



**Interact – Towards a more efficient cooperation
across borders for the protection of children**

Practical guidance on preventing and responding to trafficking and disappearances of children in migration



H&M FOUNDATION



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**Missing
Children
Europe**



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Acronyms and abbreviations

AMINA	Safeguarding Migrant Children Across Europe
CONNECT	Identifying good practices in, and improving, the connections between actors involved in reception, protection and integration of unaccompanied children in Europe (Project)
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EUROPOL	European Union's law enforcement agency
FRONTEX	European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union
IMPACT	Improving Monitoring and Protection Systems Against Child Trafficking and Exploitation (Project)
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organization
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
KMOP	Family and Childcare Centre
LEA	Law Enforcement Agency
MASH	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation



NRM	National Referral Mechanism
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
UN	United Nations
SUMMIT	Safeguarding unaccompanied children from going missing by identifying best practices and training actors on interagency cooperation (Project)
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNCRC or CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees



1. Introduction

Aim of the handbook

When a child in migration goes missing or is at risk of going missing from care, this situation creates a crossroads of different circumstances, laws and actors. The migration dimension of the child's situation frequently aggravates the risks of disappearances and exploitation, as the child is often in a precarious situation. It also means the responses to the disappearance and exploitation need to be tailored to this specific context. Child protection principles, migration and asylum laws, and specific responses to disappearances – including law enforcement investigation – need to come together to prevent and respond to the disappearance of an unaccompanied child. In addition, challenges related to human trafficking, including labour, criminal and sexual exploitation have to be taken into account. The often very complex situation of a missing child in migration requires a multi-disciplinary and often a cross-border approach in order for the risks confronted by the child to be mitigated, and their rights and needs to be met.

To prevent and respond to a child in migration going missing or falling prey to exploitation, practitioners with different backgrounds are required to work together in a coordinated and efficient way. These actors include law enforcement professionals, social workers, reception professionals, guardians, employees of 116 000 hotlines and others.

This handbook aims to stimulate and disseminate practices on how to better cooperate in prevention, response and after care of missing or exploited children in migration. This handbook is an updated version of the Summit Handbook "Practical Guidance on preventing and responding to unaccompanied children going missing" (2015), and is hence building on both the results of the report "Best practice and key challenges for inter-agency cooperation to safeguard unaccompanied migrant children from going missing" (2015) and the Simulations Report "Towards a more efficient cooperation across



border for the protection of children” (2019). The latter analysed the outcome of the simulations that took place in six countries¹ on two fictive cases of trafficking and missing children in migration: Abena (13, Eritrea) and Qiro (16, Iraqi Kurdistan). The report drew from the conclusions of these cases to formulate policy recommendations

at the EU and national level for an improved transnational cooperation framework.

This handbook does not comprehensively address general practices in the care of children in migration, but only elements that are linked to preventing and responding to their disappearances and exploitation.

¹ Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, Sweden and the UK.



Target group of professionals

Who should use this handbook:

This handbook is addressed primarily at all stakeholders who work directly with unaccompanied children or with disappearances of children and can – or should – have a role to play in:

1. Preventing children in migration from going missing
2. Preventing children in migration from exploitation
3. Responding to the disappearance of a child in migration
4. Responding to the exploitation of a child in migration
5. Providing aftercare to a formerly missing and/or exploited child in migration

These stakeholders typically include:

- > law enforcement agents (frontline police officers, investigators, ...)
- > carers (guardians, legal representatives, social services, reception centre workers, ...)
- > hotlines for missing children (call managers, case managers, operators, ...)
- > immigration officials

It is recommended that stakeholders using the handbook share it with their partners and other actors working on cases of (missing) children in migration to facilitate cooperation.

Tools available in this handbook should be part of a process of interagency collaboration, to achieve the envisaged effect.



The following key agencies and actors play a primary role:

(1) Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA)

National police forces: this group includes both local police and coordinating units specialised in missing cases or in supporting the work of officers at the local level.

Interpol: an international police organisation with 194 member countries. The role of Interpol is to enable better cooperation between police around the world, especially through their high-tech infrastructure offering technical and operational support. INTERPOL's General Secretariat publishes the Yellow Notices at the request of National Central Bureaus (NCBs) and authorised entities. A Yellow Notice helps locate missing persons, often children, or helps identify persons who are unable to identify themselves.

Europol: The European Police Office (commonly abbreviated Europol) is the law enforcement agency of the European Union that handles criminal intelligence and combats serious international organised crime by means of cooperation between the relevant authorities of the member states, including those tasked with

customs, immigration services, borders and financial police etc.

The agency has no executive powers and its officials are not entitled to conduct investigations in the member states or to arrest suspects. Europol, in providing support through information exchange, intelligence analysis, expertise and training, can contribute to the executive measures carried out by the relevant national authorities.

(2) Carers

Operators working in reception centres that host unaccompanied children, meaning reception facilities which provide housing, food, basic health care and pocket money for their inhabitants. The characteristics of these services typically vary from one facility to another, both within a country and the region. In some cases, these facilities host only unaccompanied children, in other cases the children hosted are mixed with those coming from different non-migrant backgrounds.

Guardians are the representatives appointed to assist and support unaccompanied children. Guardians have an important role to safeguard the child's best interests and well-being. In some systems, the guardian has the mandate to arrange all



basic needs and to assist them in the asylum procedure, return, Dublin procedures, family tracing, etc. The EU asylum *acquis* requires that Member States ensure as soon as possible the necessary representation of unaccompanied children by legal guardianship (or, where necessary, by an organisation which is responsible for the care and wellbeing of children or by any other appropriate representation). However, not all Member States have a guardianship scheme in place and when there is a scheme, this may not meet all standards of quality. For example, there is no guardianship system in Ireland. However, the UK is currently piloting a guardianship system in Northern Ireland.

(3) Hotlines for missing children, operated through the European number 116 000

The 116 000 hotline for missing children was reserved in 2007 by the European Commission² and has been

implemented gradually since then at national level. Today the hotline is operational all EU Member States as well as in Serbia, Switzerland, Albania and Ukraine. Through the 116 000 number, parents and children alike can obtain free emotional, psychological, social, legal and administrative support whether at home or in another European country. This holistic and multidisciplinary approach is necessary to deal with the specific needs of parents and children calling the hotline.

The resourcing and capacity of hotlines vary in the different countries, and this may have an impact on the potential support offered in cases of missing unaccompanied children. Therefore, together with the hotlines, it is important that actors involved in the situation of a missing unaccompanied child assess their capacity and the role that can be played by the relevant hotline(s) in cases of missing unaccompanied children.

² 2007/116/EC, Commission Decision of 15 February 2007 on reserving the national numbering range beginning with 116 for harmonised numbers for harmonised services of social value (notified under document number C(2007) 249)



Key terminology

Child: A child “shall mean any person below 18 years of age.” CRC, Article 1

“Where the age of the [victim] is uncertain and there are reasons to believe that the victim is a child, that person is presumed to be a child in order to receive immediate access to assistance, support and protection”. Anti-Trafficking Directive (2011/36/EU), Article 13 (2)

Integrated child protection systems: Child protection systems that place children at the centre, allocating staff and resources, and putting in place laws and policies, governance, monitoring and data collection. They are necessary to offer protection, response services and care management to protect children from harm.

Unaccompanied child: An ‘unaccompanied child’ is a child “who arrives on the territory of the Member States unaccompanied by an adult responsible for them whether by law or by the practice of the Member State concerned, and for as long

as they are not effectively taken into the care of such a person; it includes a [child] left unaccompanied after it has entered the territory of the Member States.” Qualification Directive (2011/95/EU), Article 2 (l)

Missing children: includes any situation where a child’s whereabouts are unknown to the parent/legal guardian/responsible authorities for the care of the child. This include a wide range of situations that span from runaways, to abduction by parents or third parties and to missing unaccompanied children or otherwise missing, lost and injured children³.

