for sexual consent
- repeal all legislation treating child victims as offenders

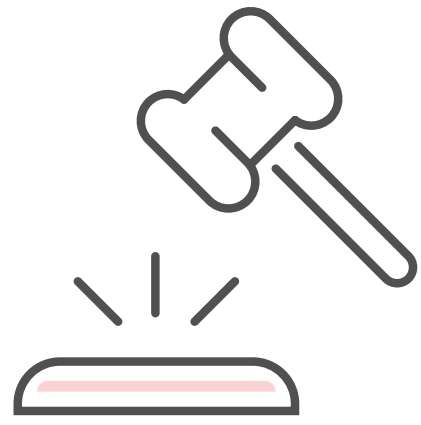




# 8

## COB :

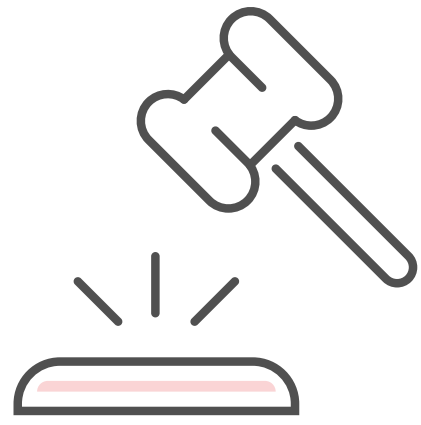
- adoption of the national plan to prevent and respond to violence against children
- establish specific child protection units, police units to combat violence against children(ex : Sexual Offences Unit, multisectoral child welfare committees, one-stop centres, specialized domestic violence units or child and gender protection units)
- allocation of adequate resources to addressing the root causes of violence and abuse



# 9

COB :

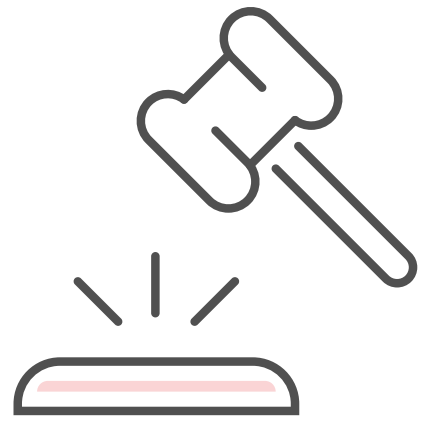
- establishment of reporting/complaint mechanisms
- establishment of independent inquiry, investigation, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators, training of law enforcement personnel and providing support for recovery/rehabilitation, compensation/reparation to victims



# 10

COB :

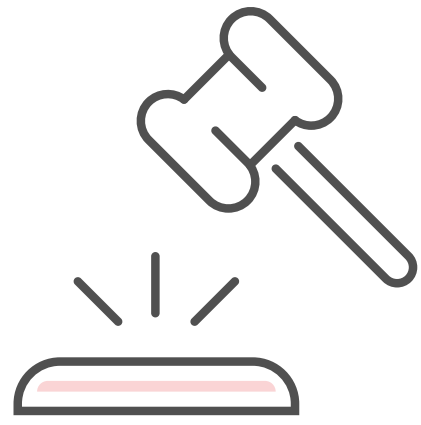
- prohibiting corporal punishment by law in all settings or partially in schools, penal institutions, detention and alternative care settings
- establish a complaints mechanism so that children can safely and confidentially report violence
- strengthening and expanding awareness-raising programmes
- adoption of national action plan for FGM (and other harmful practices)



# 11

## COB :

- establish mechanisms, procedures and guidelines to ensure the mandatory reporting of cases of child sexual abuse and exploitation
- conduct awareness-raising activities
- child-friendly and effective reporting channels
- regular training to the relevant professionals on identification of victims or on gender stereotyping
- early detection and reporting mechanisms

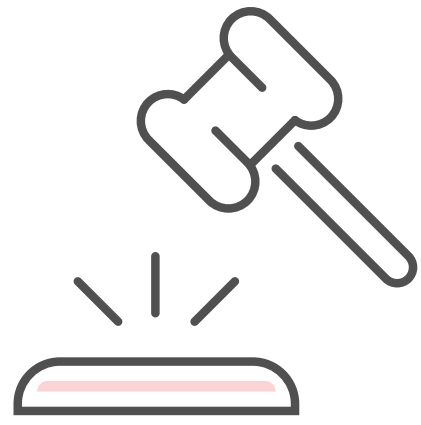


# 12

COB :

- paying more attention to the gender dimension of sexual exploitation and abuse against girls
- attention to existence of helpline and its availability to all the children and awareness about it among children
- 

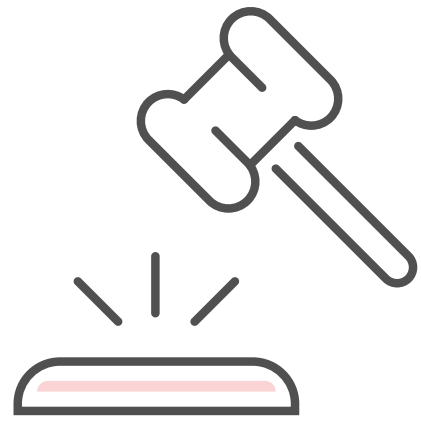




# 13

## COB :

- lack of sufficient protection for victims including against stigmatization, exclusion and retaliation from perpetrators and insufficient support for victims, including physical and psychological rehabilitation of child victims
- ensure access to health services, including mental health services, necessary support, including recovery and social reintegration assistance, counselling and shelters and that child victims of violence, abuse and neglect are provided with effective remedies.



