JUST-JACC- 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

WP3: Capacity building: online

D3.3 Capacity building: online impact assessment report

WP3 Leader: Law and Internet Foundation

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: Lachezar Afrikanov, External evaluator	20/02/2022
Version 2	Reviewed & updated by: Snezhana Krumova (LIF)	21/02/2022
Version 3	Updated by: Lachezar Afrikanov, External evaluator	21/02/2022
Version 3	Reviewed by: Daniela Ilieva (LIF)	22/02/2022

Table of contents

1. Executive summary

The current impact assessment report provides synthesis of key findings and conclusions from external evaluation of WP3, related to Capacity building activities online, which includes update of the E-PROTECT platform, 5 Virtual events and 1 Individual Needs Assessment Methodology (IAM) Simulation Game. The impact assessment targets results achieved in the period between March 2020 and February 2022. The overall impact assessment was based on several key sources of information: end-users (target groups) feedback; partners' feedback; observation notes of the external evaluator; online statistics regarding the relevant outputs (e.g., E-PROTECT platform, IAM Simulation Game).

Partners have aimed to succeed despite the unprecedented challenges of COVID-19, which influenced negatively not only the sector of EU projects, but all levels of society.

With the active role of project leading organisation (LIF, BG) and the dissemination coordinator (SEERC, EL), the partnership managed to update most sections of the E-PROTECT platform (including news, events, partners and resources section), conducted all 5 events planned and produced the gamification learning experience envisaged.

Overall, both partners and target groups are satisfied with the outcomes and there are different sources of evidence pointing to the conclusion that all three main outputs mentioned contributed to encouraging target groups to apply in practice Directive 2012/29. The virtual events enabled professional communities from different countries to engage in a professional exchange and peer to peer learning. The IAM Simulation game offered an interactive and novel way of learning about specific topics from the different chapters of the elaborated Individual Assessment Methodology.

Along with the very positive achievements, there is still one area for improvement in terms of achieving wider impact, which can be addressed in the final months of project implementation related to increasing the number of users of the IAM Simulation Game.

2. Evaluation Methodology

According to E-PROTECT II Evaluation strategy the impact assessment under WP3 should place focus on assessing the level of implementation of the following pursued results:

- Provision of interactive virtual environment for the E-PROTECT community;

- Provision of novel approaches in online capacity building for child protection professionals;

- Improved cooperation among competent national authorities, NGOs and/or professional organisations in the field of child victims' rights;

- Target groups' practical application of Directive 2012/29 increased.

The main WP3 activities under evaluation are:

- ChildProtect platform update: continued improvement and support for the platform and its functionalities.

- 5 virtual events: promotion of the individual needs assessment methodology (IAM) with purpose to focus on one of the five chapters among new groups of professionals and regions and sustain interest and application among professionals that had already attended events during the first E-PROTECT project.

- IAM Game/gamification: rendering the already developed Individual Needs Assessment Methodology more accessible to the target groups and any other interested parties (incl. child victims) by presenting it in the form of a simulation game.

In addition to collecting evaluation data from the end-users (target groups), which in project lifetime covered all project activities, the external evaluation was supported by:

- Ongoing observation of activities implementation. The external evaluator attended some of the Virtual events, monitored the platform's evolution and conducted a testing exercise using the IAM game.

- Ongoing communication with project coordinator.

- Interim external reviews of project implementation.

In summary, the overall impact assessment was based on several key sources of information: end-users (participants) feedback; partners' feedback; observation notes of the external evaluator; online statistics for relevant outputs (e.g., IAM).

The impact assessment targets results achieved in the period between March 2020 and February 2022.

It should be noted the project activities were implemented in an unprecedented context, i.e. the ongoing COVID pandemic waves, which disturbed socio-economic activities at all levels across the world. Despite the unprecedented difficulties partners put concerted efforts to fulfil all activities as approved in the application forms or find alternatives, allowed by current critical situation.