Missing child in migration: A child who migrated from their country of origin fleeing conflict or persecution, in search of survival, security, improved standards of living, education, economic opportunities, protection from exploitation and abuse, family reunification or a combination of these or other factors, whose presence became known to authorities or caregivers of the country in which the child arrives and whose whereabouts cannot be established.

³ EC Study on Missing Children: Mapping data collection and statistics on missing children in the EU, 2013, p.15



Separated child: A 'separated child' is a child who has been separated from both parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver, but not necessarily from other relatives. These may, therefore, include children accompanied by other adult family members. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No. 6 CRC/GC/2005/6 and the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (UN Alternative care guidelines) A/HRC/11/L.13, paragraph 8

Guardian: A guardian is an independent person (or an organization represented by an individual person) who safeguards a child's best interests and general wellbeing, and complements the limited legal capacity of the child. The guardian acts as a statutory representative of the child in all proceedings in the same way that a parent represents their child. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No. 6 CRC/GC/2005/6 and the UN Alternative care guidelines A/HRC/11/L.13

Representative (sometimes referred to as legal representative): A representative "means a person or organisation appointed by the competent bodies in order to assist and represent an unaccompanied [child] in [international

protection] procedures with a view to ensuring the best interests of the child and exercising legal capacity for the [child] where necessary." Reception Conditions Directive (2013/33/EU), Article 2 (j)

Representatives or legal representatives differ from the qualified lawyer or other legal professional who provides legal assistance, speaks on behalf of the child and legally represents them in written statements and in person before administrative and judicial authorities in criminal, asylum or other legal proceedings as provided in national law

Guardianship authority: The 'guardianship authority' is the institution, organisation or other legal entity that has the responsibility for recruitment, appointment, monitoring, supervision and training of guardians. The role of the guardianship authority or organisation should be laid down in the law. UN Alternative care guidelines, A/HRC/11/L

Victim of trafficking: A 'victim of trafficking' is a person who has been subject to trafficking in human beings as defined in Article 4(a) of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings and Article 2 of the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive (2011/36/EU). It is



a crime against a person and a violation of their human rights. Human trafficking consists of three basic components for adults: the action, the means and the purpose. It consists of two basic components for children: the action and the purpose.

Action: the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or reception of persons, including the exchange or transfer of control over those persons.

Means: by the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person.

Exploitation: for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, as a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, including begging, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the exploitation of criminal activities, or the removal of organs.

The 'means' stage is not required for the definition of child trafficking. The definition recognises that a child cannot give consent to their own exploitation, even if they agree

or understand what has happened. Child trafficking is child abuse and must be treated within a child protection context.

A National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a co-operative framework aimed at identifying, protecting and assisting victims of trafficking in human beings, through referral to appropriate services, and in a strategic partnership with public authorities and civil society.

Smuggling is a crime against the state involving the "procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident." UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, Article 3.

Good practice: The term good practice is used in this handbook to describe a practice in the field of combating child trafficking or disappearances that has proved to be efficient in one country or more and to indicate that this system might be applicable and adaptable in a different setting. A model of good practice can also be derived from an example of bad practice. No model can be entirely duplicated due to different national settings. Each model of good practice



also has disadvantages, and while it might not work in a different setting, it is still valuable as an effective method in the respective country.

Schengen Information System (SIS) / Schengen Information System II

is a large-scale information system that supports external border control and law enforcement cooperation in the Schengen States. The SIS enables competent authorities, such as police and border guards, to enter and consult alerts on certain categories of wanted or missing persons ("article 32 alerts" – Article 32 of Council Decision 2007/533/JHA) and objects. A SIS alert contains information about a particular person or object as well as instructions on what to do when the person or object has been found. Specialised national SIRENE Bureaux serve as single points of contact for any supplementary information exchange and coordination of activities related to SIS alerts. The SIS is in operation in all EU Member States and Associated Countries that are part of the Schengen Area.

Interpol Yellow Notices are a law enforcement tool aimed at increasing the chances of a missing person being located, particularly if there is a possibility that the person might travel or be taken abroad. A

Yellow Notice serves a global alert to help locate missing persons, or to identify persons who are unable to identify themselves. While some Yellow Notices are restricted to law enforcement use only, many are available publicly. For a yellow notice to be issued, a local police authority should get in touch with their INTERPOL National Central Bureau.

Hotspots are structures created at the EU's External Borders where the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), EU Border Agency (Frontex) EU Police Cooperation Agency (Europol) and EU Judicial Cooperation Agency (Eurojust) work with the authorities of the frontline Member State to help to fulfil their obligations under EU law and swiftly identify, register and fingerprint incoming migrants.

Eurodac is an EU asylum fingerprint database. When someone applies for asylum, no matter where they are in the EU, their fingerprints are transmitted to the EURODAC central system. EURODAC matches the fingerprints of applicants in asylum procedures so that EU Member States may determine responsibility for examining an asylum application under the Dublin regulation. EURODAC has been operating since 2003.



2. Framework

This handbook for practitioners was originally produced as part of the SUMMIT project, Safeguarding Unaccompanied Migrant Minors from going Missing by Identifying Best Practices and Training Actors on Interagency Cooperation (2015).

Four years after the SUMMIT Handbook, we took the occasion of the Interact Project “Towards a more efficient cooperation across border for the protection of children” (2019) to update the guidance with the most recent developments in practice, to include a broader section on the trafficking aspects of the situation of children in migration, as well as more targeted guidance regarding cross border cooperation between professionals.

The Interact Project is a component of the wider Amina programme, Safeguarding Migrant Children Across Europe (2019), which aims to close the protection gaps that lead to the disappearance and exploitation of children in migration and to contribute to creating an environment where policy and legislative processes give primary

consideration to the best interests of the child.

This handbook hence builds on the findings of both the SUMMIT research report and the Interact Simulations Report “Towards a more efficient cooperation across border for the protection of children” and aims to improve the knowledge and response of professionals on an individual level within the context of significant barriers in legislation and policy affecting children in migration. It aims to provide targeted practical guidance to frontline professionals on how to better cooperate nationally and across borders to prevent and respond to disappearances and trafficking of children in migration. It includes tools, checklists and concrete examples of how to enhance proactive multi-agency action, touching upon information collection, analysis and exchange, clarification of roles and tasks of involved stakeholders, and good practices in the countries targeted by the Interact and SUMMIT projects. The handbook also provides country-targeted resources and support to address the gaps experienced during the aforementioned simulations.



The protection of children in migration is dependent on effective multi-agency and cross-border approaches where the best interests of the child are always the primary consideration in all actions taken. However, current policy and legal frameworks across Member States are significantly lacking, frontline responses are insufficient and cross-border cooperation needs considerable improvement.

Data provided by the European Migration Network estimates that from 2014 to 2017 more than 30,000 children went missing after their arrival in Europe, with the majority disappearing before filing an asylum claim or during the asylum procedure. It is impossible to ascertain the actual figure of children in migration who go missing, as there is no consistency among Member States and among professionals in the definition of 'missing children', and data is not collected in a systematic, uniform and comparable way across Member States and stakeholders. The actual numbers of missing children are expected to be higher. Underreporting and lack of awareness of avenues for reporting pose further challenges to a full understanding of the scale of the

problem. When missing and out of the protection system, children are particularly vulnerable to harm, abuse and exploitation.