# 14

communications and investigations:

- one case contained the issue of violence against children, more specifically, the risk of a girl being subjected to FGM if deported and the Committee concluded that the failure of the State party to consider the best interests of the child when assessing such alleged risk consists the violation of articles 3 and 19 of the Convention.



THANK YOU



FOR YOUR ATTENTION

## **Presentation Isabella Mastropasqua**

### **The role of the Juvenile Justice Services in taking care of child victims of sexual offences**

Art. 609 decies of the Italian Criminal Code - "Communication to the Juvenile Court" (supplemented by Law 66/1996, Law 269/1998 and subsequent amendments) – establishes the intervention of the Juvenile Justice Services in the event of sexual offences (articles 600, 600-bis, 600-ter, 600-quinquies, 601, 602, 609-bis, 609-ter, 609-quinquies, 609-octies and 609-undecies committed to the detriment of minors, or for the crime provided for in article 609-quater or for the crimes provided for in Articles 572 and 612-bis).

Additionally, emotional and psychological support for the offended child is ensured at all stages and levels of the proceedings by the presence of the child's parents or other persons chosen by the minor, as well as of groups, foundations, associations or NGOs with proven experience in supporting the victims of the offences referred to in the first paragraph. These entities are registered in a special list of persons entitled to this purpose, with the consent of the minor, and are admitted by the prosecuting judicial authority.

Paragraph 3 specifies that, in any case, the child is guaranteed the assistance of the juvenile services of the Administration of Justice and of the services provided by the local authorities.

Paragraph 4 specifies that the services specified in the third (3) paragraph are also used by the judicial authority at every stage and level of the proceeding.

According to this article and in the absence of a specific provision, all the services which are potentially responsible for taking care of minors are generally tasked with offering support to child victims of sexual offences. Not-for-profit organisations, health services, local authorities, juvenile justice services are all entitled to provide support and help even when they do not receive specific instructions.

In line with the faulty transposition into Italian national law of directive 29/2012 on victims' rights, there is still a lack of a structured, systematic approach to cases of child victims of sexual offences. This has led to different practices being implemented at a local level as a result of specific local policies.

In line with these specific local policies, there exist extremely different practices for taking care of child victims from a social standpoint in Italy.

There are three different modes of intervention:

- Full delegation to specialised health and community services, as they are considered to be more competent when it comes to dealing with the complexity of the phenomenon.
- Integration between justice and community services, based on operational protocols defined at a local level that ensure a multidisciplinary and multi-agency approach so as to make the most of the specific institutional competences and to guarantee a holistic approach.
- Full delegation to the Justice services, as a result of a lack of local services or because these are not considered to be adequate by the local juvenile judiciary.

The limits of this complex organisation are clear and I will try to summarise them.

- An uneven service offering throughout the nation with serious repercussions on support services and with the risk of causing inequalities.
- The new jurisdiction, in juvenile justice services, over often young victims has not been adequately supported in terms of additional skills required to assist such significantly different users (working with adolescents and children and with trauma is not the same).

- The differentiation of the place of care makes it difficult to collect data and monitor the phenomenon.

But beyond the critical points, it is necessary to highlight that there are many good practices developed at a local level in the field of integrated care and restorative justice practices.

Also at a national level, a working table at the Ministry of Justice on victims' rights represents a significant step towards establishing a harmonised course of action.

# Initial approach

How best practices can inspire effective approach:  
examples from Finland and Belgium

Case study  
SK

## CASE STUDY



14YO OLD  
GIRL  
-SEXUALLY  
ABUSED

TOOK  
PLACE IN A  
SPORTS  
SUMMER  
CAMP

THE COACH

## STEPS TAKEN

- parents were informed by another parent of a co-player
- SK was taken by her parents back home
- they visited a lawyer
- incident was in August-delay in report
- first assessment by me




## STEPS TAKEN

- report was made to the respective police department
- the girl interviewed after an appointment scheduled
- female officers interviewed the girl
- the file was complete with all of the interviews conducted with the girls of the team that wanted to





## LEGAL PROCESS

- The court hearing was postponed twice
- the testimony of the girl was read
- the court was not persuaded about the guilt
-  coach was found innocent



# Family Justice Center Limburg







**Limburg**



**Vlaanderen**  
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# Family Justice Center Limburg

- Multidisciplinary team of professionals - and thus various services - under one roof
- To tackle domestic violence
- Coordinated & systemic (if possible) approach
- Clients can visit (not yet directly accessible)
  - to obtain all the help and the services they need to put an end to the violence
  - to enhance their safety
  - to increase offender accountability



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# Why?

# Core values

People all around the world share the same 3 core values...

- ▶ **Family**
- ▶ **Safety**
- ▶ **Health**

... which are all endangered by domestic violence!

# Domestic violence requires a specific approach

- Common and highly under-reported problem
- Complex and dangerous dynamics
- Those involved often stay in each other's environment
- Devastating impact on children -> intergenerational transfer
- Great social cost
- Gaps in interventions, approach and expertise
- Many services involved -> transcends policy domains, policy levels and competencies





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# What?