3. E-PROTECT Platform update and maintenance

Background

The main functionalities and content of the E-PROTECT platform (http://childprotect.eu/#/en/) were created during the previous E-PROTECT project. Along with hosting all key outputs such as reports and the individual assessment methodology, the platform gives opportunity for internal communication among registered users, setting the ground for continued collaboration.
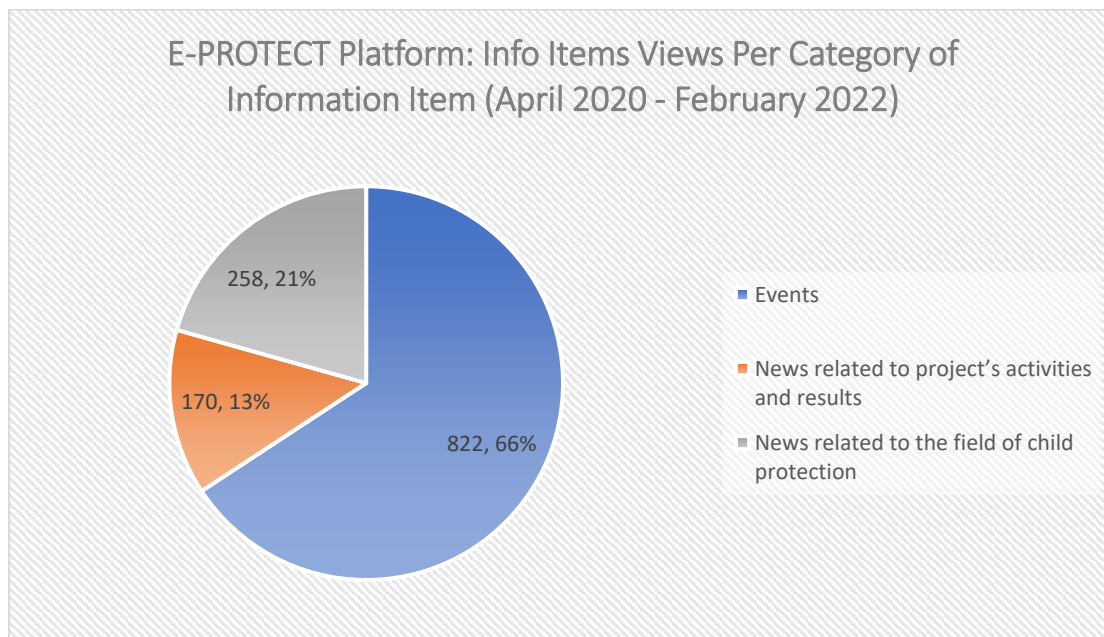
Furthermore, the platform allows for conducting online events. In the previous period the platform was reached by more than 1700 visitors. For current project, partners committed in the application form and in the following implementation plan to update and maintain the platform and reach 2000 visitors.

Findings

Up to February 2021 the overall number of page views reached according to the online statistic module of the platform is: **5500**.