In recent years, European Institutions and stakeholders have stepped up actions to prevent and protect missing children in general; in particular since the reservation⁴ of the 116 000 hotline number for missing children in 2007, which is currently operational in 32 European countries. These hotlines provide free legal, social, psychological and administrative support and coordinate appeal services for specific cases of missing children; complementing the investigative work of law enforcement authorities. Other efforts to protect children who go missing include the development of national 'child alert' or Amber Alert systems and enhanced functionalities through the second generation Schengen Information System (SIS II)⁵ etc.

Despite these developments, since 2015 – when Europol declared the striking figure of 10,000 disappearances – children in migration have continued to go missing and fall prey to exploitation.

⁴ Commission Decision 2007/116/EC of 15 February 2007 on reserving the national numbering range beginning with "116" for harmonised services of social value.

⁵ Article 32 of Council Decision 2007/533/JHA on missing persons



Summary of key challenges identified in the SUMMIT research report "Best practice and key challenges for interagency cooperation to safeguard unaccompanied migrant children from going missing"

1. Lack of training of professionals on prevention and response to the disappearance of unaccompanied children
2. Lack of systematic and consistent procedures to prevent the disappearance of unaccompanied migrant children
3. Length and complexity of legal procedures as a push factor to leave
4. Lack of systematic assessment of risks or of the likelihood that a child will go missing – e.g. through behavioural patterns related to the nationality of the child
5. Lack of exchange of information between agencies
6. Delayed or no reporting of the disappearance of unaccompanied children
7. Lack of consistency of procedures and follow up on the case (including investigation) after reporting
8. Challenging cross border cooperation and lack of consistent exchange of information across national borders
9. Difficulties in obtaining information from law enforcement on the outcome of the investigation



The Interact project aimed to respond to this need, to improve the way transnational cases of at risk children in migration are handled in Europe and to improve the day-to-day practice of professionals working on those cases. It did so by identifying gaps in practice and developing innovative practical tools to improve exchange of intelligence across services and borders and to improve follow up on transnational cases. For that, Missing Children Europe and its partners held simulation exercises in 6 countries (Belgium, Greece, France, Italy, Sweden and the UK) around the fictive cases of

Abena and Qiro⁶, two children who have gone missing since arriving in Europe and were thought to be at risk of trafficking and exploitation (October 2018). The exercise established relationships that will lead to enhanced knowledge sharing across borders.

Tools developed in the handbook are available in five languages, Swedish, English, Italian, French, Greek and Dutch. All templates included in this handbook will be available for download on Missing Children Europe's website, on the webpage <http://missingchildreneurope.eu/>.

⁶ Missing Children Europe (2019), Looking for Abena and Qiro across the EU: Missing Children Europe and partners work towards ending exploitation of children in migration with fictional cases, available at : <http://aminameanssafe.eu/News/Post/238/Looking-for-Abena-and-Qiro-across-the-EU-Missing-Children-Europe-and-partners-work-towards-ending-exploitation-of-children-in-migration-with-fictional-cases>



3. Principles

Introduction

When children are deprived of their parents or carers, the State has an obligation to provide special protection and assistance to them and to ensure their safety. Importantly, this involves action to prevent the disappearance of children from state care and to properly respond to disappearances and risk of exploitation.

Preventing and responding to disappearances of children from third countries is a particularly complex and sensitive task. This is the case because of the diverse reasons for which a child might go missing or might be at risk of exploitation. It also stems from the need for effective cooperation between actors with a range of different responsibilities, such as child protection, social welfare, immigration, law enforcement and border professionals, nationally and across borders.

International and EU law play an important role in setting down the obligations that actors should

fulfil when carrying out this vital work. General children's rights obligations are of central importance. These include the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the European Convention on Human Rights and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. International and EU asylum, migration and trafficking instruments are also key instruments in the field. They set out common obligations concerning persons within the EU who may be seeking international protection, who may have been trafficked or whose situation is undocumented.

Understanding these EU and international provisions is important for all actors. In particular, national measures need properly to fulfil the obligations set out at EU level. If they do not, the Commission can pursue a Member State for infringement before the European Court. Moreover, certain EU provisions provide for cross border cooperation between national authorities in specific areas. The Reference



document on EU law and policy concerning unaccompanied children in the CONNECT Project (www.connectproject.eu) sets out the key legal obligations for unaccompanied children under international and EU law. It also refers to a broad range of policy and practical resources that may be very helpful to policy makers and practitioners alike in this field. Also of importance are the principles set out in the European Commission Reflection Paper on integrated

child protection systems from June 2015, the European Commission Communication on the Protection of Children in Migration from April 2017 and the European Parliament Resolution on the Protection of Children in Migration from May 2018.

Below we identify the key principles that should guide the practical actions of policy makers and practitioners in relation to disappearances and responses to trafficking.



Always a Child: a vision of how to fulfil the rights of children in migration⁵

Children migrate from their countries of origin or residence for a variety of reasons, and often because of a combination of factors. They may be seeking safety, stability, asylum, decent income and living standards, freedom from discrimination, family reunification, economic or educational opportunities, amongst others, and often a combination of these. Some are trafficked. They may travel with family groups, with other adults or peers, or they may be unaccompanied. Some are separated from family members en route. Some undertake very perilous journeys while trying to reach the EU or move within it, and some die during their journey.

Regardless of a child's reasons for being in migration, their situation or status (or that of their parents), they all have rights as children, first and foremost according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and in line with the Lisbon Treaty and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

However, these rights are not always reflected in law, policy or practice. They face discrimination accessing their rights as children, on the basis of their residence or migration status (or that of their parents). Rather than considering first their status as children, their entitlements to services (such as health and shelter) are often governed by different laws or policies that focus primarily on their immigration status (e.g. undocumented and asylum seeking). Indeed, access to necessary services may fluctuate as different regimes come into application or if their immigration status changes (for example, from asylum seeker to undocumented to subject of return orders). This can lead to serious gaps in protection and enjoyment of children's rights.

Consequently, a comprehensive and rights-based approach to all children in the context of international migration is needed which:

⁷ Missing Children Europe endorses the vision of the Initiative for Children in Migration. The full document is available here: <http://childreninmigration.eu/vision>



1. Respects, protects and fulfils the rights of all children in migration, without any discrimination

Children's rights, in particular as set out in the CRC, apply equally to all children, without any discrimination on the basis of their migration, residence or citizenship status, as well as other grounds (age, national or ethnic origin, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, etc.).

2. Addresses all their rights and all aspects of their situation

All aspects of the situation of children in migration, at every stage of migration, should be addressed, in full respect of their rights.

3. Takes account of children in all actions, throughout policy areas and stages of policy making.

Children's rights should be systematically considered and addressed across all the different laws and policies that affect them. Policy makers should take stock of how children in migration are affected by different policies and actions, and ensure that their rights are respected, protected and fulfilled.

4. Involves all relevant actors working together

Many different actors work with children in migration, including a range of public bodies and agencies, IGOs, NGOs, children and youth-led organizations, professionals, private companies and the voluntary sector. Inter-agency and multidisciplinary approaches are critical to achieving effective responses to the situation of children.



Relevant EU developments in the field

The main EU developments in the protection of all children in migration, including children at risk of trafficking or of going missing, are continuously collected, analysed and updated on the website of the Initiative for Children in Migration. The Initiative for Children in Migration is an informal collaboration among NGOs and IGOs who are involved in coordinated advocacy on EU law and policy impacting children in migration. The initiative encourages the European and national institutions to fulfil the rights and protection of all children in migration. The website is coordinated on behalf of the Initiative by Child Circle, Missing Children Europe, PICUM and Terre des Hommes, alongside others leading the development of resources on specific issues.