# “Take the best of what you already have and bring it all together”



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# Goals of FJC Limburg

- Sustainable safety for the whole family
- Pro-active & low-threshold help offer
- Preventing violence and gaining a clearer picture of it

# Which files come to FJC Limburg?

- Complex files with multiple problems + coordinated approach between welfare, police and justice needed

➡ **from: all Limburg professionals = 1 %**

- All police reports domestic violence

➡ **from: 2 police departments -> 333.000 inh. = 99 %**

**Step 1:**  
**incident & police  
intervention**



+



**Step 2:**  
**police and public  
prosecutor make a  
DV-file**



+



**Step 3:**  
**risk assessment  
& triage**



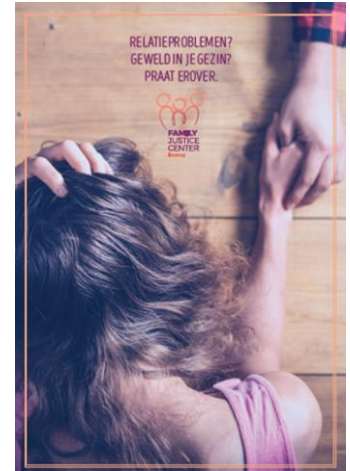
+





=

letter of public prosecutor  
and brochure FJC



=

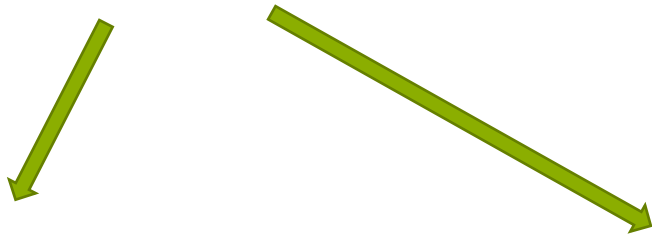
inform clients  
+ information sharing with FJC partners  
+ assessment FJC



# Decision after assessment

**No active FJC offer** = letter & brochure FJC + possibility of FJC consultation for relevant services

## Active FJC offer



### Intake team

First contact within the month

### Trajectory team

First contact within 5 days



# Intake team

- Voluntary, but acclaiming
- Short-term trajectories
- Approach:
  - Speaking about violence & effects
  - Safety planning
  - The impact on children
  - Short and long-term goals
  - Referrals
  - Coordination & follow-up

# Trajectory team

- Clear start-up criteria (structural unsafe families with a troublesome history of accepting professional help)
- Voluntarily, but very intensive and acclimating
- Longer trajectories possible
- Approach:
  - A family-oriented approach based on systemic theory
  - Giving clients insight into existing patterns and relationship dynamics that (possibly) lead to violence
  - Increasing involvement, motivation and responsibility
  - Clearly stating the impact it has on the children
  - Safety planning, goals, referrals, coordination and follow-up



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# Who?

# FJC team

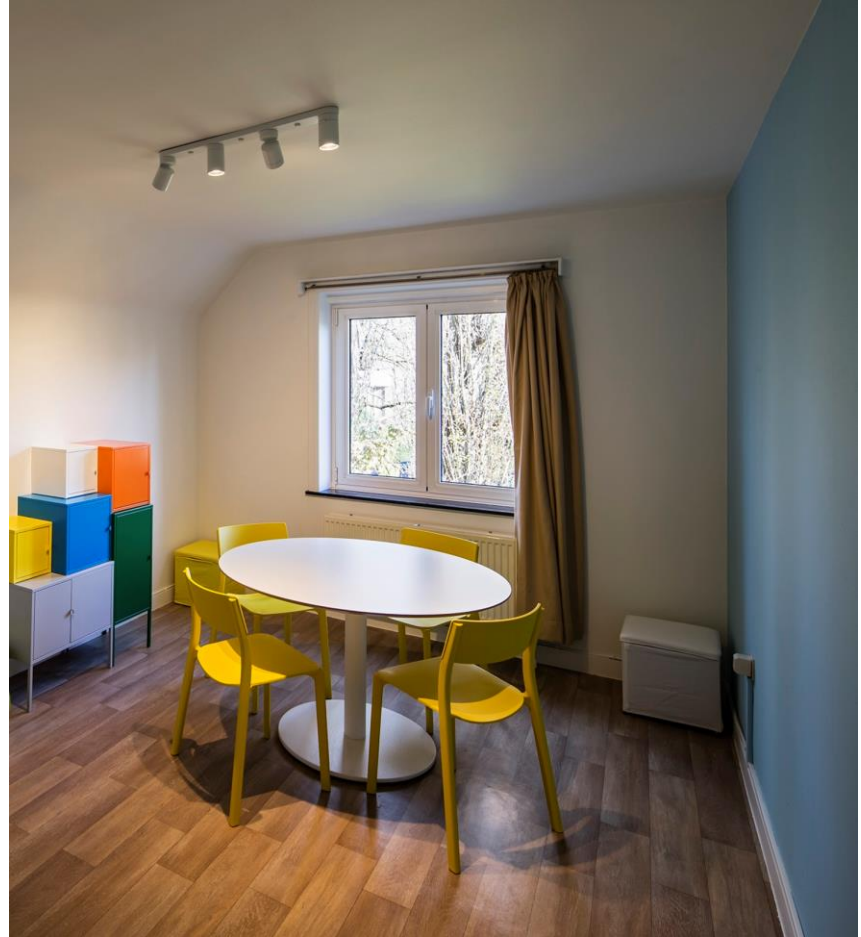
- **Coordination & administration:** 3 FTE -> 3 persons
- **Police:** 4 FTE -> 8 persons
- **Public prosecutor:** 1 FTE -> 2 persons
- **Case workers:** 10 FTE (+ 1 FTE to be recruited) -> 17 persons
  - 50% by local authorities
  - 50% regular / Flemish



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# Where?