---
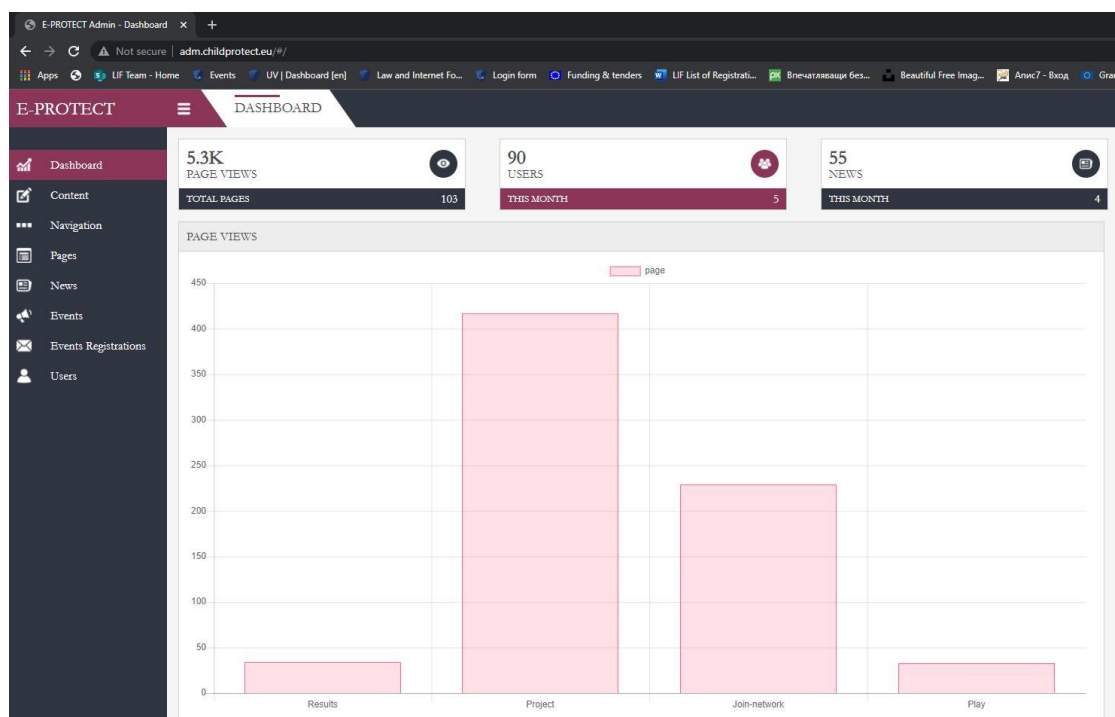
45 info items were published on the platform (9 – announcements of events; 36 – news related to project activities and project-related topics). These items attracted **1250** views, which are distributed across three main categories of info items, visualised in the below graph.

E-PROTECT Platform: Info Items Views Per Category of Information Item (April 2020 - February 2022)

- Events: 822, 66%
- News related to project's activities and results: 170, 13%
- News related to the field of child protection: 258, 21%

With regard to the news section, SEERC team has created an annual schedule. In accordance with it, each month a different partner has been responsible to draft and/or publish relevant news article or a post in order to keep the project's audience engaged and up-to-date with the recent updates in the field of children's protection.

In terms of new resources added, partners published 6 additional documents in English. Currently, the total number of resources in English is 32. The number of resources in the different language versions varies with the highest number being published in Bulgarian language.

In terms of the networking functionality ("Join the Network") the number of professionals registered increased and 90 new members joined the E-PROTECT community.

The new element that was added to the platform's main menu is linked to the IAM Simulation Game to be further elaborated in below section. A new menu called "Play" was added to allow visitors to engage in the game developed. The game was accessed through the website 165

times, which added to the above number of 1250 views of info items, suggests total number of nearly 1420 views.
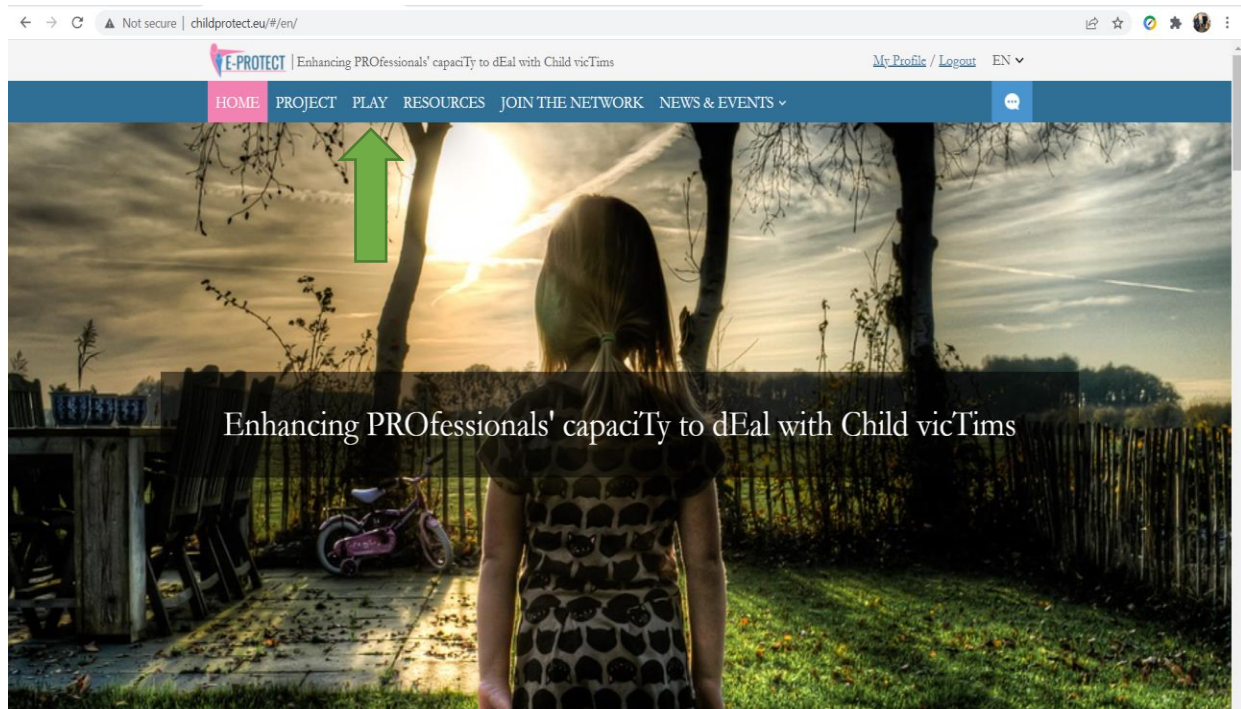
Conclusions