<http://childreninmigration.eu/Spotlight-on-EU>



COMMISSION REFLECTION PAPER CHILD PROTECTION PRINCIPLES:

1. Every child is recognised, respected and protected as a rights holder, with non-negotiable rights to protection.

Every child is treated with dignity and as a unique and valuable human being with an individual personality, distinct needs, interests and privacy, with due regard to the child's right to participation.

There are measures to empower children to protect themselves and their peers and to claim their rights.

Child-sensitive and accessible complaint and reporting mechanisms, including helplines and hotlines, are integrated in the system.

Children are involved in decisions that concern them, including the development, monitoring and evaluation of child protection strategies, policies, programmes and services.

2. No child is discriminated against.

All children, regardless of their sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation have access to and benefit from national child protection systems on an equal basis.

3. Child protection systems include prevention measures.

This may include the adoption of national legislation prohibiting all forms of violence against children in all settings, policy measures promoting child rights, awareness-raising and education for children, parents and society at large, proactive policy and outreach measures especially to discriminated against groups, parenting and family support, universal and targeted social services, integrated strategies to reduce child poverty, mechanisms for children to claim their rights, links with other policy areas and robust data collection.



4. Families are supported in their role as primary caregiver.

The primary position of families in child caregiving and protection is recognised and supported through universal and targeted services, through every stage of intervention, particularly through prevention.

5. Societies are aware and supportive of the child's right to freedom from all forms of violence.

There are concerted efforts to inform the public, including children, about children's rights and encouraging action to prevent violence against children, and to prevent the stigmatisation of child victims of violence.

6. Child protection systems ensure adequate care.

- › Professionals are committed and competent. Professionals and practitioners working for and with children receive training and guidance on the rights of the child, on child protection law and procedures and more generally on child development. The necessary protocols and processes are in place to facilitate their role and responses to violence against children are inter- or multi-disciplinary.
- › Information is shared on certification and training to promote trust, including across borders.
- › Standards, indicators and tools and systems of monitoring and evaluation are in place, under the auspices of a national coordinating framework. Systems are effectively regulated and independently monitored and accountable, ensuring accessible, quality, child-sensitive services and care for all children. The monitoring system guarantees unrestricted access to monitor the quality of services delivered, in particular for any form of institutional care.
- › Within organisations working directly for and with children, child protection policies and reporting mechanisms are in place. All agencies and service providers, civil society organisations, private associations, commercial or non-profit organisations working directly with children have robust child protection policies.



7. Child protection systems have transnational and cross-border mechanisms in place.

In view of the increasing prevalence of children in cross-border situations in need of child protection measures, efforts are stepped up by clarifying roles and responsibilities, keeping abreast of country of origin information, ensuring a national focal point for cross-border child protection matters, adopting procedures/guidance/protocols/processes, for example for the transfer of responsibility within the context of asylum procedures (Dublin Regulation), or when considering out of country care placements, or family tracing and protection in cases of child trafficking. However, for children seeking international protection or child victims of trafficking where contact could put the child and/or family at risk, caution should be exercised.

8. The child has support and protection.

No child should be without the support and protection of a legal guardian or other recognised responsible adult or competent public body at any time. In view of the need for continuity of actions, the child protection system appoints a person of reference responsible for the child from reporting and referral through to follow-up and reintegration, to assure liaison among the different sectors and to guarantee a coherent and comprehensive response.

9. Training on identification of risks for children in potentially vulnerable situations is also delivered to teachers at all levels of the education system, social workers, medical doctors, nurses and other health professionals, psychologists, lawyers, judges, police, probation and prison officers, journalists, community workers, residential care givers, civil servants and public officials, asylum officers and traditional and religious leaders. Rules on reporting cases of violence against children are clearly defined and professionals who have reporting obligations are held accountable.

10. There are safe, well-publicised, confidential and accessible reporting mechanisms in place.

Mechanisms are available for children, their representatives and others to report violence against children, including through the use of 24/7 helplines and hotlines.



4. Children at risk of trafficking as a specific target group

A child in migration needs to be treated as a child and protected as a child, as explained in the previous chapters, even when they go missing from care or fall prey to exploitation. That principle does not contradict the need to adapt the response to the specific circumstances of their disappearance. Professionals and individuals responding to missing or trafficking cases of children in migration should therefore have the necessary knowledge of the specific circumstances that these children face, because their responses and decisions may benefit from it.

Children migrate to escape violence, persecution, forced military conscription, armed conflict, poverty, ravages of climate change and natural disasters. Many young

people set out to find opportunities for work or education. In some cases, children may migrate to avoid the threats of female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage or other forms of gender-based violence. Current policy and practice presents serious threats to children in migration on their way to Europe and after they arrive in Europe.

Before arriving in Europe the most significant gap in policy and procedures for children are the limits to access safe and legal opportunities to migrate. The Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No. 6 on the Treatment of Unaccompanied and Separated Children Outside their Country of Origin explains in great detail the serious risks of exploitation and



abuse.⁸ In Italy, doctors report that medical checks show that many children carry sexually transmitted diseases. This is taken as evidence that they have been sexually exploited in transit.⁹ Research shows specific factors may render children and young people more vulnerable to exploitation: travelling alone, having a lower level of education and the length of their travel. A significant factor is the xenophobia and racism children face which has been shown to contribute to significant abuse and exploitation of children on the move.¹⁰

It is well documented that once children in migration arrive in Europe, they may experience a variety of different situations, all equally precarious. Some are subject to sexual exploitation to “pay back” their transit debts. Some face abuse in immigration detention. Some end up living on the streets, at significant risk of harm,

due to flawed and/or invasive age assessment procedures or for fear of immigration enforcement.¹¹ Some are placed in a cannabis farm or other forms of criminal exploitation and are never identified as victims. Some fall into labour exploitation in agriculture as an effort to make their own migration path through Europe.

If the child has been exploited, or if there is an intention to exploit the child, early identification is critical. This is not an easy task, however.

Child victims are unlikely to give direct disclosure, and their account may be confused and sometimes contradictory. They may be suffering from psychological, physical or emotional trauma, and may be subject to continuing fear of (or control by) those who trafficked or exploited them. Research shows that children in particular find it difficult to disclose their experiences of abuse.¹²

⁸ General comment No. 6 (2005): Treatment of Unaccompanied and Separated Children Outside their Country of Origin

⁹ UK House of Lords, European Union Committee, 2nd Report of Session 2016-17, Children in crisis: unaccompanied migrant children in the EU, §24.

¹⁰ IOM and UNICEF (2017) *Harrowing Journeys. Children and Youth on the Move across the Mediterranean Sea, at Risk of Trafficking and Exploitation*

¹¹ Council of Europe Report Stop violence against, and exploitation of, migrant children – Resolution 2295 (2019) Provisional version (27 June 2019)

¹² Illock, D. and Miller, P., No one noticed, no one heard: a study of disclosures of childhood abuse. (NSPCC, London, 2013), available at <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2013/no-one-noticed-no-one-heard/>



Identification of potential victims and disclosure of the detail of their experiences are rarely single events, but are staggered over time and will only occur when the child has a trusted and secure relationship with a practitioner.¹³

Research also suggests that being identified as a potential victim of trafficking was found to be a key risk to a child going missing from care.¹⁴ Being disbelieved if they disclosed elements of their exploitation was seen to compound their risk of going missing. Disputes over age have a strong influence on whether a child feels believed by authorities and on the trust developed with professionals. Age assessment can further strongly influence the type of support and accommodation they receive, which, in turn, will significantly impact their risk of going missing.