# Location Hasselt



# Location Genk



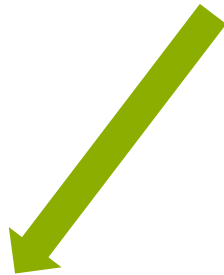




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# Numbers?

**100**  
**unique client systems / families**  
**each month**



**47%**



**32%**



**21%**

# Type of violence

- ▶ (Ex) Intimate partner violence: **78%**
- ▶ Child abuse: **10%**
- ▶ Parental abuse: **6%**
- ▶ High conflict divorce: **5%**
- ▶ Sibling violence: **2%**
- ▶ Elder abuse: **1%**
- ▶ Honor-related violence: **1%**

# Form of violence

- ▶ Physical violence: **59%**
- ▶ Emotional violence: **58%**
- ▶ Threats: **36%**
- ▶ Vandalism: **25%**
- ▶ Economic violence: **5%**
- ▶ Sexual violence: **4%**
- ▶ Confinement / isolation: **4%**
- ▶ Neglect: **3%**
- ▶ Abduction: **1%**

# Children

- ▶ Children -18: **66%**
- ▶ Present at home during violence: **35%**
- ▶ Direct witness to violence: **30%**
- ▶ Alarming parenting situation: **28%**
- ▶ Known at mandated youth facility: **14%**
- ▶ Direct victim of violence: **10%**
- ▶ Supervised by youth court: **4%**

# Risk factors

- ▶ Re-offending domestic violence: 52%
- ▶ Other relevant criminal facts (drugs, fights, ...): 50%
- ▶ Substance use: 39%
- ▶ Fear for safety: 34%
- ▶ Psychological problems: 33%
- ▶ Housing: 20%
- ▶ Finances: 18%
- ▶ Education: 12%
- ▶ Extreme fixation/jealousy: 11%
- ▶ Use of weapons: 7%



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# The FJC has an impact



# Impact

- ▶ **Risk assessment:** in all families
- ▶ **Special attention to the children :** in all families
- ▶ **Information sharing:** in all mid- to high-risk files
- ▶ **A care offer:** in all families
- ▶ **Consultation for professionals**
- ▶ **Evaluation research FJC**
  - Clients: 50% satisfied, 50% very satisfied
  - Partner organizations: more knowledge, great satisfaction with the cooperation
- ▶ **Need for reoffending study**

## Swift approach



## Under one roof



## Team with DV experts



## Pro-active approach



## Multidisciplinary coordination



## Structural risk assessment



## Tailor-made approach





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# Challenges & ambitions

## Roll-out across Limburg



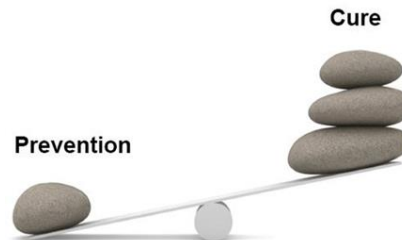
< Pressure on professionals



## Accessibility



## Prevention



## Structural funding



> Attention for children



## Expertise center





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# Contact

Sabrina Reggers

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[www.fjclimburg.be](http://www.fjclimburg.be)

DEPARTEMENT WELZIJN VOLKSGEZONDHEID EN GEZIN

Afdeling Justitiehuisen



# **LASTA - Multi-Professional Risk Assessment Method implemented in Finland**

E-PROTECT International Workshop 24.3.2021

Taina Laajasalo, Chief Specialist, Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare



# Finnish Barnahus project (2019-2023)

Launched in June 2019 by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in collaboration with the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare and the five university hospital districts with their Barnahus-units (forensic psychiatry/psychology centers)