• The reached number of platform visits has been exceeded almost three times.

• The most popular categories of info items are related to project's events and news related to different professional topics, related to the child protection sphere.

• In terms of national language pages, the Bulgarian partners seems to be most active across the partnership.

• In terms of the overall objective of updating the platform, it was achieved in terms of the news and events sections and with embedding a new functionality, linked to gamification. The increased number of registered professionals suggests that the platform continues serving as a networking vehicle, as well.

4. Virtual events

Background

According to project plan 5 virtual events were to be conducted, each of them focusing on one of the five chapters of the Individual Needs Assessment Methodology that had been developed during first EPROTECT project. The main responsible partner for this activity was Romanian Center for European Policies (CRPE).

The target groups of these events were all target groups of the current project and the target set in terms of numbers to attend was 250 participants.

Findings

All five virtual events were conducted. The main parameters are presented in the table below.

No:	Name of event:	Date:	Number of participants:
1.	Child friendly justice in time of pandemic	17.06.2020	16
2.	Cooperation as a key factor in child protective services	17.09.2020	31
3.	Procedural safeguards	04.02.2021	45
4.	Determining the best interest of a child victim of crime	16.09.2021	35
5.	Determining the best interest of a child victim of crime	16.12.2021	33

Total number of participants reached was **160**, which is with 90 participants below the initially planned number. There are several negative factors influencing this result: 1. COVID-19 unprecedented challenges, which focussed public attention on other topics than current

project's focus. 2. There was an increased number of online events (again due to COVID restrictions), which led to dispersing target groups' attendance availability.

The main target groups reached through the event are as follows:

• Event 1 – mainly participants from 4 target groups: judiciary; psychologists; service providers in social services of child protection; social workers;

• Event 2 – mainly participants from 3 target groups: social workers; judiciary; psychologists;

• Event 3 – mainly participants from 3 target groups: psychologists; social workers; judiciary;

• Event 4 – mainly participants from 3 target groups: judiciary; psychologists; service providers in social services of child protection;

• Event 5 - mainly participants from 4 target groups: judiciary; social workers; psychologists; service providers in social services of child protection.

Feedback from participants was collected using a standardised Google form and focussing on exploring key topics such as: Overall satisfaction and Learning outcomes, in line with projects goals (New and interesting information learnt; Increased understanding of Child's rights as defined by Directive 2012/29; Motivation to embed Directive 2012/29 in daily work; Motivation to apply the content from the event in day-to-day work).