Children may arrive in Europe accompanied by adults who are either not related to them or in circumstances that raise child protection concerns. For example, there may be no pre-existing relationship between the child and the accompanying adult or even no knowledge from the carers and/or authorities about the person who will care for the child. They may present as seemingly accompanied children but are really transported for the purposes of exploitation.

Unaccompanied and separated children who have not been exploited at the point of first encounter with public authorities may become more vulnerable to different forms of exploitation due to protracted legal uncertainty causing them to disengage from services and enter into precarity and destitution, which are major risk factors.¹⁵

¹³ Pearce, JJ., Hynes, P. and Bovarnick, S., *Breaking the Wall of Silence: Practitioners' Responses to Trafficked Children and Young People* (NSPCC, London, 2009), available at <https://library.nspcc.org.uk/HeritageScripts/Hapi.dll/search2?CookieCheck=43765.8746503819&searchTerm0=C2866>

¹⁴ ECPAT UK (2016), *Heading back to Harm, A study on trafficked and unaccompanied children going missing from care in the UK*, available at: <https://www.ecpat.org.uk/heading-back-to-harm-a-study-on-trafficked-and-unaccompanied-children-going-missing-from-care-in-the-uk>

¹⁵ Sigona, N., Chase, E., Humphris, R. (2017) 'Understanding causes and consequences of going 'missing'', *Becoming Adult Brief no. 6*, London: UCL



The best interests of the child is the primary concern when children go missing. Unaccompanied children may have had to leave their familiar environments due to extraordinary circumstances and develop and grow into independent adults in a social and cultural environment that is entirely new. The initial cultural disorientation, together with the applied immigration laws, may make them vulnerable and require education and support based on respect, safety, and protection. These children may go missing for multiple reasons. When they disappear from care of their own decision, knowing the push factors such as their backgrounds, pressures and goals is needed to be able to respond to and assist them. Elements such as their personal migration goals, their legal situation, relations with the family in the country of origin or destination, the need for money to pursue their goals or to send to their family and other elements may well weigh heavier on them than their own safety. Without knowledge of that background it is difficult to estimate the risk of children going missing (again) or to falling prey to trafficking, and even more difficult to offer an alternative to their initial plans that is considered as a real option by the child. The tool “working with the unaccompanied child”, developed in the framework of the CONNECT project (2014) is particularly useful to understand these circumstances further. <http://www.connectproject.eu>



5. Perspectives for Action

5.1 Prevention

“(Prevention) is about someone being trained and knowledgeable about these issues in order to be able to keep them safe. When a young person is referred to us, we then link them to an advocate in a very timely way. We then ensure that a safety plan is put around that young person to try to support them to not go missing or return to a risky place. We’ve done research and what we’ve found is that young people need foster care with fully trained carers that understand the needs of unaccompanied young people. They need good quality support, like supervising social workers.”

(NGO supporting Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA) and social services with trafficked children, UK)



Maximising the prevention of children going missing is essentially founded in well-functioning child protection systems. There are a number of questions that need to be considered when evaluating the readiness of a protection system in this matter. Are actors well-informed (about the child) and properly trained, do they cooperate with the aim of supporting the child and are they positioned to act when needed? Still, a functioning child protection system will not always be able to prevent an child from leaving reception facilities, as many factors influence the child's decision-making (such as their family's preferences, their migration plan, general ideas about their destination country etc.).

Several aspects of a well-functioning child protection should be considered when talking about prevention of disappearance and exploitation. In this handbook we will analyse a (non-exhaustive) selection of them:

- › Information known about the child (to assess risks and – if needed – respond properly later)
- › Well-informed and well-trained staff who inform the child of their options
- › Well-informed and well-trained staff who maximise the opportunity to build a relationship of trust
- › Well-informed and well-trained staff who do a risk assessment of the child going missing or falling victim of (re-)trafficking
- › The protection system needs an action-oriented perspective: upon a risk that is assessed as high, measures need to be put in place to be able to protect the child
- › Within the protection system, professionals need to work together closely
- › Across borders, professionals need to work together



Detecting, identifying and referring the child in need of protection

It is important that each and every professional in contact with the child, especially stakeholders who are the first to be in contact with the child (e.g. border guards, law enforcement officers, outreach social workers, etc.) are trained and equipped to identify vulnerabilities and risks of exploitation and to take the necessary protective measures.

Children may often not disclose that they have been a victim of abuse, violence, exploitation or trafficking. Frontline professionals might also face different reactions from children to these situations and must be equipped to identify early signals. Some of these may be signs the child has been, is or will be exploited (these are not exhaustive):¹⁶

- › Has money or possessions which are unaccounted for
- › Has a lot of money in cash
- › Has no money but has a mobile phone
- › Receives unexplained/unidentified phone calls whilst in placement/temporary accommodation
- › Shows signs of physical or sexual abuse
- › Goes missing
- › Shows fear of authority figures
- › Acts like he or she is required to earn a minimum amount of money each day
- › Is seen begging for money
- › Has to pay off an enormous debt
- › Shows signs of undernourishment
- › Makes unexplained phone calls while in a placement

¹⁶ This list has been inspired by the pocket guide for frontline professionals created by the Croatian Red Cross and France Terre d'Asile on "the identification of victims of human trafficking in transit and destination countries in Europe" (2019), and was further completed by the experience of ECPAT UK.



- › Works at various locations
 - › Tells a prepared story, possibly very similar to that of other children
 - › Has a history with missing links and unexplained moves
 - › Shows fear for their family in the country of origin, particularly related to a debt
 - › Shows lack of knowledge of which location they are in
 - › Has offset rhythm of life: sleep schedule, punctuality at appointment and/or missed appointment, repeated and unjustified absences, etc., resulting in fatigue and concentration problems
 - › Does not appear to worry or ask questions about accommodation solutions
 - › Is present in a place commonly known to be a place of exploitation (such as street begging, brothel, drug production or drug distribution location)
 - › Has a neighbour (or guardian) complaining, for instance about noise, too many people visiting or any other element that could indicate sexual exploitation or criminal exploitation
 - › Receives social benefits or payments but is told to hand it over to another person and/or does not have access to the benefits themselves
 - › Often leaves the accommodation in different cars or with different people
- Children may also experience distrust and fear of the authorities and support staff as a result of these experiences. Disclosure often takes time. Establishing conditions and the environment to build trust is key to ensure the child's needs are met at an early stage. For this reason, children must always be referred as soon as possible to the appropriate care and specialised professionals.
- The most successful practices are those which take time constraints into consideration, as children may go missing within a few hours from their detection or placement in a care centre.
- › Authorities deployed at known border points, such as airports, ports and hotspots, should be trained to quickly identify risks of exploitation and disappearances



and to refer the child without delay to appropriate child protection services, which will then gather fuller information on the child.

- › It is important to train personnel, for example guardians, on how to collect and register relevant information about the child.

The European Parliament published a study (2019) on Detecting and protecting victims of trafficking in hotspots – Ex-post evaluation

The European Commission has developed guidelines for the identification of victims of trafficking in human beings, especially targeted at consular services and border guards. For more information, see European Commission (2013), 'Guidelines for the identification of victims of trafficking in human beings'.

The Croatian Red Cross and France Terre d'Asile have created a practical guide for frontline professionals on "the identification of victims of human trafficking in transit and destination countries in Europe" (2019) also available in a pocket guide format.