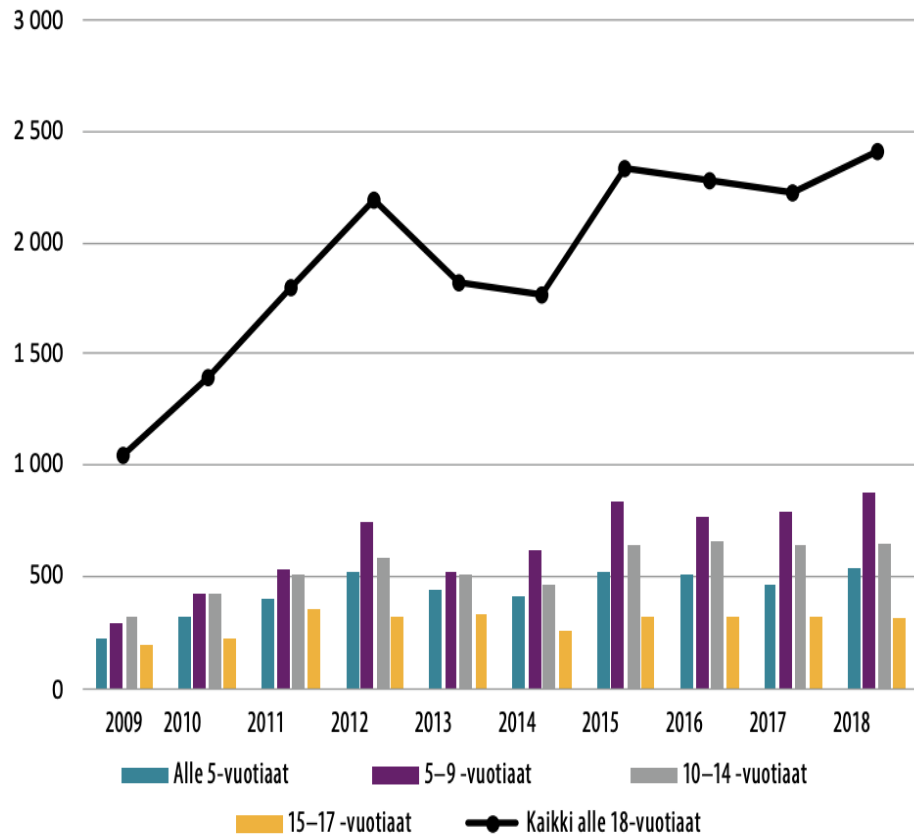
# Barnahus



- Five co-ordinators in each of the hospital districts (on each of the “Barnahus-centers”)
- Close collaboration with relevant stakeholders: social services, police organization, prosecution, health care, universities, NGO’s



# The Finnish context



**Kuvio 6.** Lapset ja nuoret poliisin tietoon tulleiden lähisuhdeväkivaltarikosten uhreina 2009–2018 (lähde: Suomen virallinen tilasto 2019).

- Mandatory to report all types and all incidents of violence towards children not only to the CPS but also to the police → number of reports increasing on Finland
- Severe delays in processes
- Services, including the five Barnahus-type units struggling to cope with the increasing amount of cases
- Lengthy pre-trial investigations by the police not always the child's best interest

## Early, holistic, structured decision making necessary!

- Fitting together the different kind of needs (care, protection, treatment) with the requirements of the pre-trial investigation is the critical stage in terms of the successful service path
- **LASTA-seula –model as part of the solution:**
  - intended to create a well-structured decision making routine and tool to improve information flow and co-operation between different parties *at the earliest stage after the report of abuse has been made*
  - a way to ensure that the best interest of the child are approached from a *variety of perspectives* (judicial, child protection, physical and mental health)

1 / 4

LASTA-SUULA TAUSTATUTKARTOITUSLOMAKE

<b>1. Taustatiedot</b>					
a) R/S-mu: [ ]	b) Ilmoitus tehty pöytäkirja:	c) Lastensuojeluilmoitus tehty:	d) Konsultointipyyynnön saapumispvm:	e) Lomakkeen käyttöpvm:	f) Lasta-seula käsitteilyn pvm:
g) Lapsen nimi:	h) Lapsen hetu:		i) Lapsen ikä: [ ]	j) Lapsen sukunimi:	
k) Lapsen asioista vastaava ns. oma työntekijä: <sup>1</sup>					
l) Epäilyä rikosta tutkittaessa polisi:					
<b>2. Epäily rikos ja sen viimeisin tapahtuma-aika</b>					
a) Tapahtuma-aika:	Kerran tapahtuva Toistuvasti tapahtuva	[ ] [ ]	kylä ei	Liiketoiminta:	
b) Onko epäilyt rikos:	Pahoisnimitys (pp) Seksuaalirikos (SERI)	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]		
c) Epäilty oleva rikos:	Muu. Mikä? [ ]	[ ]	[ ]		
<b>3. Somaattiset tutkimukset ja niiden kiireellisyyssarvio</b>					
a) Somaattiset tutkimukset on tehty. Paikka ja pvm:	[ ]	[ ]			
b) Kiireellisyysarvio	[ ]	[ ]			
Akuutti	pp >T1;14] vrk tai havaittava vamma: tutkimus heti, pälyvystyksiläissati; SERI < 72h tai haittaa vaativia vammoja: tutkimus heti, pälyvystyksiläissi	[ ]	[ ]		
Kiireellinen	SERI > 72h, mutta < 2 vko, mahdollisimman pian, lauseke > 1 vrk.	[ ]	[ ]		
Ei kiireellinen	pp > 7 vrk ja lapsi oireeton, tutkimus erikoisen sovitettavana aikana paikallisten käytäntöjen mukaan, SERI > 2 vko, tutkimus erikoisen sovitettavana aikana paikallisten käytäntöjen mukaan	[ ]	[ ]		
<b>4. Lapsen asuminen, suojeluasutus, perhesuhteet, vk / koulu ja lapsen sekä vanhempien äidinkieli ja kansalaisuus</b>					
a) Lapsen asuminen [ ]	kylä ei	[ ] [ ]	Liiketoiminta mm. perheesteistä:		
Molempien vanhempien kanssa	[ ]	[ ]			
Toisen vanhemman kanssa	[ ]	[ ]			
Vuorostajimuksella vanhempien kanssa	[ ]	[ ]			
Sijoitettuna	[ ]	[ ]			
b) Lapsen huoltajuus [ ]	[ ]	[ ]			
Yhteishuoltajuus	[ ]	[ ]			
Oikeushuoltajuus	[ ]	[ ]			
Yhteishuoltajuus; ennenneet	[ ]	[ ]			
Yksinhuoltaja, kuka:	Lapsen:	Äidin:	Iän:		
c) Äidinkieli [ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]		
d) Kansalaisuus	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]		
e) Päivähoito [ ]	[ ]	[ ]	f) Koulu [ ]		