The feedback results were described in a dedicated report, produced by the leading partner for this activity and can be summarised, as follows:

SUMMARY TABLE OF PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK FROM VIRTUAL EVENTS*					
*Only data for maximum value response was used, i.e., "Yes" category replies					
Topic/Event	**Event 1**	**Event 2**	**Event 3**	**Event 4**	**Event 5**
Overall satisfaction	93%	66%	93%	89%	91%
New and interesting information was learnt	58%	58%	-	55%	58%

Increased understanding of Child's rights as defined by Directive 2012/29	53%	-	-	55%	-
Motivation to embed Directive 2012/29 in daily work	73%	-	-	-	66%
Motivation to apply the content from the event in day-to-day work	60%	66%	-	67%	66%

Conclusions

• In terms of type of target groups partners were successful in reaching out to key target groups such as judiciary staff; social workers and psychologists. There were limited number of participants from the so-called new target groups such as teachers and medical staff.

• Overall satisfaction of events is high (93%) with only one exception (Event 2). There are numerous factors that might influence the level of satisfaction for Event 2. For example, there might be a mismatch between topics presented and the concrete interests of the majority type of participants that attended, which in the given case were mainly social workers. Another example can be related to the chosen period for conducting the event and also the choice of speakers.

• One of the very positive effects from virtual events is the sustained trend across all events related to participants motivation to embed learnings in their daily practice and more concretely to embed Directive 2012/29 in daily work, which is a key focus of project' objectives.

• Number of participants planned has not been reached to a full extent. The leading partner tried to take mitigating measures like live streaming and more promotion of the events, but still the target was not met. It should be noted that these events took place in the most challenging years caused by COVID-19, when attention of different target groups was focussed on other issues.

6. IAM Simulation Game

Background

The starting point for the Game's delivery was to render the already developed Individual Needs Assessment Methodology (IAM) more accessible to the target groups and any other interested parties (incl. child victims) by presenting it in the form of a simulation game. The game was to be designed through exploring the practical application of the Methodology on the backdrop of case studies. The targeted number of users was at least 600 users.

Findings

The game (https://gamification.childprotect.eu/) was developed around 3 case-scenarios which allow players to immerse themselves in the different layers of the Individual Assessment Methodology and through three different perspectives of the Police Officer (Scenario 1); Social Worker (Scenario 2) and Lawyer (Scenario 3).