Collection of identifying information

There is a legitimate fear amongst children in migration that information sharing between agencies can be used for the purposes of immigration enforcement. Practices of this kind have led to the use of data in the context of health, policing and education.¹⁷ Information collected in these contexts has been used to dismiss the child's immigration or asylum claims, to dismiss their disclosure of exploitation, and in the context of age assessments. For this reason, it is essential that an effective firewall¹⁸ is in place between immigration enforcement, child protection and other services when handling information of children in migration, and also that it is clearly communicated to the child and the stakeholders responsible for their protection.

The collection of detailed and exhaustive information on a child is essential to ensure a proper follow up in case of disappearance. Essential information should be collected as soon as the child comes into contact with a public authority, but sensitivity

must be practised given the fact that arriving children may have endured an arduous journey, may be in need of medical attention, may lack rest and nutrition or other factors which significantly influence their ability to engage. Information collected should be used solely for the purposes of assessing the child's welfare needs, facilitating a risk assessment and identification of possible exploitation. Identifying information includes the name of the child, age, description of the child including distinguishing features, photograph, biometrical information such as fingerprints (where permissible), as well as information about the origin and nationality of the child. It could also be helpful to collect information on family members or acquaintances and their location, on special needs of the child (e.g. medical needs) etc. It is important mentioning key background information and information on the vulnerability, for example if the child was a victim of trafficking or was smuggled, as these elements could

¹⁷ Bradley, GM. (2018). Care don't share, Hostile environment data-sharing: why we need a firewall between essential public services and immigration enforcement. Available at: <https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk/sites/default/files/Liberty%20%27Care%20Don%27t%20Share%27%20Report%20280119%20RGB.pdf>

¹⁸ For more explanations on what we mean by firewall, please see: <https://picum.org/firewall-3/>



give an orientation to the investigation on the missing case.

- › This step is extremely important in the case of unaccompanied

children, as they will not always hold identity papers and the collection of biometrical data, like fingerprints, is not always allowed.

Every child should be linked to a **personal file** (preferably digital, for sharing purposes). The file should be unique, even when information is collected during different sessions and from different parties, to allow easiest storage and retrieval of information collected.

The use of **standard forms** to collect information, shared by authorities and carers consistently within the country, will also benefit a quicker and more efficient cooperation between concerned services. Personnel needs to be trained on how to fill in the forms and with whom information can be shared.

Easier centralised systems (e.g. databases) to register information that would help identify or find the unaccompanied child would simplify cooperation between authorities in charge of the protection and/or the missing case. These databases should be different from the asylum databases and managed by child protection authorities. Data should be used only in the best interest of the child for the purposes of protection.



Template for collection of information on a child in migration

The following form can be used as a common template to collect and share information about the child between different agencies and across borders. You can use the form as it is, or adapt it to your needs and systems. For instance, it can be filled in by authorities or institutions in charge and should be sent to child protection authorities (e.g. the service responsible to appoint a guardian).

Consent for collecting and sharing a child's information should always be sought so that, when and if necessary, their information can be shared between agencies and borders (for instance, if requested by a counterpart in another EU country where a missing child has been found again).

1. Identification of the child

Surname:

Name:

Age:

Date and place of birth:

Nationality:

Gender:

Language(s) spoken:

Characteristics of their appearance
(including information about tattoos, scars, etc.):

Does the child own any Identity Documents?

☐ YES (Number:)

☐ NO

Description of the Identity Documents:

.....



Does the child own any passports?

☐ YES (Number:)

☐ NO

Description of the passport(s):
.....

Does the child have a visa?

☐ YES (Type and expiration date:v

☐ NO

2. Is the child known to authorities responsible for asylum, border control accommodation or return?)

☐ YES

☐ NO

3. Identification of family members

☐ **Father:**

Surname:

Name:

Date of birth:

Place of birth:

Nationality:

Marital status:

Profession:

Address of residence (in the same or another country):
.....
.....

Phone number:



☐ **Mother:**

Surname:

Name:

Date of birth:

Place of birth:

Nationality:

Marital status:

Profession:

Address of residence (in the same or another country):

.....

.....

Phone number:

☐ **Siblings: (repeat if necessary)**

Surname:

Name:

Date of birth:

Place of birth:

Nationality:

Marital status:

Profession:

Address of residence (in the same or another country):

.....

.....

Phone number:

Relation with the child:



☐ **Other family members: (repeat if necessary)**

Surname:

Name:

Date of birth:

Place of birth:

Nationality:

Marital status:

Profession:

Address of residence (in the same or another country):

.....

.....

Phone number:

Relation with the child:

4. Travel

Brief description of the circumstances that brought the child to the country;
means of transportation, stops, countries crossed etc:

.....

Date of arrival in the country

.....

5. Declaration of the child related to their personal situation

Concerning medical conditions

.....

Concerning the presence of members of the family in the country or within
the EU

.....



Does the child show any trafficking indicators?

6. Reception of the child

Address

Contact person:

Decision on reception was taken by:

7. Any element that could indicate the risk that the child will go missing¹⁹

8. Any other information available that could be useful to identify the child

¹⁹ For more information on this point, please see page 34



Appointing a guardian

Guardians need to be appointed as soon as possible after the identification of an unaccompanied child in order to defend the interests of the child from the outset and provide a single point of contact throughout all types of legal proceedings, such as applications for asylum and other types of protection, for family reunification or for being recognised as a victim of trafficking.

Guardians also have an important role to play in the cross-border response to a case. For example, they may help the child re-establish family contact, liaise with the

child's parents or extended family in another EU Member State, build trust with the child or report a disappearance if the child has gone missing.

For all these reasons, the early appointment of a qualified, independent and trained guardian is key and represents a crucial means to prevent disappearance and exploitation.

All further guidelines are relevant for guardians as the persons primarily responsible for safeguarding the rights and best interests of children.

For a complete overview of the responsibilities, roles and duties of guardians and guardianship systems, please see the FRA Handbook on Guardianship systems for children deprived of parental care in the European Union (2015)

The toolkit for guardians developed in the framework of the ProGuard Project (2019) provides information, tools and best practices for guardians in charge of unaccompanied children in Europe. See: ProGuard Guardianship Toolkit



Informing and hearing the child

“A vital element of the *best interests assessment and determination* process is communicating with children to facilitate meaningful child participation and identify their best interests. Such communication should include informing children about the process and possible sustainable solutions and services, as well as collecting information from children and seeking their views” UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2013), General Comment No. 14, on the right of the child to have their best interests taken as a primary consideration, Article 3, paragraph 1

Providing an unaccompanied child with information is an important element of prevention activities. There is a widespread suspicion and scepticism against authorities that could be eased by providing complete and understandable information on procedures and services available to the unaccompanied child, for example through child friendly communication, such as leaflets and videos.

The creation of a relationship of trust between the professional and the child is a very efficient measure to prevent the disappearance of the child.

Throughout the process, it is essential to listen to the child, and provide them every opportunity to express their needs and worries in an open and non-confrontational setting.

The length and complexity of asylum procedures may lead to frustration, fear, lack of trust in the protection system and may generate false expectations. Clear and thorough explanations of the services to which the child is entitled and of the procedures available to them is essential to prevent them going missing. It is also important to routinely engage with the child and provide updates about the process they are or will be going through and what it is likely to involve.

In most cases, taking into account the views and wishes of children in the services and processes which affect them is a powerful way to prevent disappearances. For instance, if the child expresses strongly their wish to stay in a particular region or city, everything should be done to accommodate that need and not place the child in a remote area.