TULOSTA

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TYHJENNA

- Preliminary assessments utilize a half-structured, research-based risk assessment/clinical judgment form
  - Based on a literature search on risk factors of abuse (e.g. related to child and family characteristics, prior service use)
  - Barnahus-staff or a specifically appointed LASTA-co-ordinator collects information from CPS records, health care records and police
- In many, but not all cases, the knowledge of the LASTA-form is utilized in a multi-agency meetings (police, prosecutor, CPS, health care jointly make decisions)
  - i.e. when to send the child to the Barnahus-center to be interviewed by a forensic psychologist?
  - When is it best to cease the the pretrial investigation and instead let the CPS take the lead? What kind of support to give for the child and the family?

## LASTA SCREENING: A BACKGROUND MAPPING FORM

<b>1. Background information</b>			
a) Police officer's R/S number	b) Report made to the police:	c) Child welfare report made:	d) Consultation request arrival date:
e) Child's name:	f) Child's ID number:	g) Child's age:	
h) Designated employee looking after the child's affairs:			
i) Police officer inspecting the suspected offence:			
<b>2. Suspected offence and its latest incident date</b>			
a) Incident date:			
b) Is the suspected offence:			
c) Suspected offence:			
<b>3. Somatic examination and their urgency assessment</b>			
a) Somatic examinations made: Location and date:			
b) Urgency assessment:			
c) Physical abuse < 7 (14) days or observable injury: immediate examination, emergency care; Sexual abuse < 72 h or injury requiring treatment: immediate examination, emergency care			
d) Physical abuse > 7 days and the child is asymptomatic; examination at a separately agreed time according to local practices, sexual abuse > 2 weeks, examination at a separately agreed time according to local practices			
<b>4. The child's housing, guardianship, family relationships, day care / school and the child and the parents</b>			
a) The child's housing:			
b) Custody of the child:			
c) Mother tongue:			
d) Nationality:			
e) Day care:			
<b>5. Existing active cooperation:</b>			

<b>6. Is the child within the scope of treatment / support?</b>		from public health care		from social care			
7. Work for a multidisciplinary meeting / LASTA meeting:		yes	no	could not say	yes	no	could not say
<b>8. Process basics</b>		yes		no			
a) Has the authority previously suspected / found that the child has been sexually abused?							
b) Has the authority previously suspected / found that the child has been sexually abused?							
c) Are there any previous records that may indicate that the child has been subjected to a sexual offence or assault?							
d) Is the child pregnant / does the child have sexually transmitted diseases / has the child had sexually transmitted diseases?							
e) Does the child have long-term illnesses? Please specify:							
f) Are there any records of previous traumatic experiences?							
g) Does the child have recurring or otherwise significant visits to public health care?							
h) Does the child have recurring or otherwise significant visits to private health care?							
i) Does the child have recurring absences from health care visits?							
j) Any records of the child's risk behaviour?							
k) Any records of behavioural or emotional regulation problems (e.g. behavioural disorder)?							
l) Any indications of developmental problems of the child?							
m) Any other significant information related to the child's state of health and development (e.g. neglected care and attention, neglected vaccines)?							
n) Any indications of neglect of dental care?							
<b>9. Details on parents, family and conditions</b>							
a) Does the child / family have a significant migration history?							
b) Do there concern other children in the family / families?							
c) Does the parent or other of the parents of the child have a positive attitude towards physical punishment in the upbringing of their child / children? Enter additional details in the section on where the information was obtained.							
d) Child Protective Services' emergency home visits							
e) Police assignments related to domestic violence and / or domestic disturbance							
f) Is there a dispute between the parents about the child's custody, housing or meeting rights?							
g) Does the parent / do the parents / other family members have substance abuse problems, mental health problems, gambling or other addictions? Record the existing care or service contact, if known, into the Additional information section.							
h) Do the parents have significant or multiple stress factors in their lives (e.g. inadequate social network, fatigue, financial difficulties, illness or relationship problems)?							
i) Do the parents have previous experiences of violence or other traumatic experiences?							
j) If yes, the person's name and contact details:							
<b>10. Factors related to the child's health and development</b>		Information received		Further info			

j) Is the child subjected to an honour-related or other cultural threat of violence (e.g. female genital mutilation)?		yes		no		could not say		Further information:	
k) Are there any indications of a lack of supervision and / or care?									
<b>12. Based on the current information, are the following risks valid</b>		yes		no		could not say			
a) Risk of suicide of a parent or other family member?									
b) Risk of family killing?									
c) Risk of persecution of a parent or other family member?									
d) Any other concerns about parents, family or circumstances?									
<b>13. The case follow-up</b>									
a) Request for executive assistance from the Psychiatric Unit for Children and Adolescents:									
b) Grounds for executive assistance:									
c) Child's age									
d) Child's developmental delay									
e) Child's mental symptoms									
f) Child may have been groomed									
g) Other reason. Please specify:									
h) Investigation is restricted									
i) Grounds for restricting:									
j) Within reasonable limits									
k) Small amount									
l) No proof									
m) Other reason. Please specify:									
n) Other further measures									
o) The police takes responsibility, hears alone									
p) The police hears, supported by a unit employee									
q) Child Protective Service takes responsibility									
r) Actions to support parents and family:									
<b>14. Alternative hypotheses based on background data:</b>									
Contact details of the person filling in the form:									