Each scenario is based on an example from real life and probes player's knowledge and skills in approaching the situation in the most appropriate manner with the child's interest in the first place. For each question posed by the game, the player can choose from different replies. When a wrong reply is given, the game provides explanation about the right reply and then the player can continue to next level. For every right reply, the player receives 5 points. There are also the so-called misleading answers, which give 2 points, because they are partly true or true in a given instance or context.
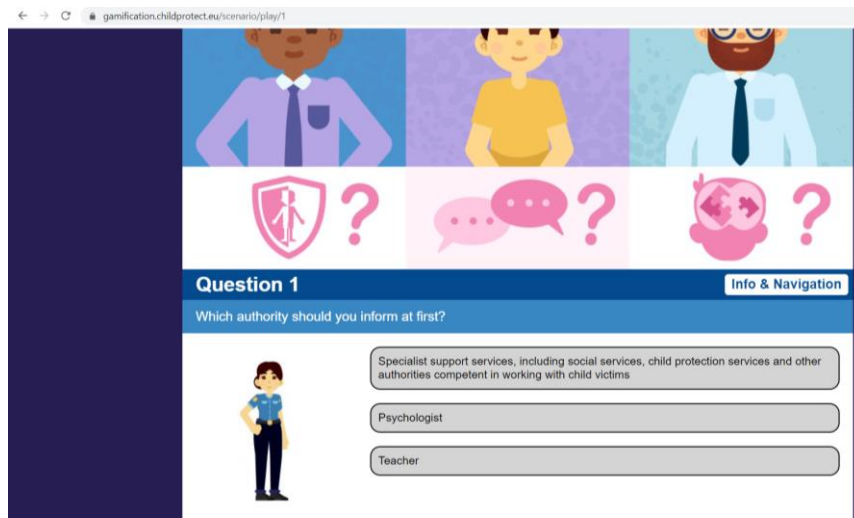
Total number of questions to be answered for Scenario 1 and Scenario 2 are: 19 and for Scenario 3: 20. At the end of the experience, the player receives one's final score and can provide quick evaluation of one's learning and satisfaction with the overall experience.
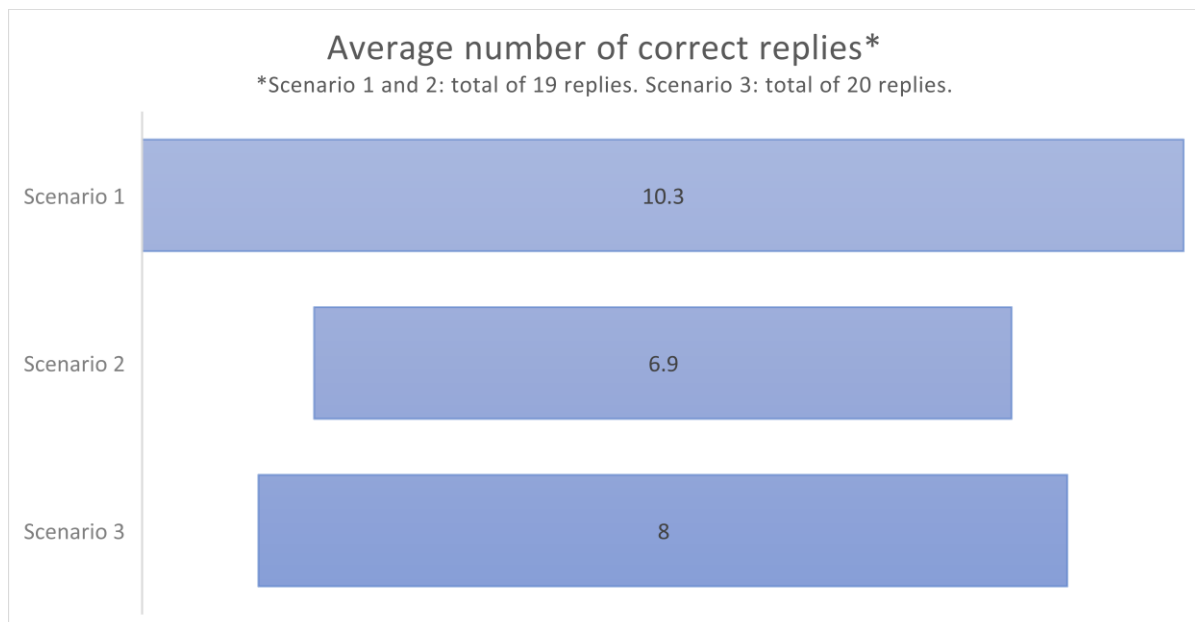
The graphical design of the game uses elements from the graphical design of the promotion videos from previous project (E-PROTECT), which creates sense of continuity, recognisability, and sustainability.