Listen up! Creating conditions for children to speak and be heard

In 2019, the Council of the Baltic Sea States published guidance on how to create conditions for children at risk of exploitation and trafficking to speak and be heard by professionals. Children and young people who have had experiences of exploitation and trafficking were consulted during the preparation of the guide. For more information, see Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) (2019), Creating conditions for children to speak and be heard, available at: <https://www.childrenatriskeu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Listen-Up-2019.pdf>

See the New **EASO Practical Guide** on the best interests of the child in asylum procedures (2019), available at: <https://www.easo.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Practical-Guide-Best-Interests-Child-EN.pdf>



Child-friendly way to provide important information and generate trust

Promising practice: Leaflets

"Young people have been trying to put together a leaflet for other young people to explain the different sorts of systems here. A lot of young people are not sure – they might have to pay for their care or they're not sure about what their entitlements might be. So we're trying to put a leaflet together with some helpful numbers on it, as well as what their entitlements are."

Source: a reception centre in Spain.

Promising practice: Peer videos

In the south of Italy, carers helped a group of Egyptian children to record a video in which they described to other children what is to be expected when arriving in Europe. The aim of this video was to correct false information that may have been provided to children, using the voices of others who arrived before them.

Source: Save the Children Italy

Promising practice: the Miniila app

The app gives children access to child friendly, up to date and accessible information on their rights and the support available wherever they are in Europe, in 8 countries and in 5 languages. Available in app stores as of early 2020. For more information, contact Missing Children Europe

Promising practice: online tools

The immigration authority in Norway created an online tool to inform children about the different procedures to be granted protection in the country, in a child-friendly way.

It is available here: <https://asylbarn.no/>



The REACT leaflet – ECPAT

Child-friendly booklet on advice and contacts for children who may have been trafficked in Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, the UK and France. It is part of the ReACT project (Reinforcing Assistance to Child Victims of Trafficking), which aims to ensure access to justice and protection for child victims in legal procedures. One leaflet is available for each country and in 13 languages. They can be found here: <https://www.ecpat.org/resources/>

For inspiration – The ‘Resiland’ approach

The “RESILAND” booklet for professionals is based on stories of children on the move, and translates the children’s key messages, learning and advice into orientations for professionals and officials working with and for children on the move. It is built along the stages of the metaphorical story faced by ‘Resil’ – and provides observations on how stakeholders can support children to feel better, to trust and gain confidence.

These observations come down to basic matters concerning the quality of human relations, dignity and respect, a healthy life and perspectives for the future. It invites professionals and officials working with children on the move to build the relationship with children on the move allowing the following guidelines, which may also be of use in the context of preventing disappearances:

- › Engage the child in a conversation about what ‘feeling at home’ means to them. Support the child in creating a personal map of the place of arrival with his or her preferred points of reference and confidence.
- › Support the child in making positive social contacts and friends among children, youth and adults from different population groups, with a view to fostering a sense of belonging and making the child feel a member of a community where people care about them.
- › Give the child space and time to talk about their home community and its culture, customs and features. Listen without pressuring the child to speak about it. Be open-minded about social and cultural differences and acquire a basic understanding of places of origin and the causes and contributing factors that led to the child’s departure. This is



important for understanding the child's background, for determining the best interests of the child and for identifying a durable solution.

- › Seek dialogue with the child about their 'migration project' and the underlying risk factors, aspirations and motivations that led to the child's departure. Take the circumstances of the child's departure into consideration for care planning, a best interests determination and the identification of a durable solution.
- › Engage the child in a conversation about decisions that are important for them. Invite the child to express their views about their role in decision making processes. Support the child in expressing their personal views in decision making processes and discuss with the child ways and means to gain confidence and agency in decision making, for instance learning how to assess the reliability of information from different sources, how to estimate risks and opportunities and how to reach a conclusion about their own best interest.
- › Support the child in preparing for changes in life. Offer counselling for the child to reconcile with the changes they have lived through in the past. Help the child to gain

confidence in their own evolving capacities to cope and to keep track of their life project.

- › Together with the child, explore their skills, personal capacities and resources. Seek to understand the type of support the child needs in order to strengthen and activate these capacities and resources in a way that is oriented to the protection, empowerment and development of the child.
- › Support children in testing and developing their social and negotiation skills, knowledge of human nature and people skills as these are essential in their interaction with peers and in communities, with service providers and other professionals and officials. These skills are fundamental for understanding sources of risk and protection that are inherent within human relations.
- › Create trusted spaces where a child can talk about experiences with illegal or criminal acts. Inform the child about the law in the place of arrival and the consequences of any infringements. Use the child's disclosure to develop tailor-made counselling and support services for the child, while also taking into consideration any possible implications for the child's asylum claim or



residence, or the child's status as a victim of trafficking.

- › Listen to the child's economic aspirations and responsibilities and show the child that you take them seriously. Engage in an open and trusted dialogue to exchange views with the child and to try to find solutions. Explain any possible limitations imposed by the care arrangements in the reception system and relevant immigration and labour law.
- › Support the child in acquiring tools and methods for keeping calm and in control of their life, even in difficult situations.
- › Talk to children about identity documents and what they mean to the child. Provide them with information about the importance of these documents, who is authorised to check or take them, and what it means for the child to be with or without documents.
- › Treat the child with respect and be sensitive to preserving their dignity through the quality of personal relations, targeted assistance and support and a pleasant, healthy and protective environment.
- › Engage the child in a conversation about human rights, the rights of the

child and the Convention. Seek to relate these rights to the present situation of the girl or boy concerned and their aspirations for the future.

- › Support the child in understanding the role of the guardian and use the support offered by the guardian or an equivalent support person in a sensible way to promote their best interests.
- › Support the child in gaining an understanding of the reception and protection systems in the place of arrival, including the mandates and roles of different professionals and officials who the child will meet. Encourage the child to be open about telling their story, even if it is difficult to go through repeated meetings and interviews. Raise the child's awareness about the importance of being honest in order to maintain their credibility in the asylum procedure.
- › Work closely with the child to develop a life project that provides a transparent structure, helps the child to use their time in a meaningful way and to balance different interests and aspirations. A life project helps to obtain clarity about achievements, obstacles and setbacks and how to deal with them within the opportunities and



limitations offered by the reception system in the country of arrival and in the case of transfer to another country or return.

- › Consult with the child to assess the appropriate level and type of school or training and to understand what support the child needs to succeed. Make sure the child has access to quality education that is appropriate to their aspirations and ensure the child receives certificates of any school years or courses completed.
- › Encourage and enable children to engage in leisure time activities, sports and recreation, individually and together with peers who share similar stories as well as children, youth and adults from the host community.
- › Talk to children about their needs in relation to religion and spirituality and be open-minded about the potential symbolic value of achievements, items or objects. It is important to accommodate the child's religious and spiritual needs and to respect the child's choices, with due consideration to the best interests of the child.
- › Gently invite the child to recall good memories about their home and about the journey and to share them with trusted persons, as they are part of the child's identity and can give a meaning to the child's current situation.
- › Support the child to remain in contact and to uphold relations with their family and community of origin, in accordance with the best interests of the child and confidentiality rules in the asylum procedure. Seek to mediate between any possible expectations from home and the reality of the child's situation in the place of arrival with all relevant opportunities and limitations.
- › Be sensitive to the role and responsibilities of the child in light of the child's migration project and the underlying decisions taken in the home community. Seek to understand the implications that these may have on the child's behaviour and decisions in the place of arrival. Engage in a dialogue with the child about these matters, be transparent and clarify any related opportunities, risks and limitations in the place of arrival.
- › Inform the child about the rules and regulations concerning the employment of children in the country of arrival and the relevance of age and immigration status. Talk to



the child about the risks of informal labour and support the child in finding safe and legal income generating activities that do not interfere with the child's schooling, health and developmental needs. If that is not possible, consult openly with the child about the given limitations and try to find acceptable alternatives.