- 4 pages (quite lengthy!)
- Variables related to child, parents, family relationships, abuse allegation at hand, prior CPS/police involvement
- Based on the gathered material, decisions of measures to be taken are made

**3. Somatic examination and their urgency assessment**

a) Somatic examinations made. Location and date:			
b) Urgency assessment			
Acute	physical abuse < 7 (-14) days or observable injury: immediate examination, emergency care; Sexual abuse < 72 h or injury requiring treatment: immediate examination, emergency care		
Urgent	Sexual abuse ≥ 72 h, but < 2 weeks, as soon as possible, aim = 1 day		
Not urgent	Physical abuse > 7 days and the child is asymptomatic, examination at a separately agreed time according to local practices, sexual abuse > 2 weeks, examination at a separately agreed time according to local practices		

c) Does the parent or either of the parents of the child have a positive attitude towards physical punishment in the upbringing of their child / children? Enter additional details in the section on where the information was obtained.

Have there been

d) Child Protective Services' emergency home visits

e) police assignments related to domestic violence and / or domestic disturbance

f) Is there a dispute between the parents about the child's custody, housing or meeting rights?

D) Actions to support parents and family:

# Summary

- LASTA-seula seems to improve the information flow and co-operation between different parties
- In some cities/areas of Finland has become "normal practice" for all cases of suspected child abuse
- Supports the police and prosecutor in making better informed decisions on the extent of the investigation and supports a more nuanced assessment of the needs of the child in terms of protection and support.
- However, currently there are legislative barriers, which hinder the scaling up for this practice. For example, sharing the child's health information based on the records, which is an essential part of the risk assessment, is complicated.
- Collecting the information takes time – resource needs are considerable!





**Kiitos! Thank you!**



# **E-PROTECT – “Enhancing Protection of Children – victims of crime”**

**International workshop**

**24<sup>th</sup> of March 2021**





- BACKGROUND;
- OBJECTIVES OF THE METHODOLOGY;
- HOW THE METHODOLOGY WAS DEVELOPED;
- CONTENTS AND ORGANISATION





## Chapter 1 Child-sensitive JUSTICE

### Key objectives

- ❖ Explain what the key international and European legal texts protecting child victims of crime are;
- ❖ Highlight the key principles enshrined in strategic documents such as the European Directive on victims of crime and the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- ❖ Demonstrate how the principles, standards, and rights provided in the legal texts should be translated into quality standards for practice, as well as, professional models for practice.



## Chapter 2: Multi-disciplinary and Interagency Cooperation in the individual assessment

### Key objectives:

- ❖ Explain the critical value of multi-disciplinary and interagency cooperation for a comprehensive rights-based individual assessment;
- ❖ Highlight the multiple challenges multi-disciplinary and interagency cooperation presents;
- ❖ Understand and build on the role of the third person.



## Chapter 3: Procedural Safeguards of the Individual Need's Assessment

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### Key objectives:

- ❖ Review the procedural safeguards that need to be in place for the individual assessment to prevent secondary- victimisation;
- ❖ Examine how these safegurads need to be applied with an apparoach that is respectful of child victims and their rights as children;





# Timeliness



## INITIAL ASSESSMENT

- ✓ Within 48 hours
- ✓ By the caseworker who will follow the process
- ✓ First contact
- ✓ Identification of nature of risks, risk level and timeframe for intervention
- ✓ Immediate physical protection health and safety
- ✓ Basic needs such as food, shelter, medical care
- ✓ Determination of frequency of monitoring

## COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT

- ✓ Completed within one month
- ✓ In-depth and holistic view of the child's situation
- ✓ Identification of risks and harm factors but also positive influences, resources and strengths
- ✓ Child participation in the assessment
- ✓ Identification of comprehensive set of needs
- ✓ Follow-up action no later than two weeks after completion

Based on Inter Agency Guidelines for Case Management & Child Protection (2014). The Role of Case Management in the Protection of Children: A Guide for Policy & Programme Managers and Caseworkers, January 2014.



# Accessible information

## GOALS AND MAXIMUM TIME LIMITS - BARNAHUS - ICELAND

Suspicion of abuse, or disclosure from a child, should be reported immediately to the Child Protection Services (CPS). Once a report has been received, the CPS must take action to assess the situation of the child within a week, maximum 7 days. In acute cases, in particular if the child is at risk, the CPS acts on the same day, or at the latest the day after.

The mental health assessment should ideally take place within 2 weeks after disclosure/reported suspicion. The time limit can be determined on the basis of an assessment of the child's characteristics, such as age, the child's situation, such as relation between the suspected perpetrator and the child, and other variables. For some children it is important to make the assessment and start therapy directly after the forensic interview, whereas in other cases, it is possible to wait 2-3 weeks. The time period between disclosure/reported suspicion and mental health assessment should never exceed 4 weeks.

Medical examination should take place between 2-4 weeks after disclosure/reported suspicion, except in acute cases where medical assessment should take place within 72 hours of the abuse.

The time limit for [medical or mental health intervention for non-offending family/care-givers/support persons] is similar to that applying in the case of the child victim. The therapist and doctors meet the non-off t the same time as the child. If the non-off parents/caregivers are in need of assessment and treatment, it is provided by the CPS outside of the Barnahus.