Up to February 2021 the game has been played by 205 professionals. The number of started and completed scenarios can be visualised with the following chart.
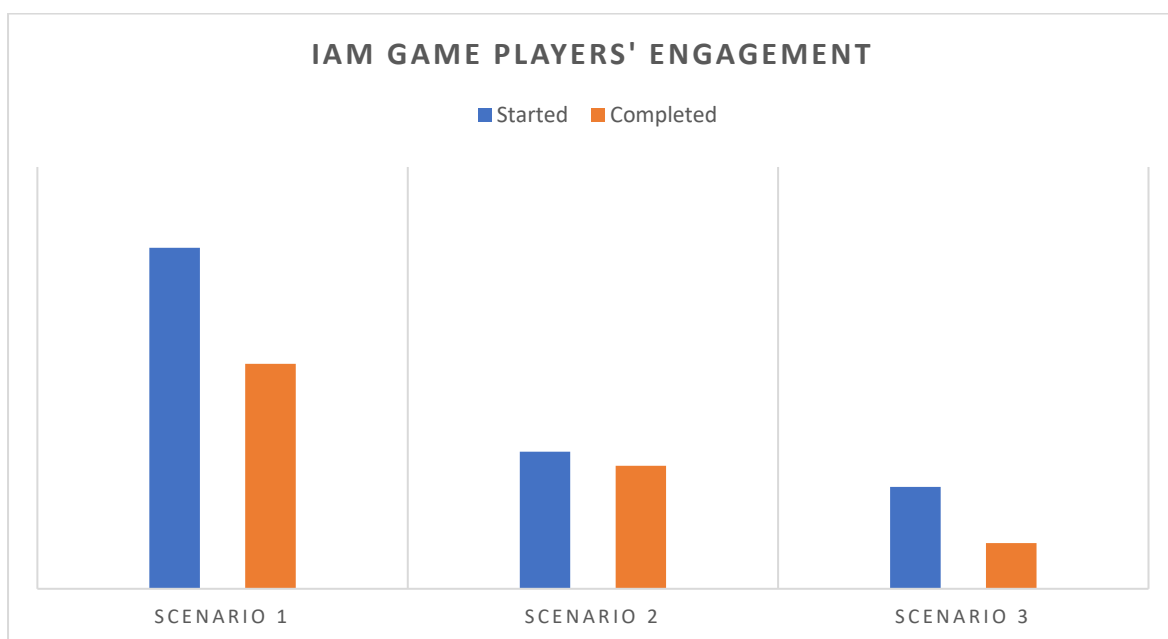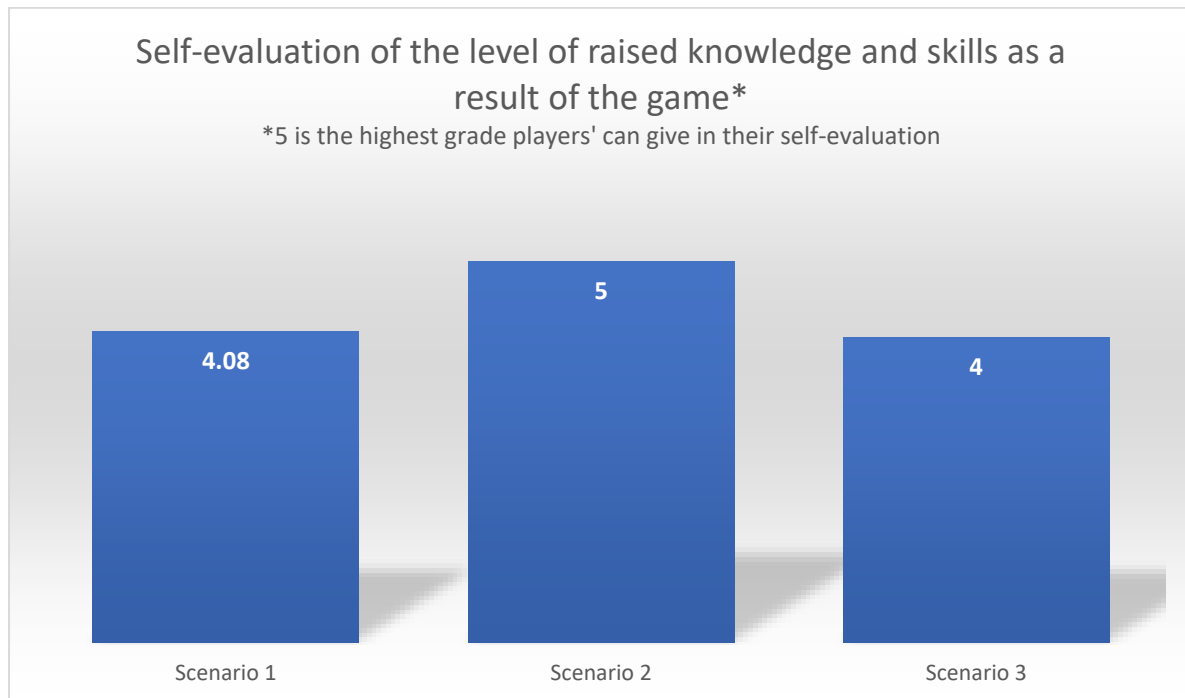
Scenario 1, linked to the role of police officers seems to be attracting the highest level of attention of players. At the same time Scenario 2, which is focussed on social workers is the one, where there is almost equal number of started and completed game sessions, which might be evidence for a sustained interest in this topic.

The average number of correct replies provides information on the entry level of expertise of game's players and the respective added value from the information players receives, when they pick a wrong or misleading answer.

Average number of correct replies*
*Scenario 1 and 2: total of 19 replies. Scenario 3: total of 20 replies.

Scenario 1	10.3
Scenario 2	6.9
Scenario 3	8

From the above graphic it seems that the most difficult scenario was the one focussed on social workers' role and where most of the learning took place. Looking at the results for the other two scenarios with nearly only 50% correct answers the same observation for new learning that occurred can be made.

This observation has been further supported by the players' feedback in the end of their game experience regarding their improved knowledge and skills. On the following chart, it is seen that players confirmed that the game contributed highly to improving their knowledge and skills on the topics promoted by the game.

Self-evaluation of the level of raised knowledge and skills as a result of the game*
*5 is the highest grade players' can give in their self-evaluation

Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
4.08	5	4

Similar ratings, players gave for their overall satisfaction from the gamified learning experience.

Conclusions

• The project partnership managed to create an IAM Simulation Game, aligning to most of the elements in the application form. One small deviation noticed is related to the procedure for choosing case studies, which initially was mentioned to be using as a source of information activities to be conducted within WP2 of the project plan. Due to the slight delay in carrying out activities under WP2 and the change format of some of them, it was decided not to rely on contribution from those for elaboration of the scenarios. It should be noted that scenarios were inspired from real cases while confidentiality of each party was respected. Moreover, the selection of the deployed cases was consolidated among all partners. Still, this does not influence the final product, which matches the vision described in the project concept.

• The game's scenarios provide concrete learning for three key (from the perspective of the Individual Assessment Methodology) groups of professionals – police officers, social workers and lawyers.

• The satisfaction from the game of target groups is categorically positive. The impact of the game on target group's knowledge and skills is strongly evident.

• The main area requiring further action from the partnership in the final months of project implementation is related to the number of game players, which in the initial plan was set to be min. 600 and currently is 205. A possible activity to support further use of the game is launching a paid social media campaign to attract attention of potential users. Another approach might be promoting the game during each project event, planned in the following months.

7. Conclusion

The current evaluation exercise has focussed on confirming the level of achievement of E-PROTECT II partnership through WP3 in implementing several key objectives related to:

• Provision of interactive virtual environment for the E-PROTECT community;

• Provision of novel approaches in online capacity building for child protection professionals;

• Improved cooperation among competent national authorities, NGOs and/or professional organisations in the field of child victims' rights;

• Target groups' practical application of Directive 2012/29 increased.

Partners put substantial efforts to contribute to all objectives listed even though the project was faced by the unprecedented challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which naturally drew the attention of all citizens, including project's target groups and project partners themselves to more urgent matters such as health, family wellbeing and employment.

Stepping on the successful legacy of the first E-PROTECT project, the E-PROTECT platform was further enriched with regular updates on project's events and other relevant information items. Overall, all partners made contribution to this aspect, but still it seems that two of the partners from Greece (Dissemination coordinator) and Bulgaria (Project lead) took the initiative for this activity.

The platform served as a springboard, along with the social media page of the project for a series of 5 Virtual events. Overall satisfaction of target groups with these events is very high. One of the very positive effects from virtual events is the sustained trend across all five events related to participants' motivation to embed learnings in their daily practice and more concretely to embed Directive 2012/29 in daily work, which is a key focus of project's objectives.

The most sophisticated and innovative output reviewed is the IAM Simulation Game. Despite all types of challenges (including sickness of one of the IT developers) partners with the strong leadership of the Bulgarian coordinator managed to finish and launch the game. The

satisfaction from the game of target groups is categorically positive. The impact of the game on target group's knowledge and skills is strongly evident.

There is one area for improvement, which partners can address in the extended period of project implementation, which is related to further promotion of the IAM Simulation gain to reach the number of users planned.