## RIGHT TO INFORMATION FROM CHILDREN'S AND PROFESSIONALS' PERSPECTIVES



### PROFESSIONALS' VIEW CHILDREN'S VIEW

#### APPROPRIATE INFORMATION

Importance of information	It is very important for children to be sufficiently informed and understand proceedings. However, they often do not feel sufficiently informed and lack explanations, causing considerable insecurity and anxiety.
Clear rules on who gives information, when, on what, and how are necessary – but not necessarily implemented	There seems to be a wide range of practices. Information does not seem to be systematically provided throughout proceedings and often depends on personal initiatives by professionals and parents.

#### PERSONS INFORMING CHILDREN

Victim support services are important source of information; professionals provided examples of such services providing practical information and preparing children for hearings	In several countries, victim and witness support specialists are not widely available or play too passive a role.
Judges usually give information at beginning of hearings	Children generally would like to receive more information from judges.
Parents are main or only source of information	Parents have a pivotal informative role, even if they are parties to the conflict or lack understanding of the proceedings themselves.
Hold ambivalent view of parents' role and suggest that professionals provide information	Children in general prefer to receive information from their (foster) parents and their role is very important to them. However, they also see that parents may try to influence them while giving information, particularly in civil proceedings. The most preferable option is to receive information from professionals and parents.
Emphasise importance of coordinated provision of information via a continuous support person	A child-friendly approach is necessary and building up a continuous relationship whenever possible. There are positive examples of legal counsel, legal guardians and ad hoc administrators, but they do not seem to be systematically appointed as children usually do not mention them





## TYPE OF INFORMATION

Information should focus on the phases of proceedings, children's rights, availability of support and outcome	Children consider it equally important to receive information about the presence of other persons (particularly parties to proceedings); professionals' functions; the extent of disclosure of the information provided; the availability of procedural safeguards; and behavioural rules during hearings. The presence of others is often ambivalently assessed and not necessarily appreciated during hearings, unless the persons show clearly that they represent the children's interests.
Importance of information about protective measures	If information about the reason for/use of protective measures such as video-links and video recordings is not clear, children feel unsafe even though those safeguards may be in place.
Notifications and summonses are usually not child-friendly	Children complain about often receiving these documents without explanation, making them feel like defendants. When this type of legal and procedural information is addressed only to parents, children tend not to read it.
Too much information is confusing	Children agree that too much information is not necessarily helpful and that it should focus on the proceedings and implications for their future, not too much on the legal background and details of the case



## CHILD-FRIENDLY INFORMATION MATERIAL

There is a lack of use of child-friendly material, particularly in civil proceedings	Children rarely reported receiving child-friendly material.
Professionals in some Member States provide examples of existing information material, mostly developed by NGOs	Existing leaflets and information packets are not consistently made available.

## TIMELY PROVISION OF INFORMATION

Not specifically addressed by professionals	Children stress the importance of receiving information early enough to be prepared for the different phases of proceedings.
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## ADAPTATION OF INFORMATION TO DIFFERENT NEEDS OF CHILDREN

Not specifically addressed by professionals	Special needs of children are not always met in the information process
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## MEASURES OF PROVIDING INFORMATION

Recommend using a range of child-friendly measures, such as toys and drawings, to illustrate the situation in court, who will be present and their roles	Children stress that friendly behaviour from professionals is as important as specific measures so that they can develop a relationship with them and easily contact them, particularly in civil proceedings.
Informing children through pre-trial visits to court is helpful	Children highly appreciate familiarisation with physical settings and people involved but information needs to be accurate and reflect the process on the day of the hearing.
Professionals should try to use child-friendly language when informing children	The majority of children report that professionals' lack of interpersonal skills, verbal and non-verbal, frequently made them scared or nervous. Children admit that they often do not understand the information given. They prefer persons of trust to give information so that they feel free to ask questions.
Written information should be provided in combination with counselling and support	Written materials are assessed positively if explained by an adult of trust together with a professional.



# Transparency

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- The individual assessment needs to follow a transparent process – while respecting the principles of privacy and confidentiality. This means that the child needs to be aware of how the assessment will be conducted, what will be decided and on the basis of which elements. The process has to be transparent for the child to be able to participate, feel respected, and be empowered.



# Responsiveness

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- The individual assessment needs to respond to the child's needs and be acted upon. It cannot consist in a superficial assessment of the child's situation, with a set of measures applied on the basis of similar cases.



# Privacy and confidentiality

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- Privacy is a child's right, recognised in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As such, it is intrinsic to the child's dignity and right to be respected like all human beings. In relation to child victims, privacy is a child's right, recognised in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As such, it is intrinsic to the child's dignity and right to be respected like all human beings. In relation to child victims, privacy is a child's right, recognised in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As such, it is intrinsic to the child's dignity and right to be respected like all human beings. In relation to child victims, privacy is a child's right, recognised in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As such, it is intrinsic to the child's dignity and right to be respected like all human beings.





# Legal guardian

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- A child's legal guardian is usually her or his parents, or one of the parents. However, in cases where the usual legal guardian or if there is a conflict of interests between the child's and the legal guardian, the judge will decide to appoint a new guardian for the child;





# Legal representation

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- Child victims are entitled to receiving assistance and support by a guardian/legal representative, if and where applicable. Legal assistance comprises the various means that support a person in accessing a remedy. It includes legal representation and legal aid, which covers legal counsel and associated fees;





THANK YOU!



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