- › Be open with the child about the changes that will occur after the child turns 18 years old. Explore together with the child, relevant professionals and support persons what kind of support the child needs in order to succeed in the transition into adulthood and an independent life.
- › Seek to solicit the child's views about return and understand the

correlated risks and sources of protection. Ensure that the child's views are heard, understood and taken into account in the best interests determination process and the identification of a durable solution. If return is considered to be in the best interests of the child, explore with the child and all relevant actors in the country of destination and origin, the type of preparatory and follow up support that the child needs to make return a positive, safe and sustainable experience. Mobilise this support from formal and informal sources with a view to enabling continuity of care and support into adulthood and an independent life. Where return is not an option, assess whether family reunification is in the best interests of the child and support the child in this regard.

Source: Centro de Estudos para a Intervenção Social (CESIS), Defence for Children International – Italy, Family and Childcare Centre (KMOP), Hors La Rue, France, see www.resiland.org: Orientations for professionals and Officials working with and for children on the move.

Children should also be informed about the risks they could face if they go missing from the protection system.

- › Carers could also propose to inform the family of the child about those risks and discuss safer alternatives to individual plans to be realised outside regular procedures.

- › Highlight that other children are going through similar experiences (through the creation of support groups) and have been in the same situation before which proved helpful. For that, various good practices exist such as support groups or associations working on facilitating and improving the lives of newly arrived and unaccompanied young people.



Checklist: Information that could be provided to children in migration as a means to prevent disappearance

- ✓ Contact details of the guardian and role of the guardian
- ✓ Care options, including in the longer term, such as foster care, independent living arrangements, etc.
- ✓ Rules and regulations of the place where the child is taken into care
- ✓ Information about the roles of different professionals
- ✓ Geographical information about where they are
- ✓ Dublin III rules
- ✓ Family reunification procedures and possibilities
- ✓ Explanation on asylum procedure and other applicable procedures
- ✓ Procedure for victims of trafficking, including information on what constitutes trafficking
- ✓ Importance of personal interview
- ✓ Right to be provided free of charge with legal and procedural information
- ✓ Right to be assisted by a legal representative
- ✓ Risks which child could incur if they leave the system and go missing
- ✓ Rights related to reception and accommodation
- ✓ Right to healthcare services
- ✓ Right to education
- ✓ Complaint procedure

The person providing information to the child and building the aforementioned relationship of trust should be trained in child friendly communication.



Assessing the likelihood of disappearance and (re-)exploitation

Risk assessment

The assessment of the risk that a child will go missing and risks to which they could be exposed to if missing is one of the first steps to undertake in the care of an

unaccompanied child. **Every decision related to reception and protection will need to take the results of this assessment into account.**

For a correct risk assessment, it is essential to:

- ✓ Clarify which service is always in charge of this assessment. It is suggested that either the guardian or reception centre operators first in contact with the child are in charge.
- ✓ Conduct it as soon as possible, if possible during the first 24 hours after the child is placed under care of the authorities.
- ✓ Consult with other services, including the police and other authorities that may have been first in contact with the child, to recognise elements that could influence this assessment.
- ✓ Create a list of standardised indicators with which to assess risk to the child. This list needs to be created together with relevant actors (e.g. guardianship services, specialised police departments, international agencies) and needs to be periodically updated. The assessment should be conducted consistently within the country.
- ✓ Train the personnel who may come into contact with the child, especially in the first few hours, on recognising indicators that could influence the assessment.



Elements to be taken into account when assessing the risk that a child could go missing

Any list of indicators that could help assessing the risk that a child could go missing cannot be exhaustive, as the assessment must take into account not only the specific needs of each child under the care of the

authorities and the context and features of the country or region where the child is located. Nevertheless, there are some indicators that could be generally used for these purposes.

Checklist of elements to be taken into account to evaluate the risk of disappearance

- ✓ The child has mentioned that they have family or acquaintances in other countries and most likely arrived in the country with the help of smugglers
- ✓ The child seems uninterested in/unsatisfied with the accommodation, the information given or the activities proposed (including going to school)
- ✓ The child seems concerned about money and asks when it will be possible to start working (and doesn't seem interested in education opportunities)
- ✓ Police reports that the child went missing before
- ✓ It is common for the children of that nationality or region to go missing
- ✓ The child arrived in a group and some of them went missing already
- ✓ The child has a phone and uses it nervously
- ✓ The child was victim of trafficking
- ✓ Indicators suggest that the child is at risk of (re)trafficking
- ✓ The child is approaching the age of 18.

Source: SUMMIT Report



Who should participate in the creation of the standard list of indicators bringing intelligence gathered and practical experience?

- › Child protection authority
- › Guardianship service
- › Reception services
- › Police, including services specialised in missing and trafficking
- › Asylum authorities
- › Hotlines for missing children

Who should assess the risk?

- › The guardian or social worker, if appointed and in touch with the child within the first 24 hours
- › The reception centre operator who received the child, if the guardian is not appointed and in touch with the child within the first 24 hours

Who should assess the risk?

- › The police
- › The hotline for missing children
- › Specialised anti-trafficking services (to always be consulted when the child has been a victim of trafficking or is assessed at risk)



Promising practice – Assessing the risk of a disappearance

In the Minor Ndako centres in Belgium, all reception centre operators are instructed to assess the risk of going missing during the first hours after the arrival of the child. All operators are given the following guidance in case of doubt:

- > Are the police involved in the case?
- > Does the case involve human trafficking, smuggling or other criminal activities?
- > Is the child or teenager NOT the one asking for shelter/refuge?

If the answer to one or more of these questions is YES there is a reasonable concern for disappearance. Also ask the person(s) who referred the child and the police about their assessment of the situation; do they think there is a risk of disappearance?

Source: Minor Ndako, Reception Centre in Belgium



Promising practice – Safeguarding Children who May have been Trafficked

The Glasgow Child Protection Committee (CPC) developed a Child Trafficking & Exploitation Inter Agency Guidance for practitioners in Scotland who may come into contact with child victims, which includes the safeguarding toolkit matrix of child trafficking indicators for practitioners conducting an assessment.

CHILD TRAFFICKING MATRIX (from NRM referral form for children in Scotland)

Exploitation	Y	S
Claims to have been exploited through sexual exploitation, criminality, labour exploitation or domestic servitude by another person		
Physical symptoms of exploitative abuse (For example sexual or physical)		
Underage marriage		
Physical indications of working (For example overly tired in school, indications of manual labour – condition of hands/skin, backaches)		
Sexually transmitted infection or unwanted pregnancy		
Story very similar to those given by others, perhaps hinting they have been coached		
Significantly older partner		
Harbours excessive fears / anxieties (for instance about an individual, of deportation, disclosing information)		
Movement into, within or out of the UK		
Returning after missing, looking well cared for despite no known base		
Claims to have been in the UK for years but hasn't learnt local language or culture		
Other risk factors		
Withdrawn and refuses to talk / appears afraid to talk to a person in authority		



Shows signs of physical neglect – basic care, malnourishment, lack of attention to health needs		
Shows signs of emotional neglect		
Socially isolated – lack of positive, meaningful relationships in child's life		
Behavioural – poor concentration or memory, irritable / unsociable / aggressive behaviour		
Psychological – indications of trauma or numbing		
Exhibits self assurance, maturity and self confidence not expected in a child of such age		
Evidence of drug, alcohol or substance misuse		
Low self image, low self esteem, self harming behaviour including cutting, overdosing, eating disorder, promiscuity		
Sexually active		
Not registered with or attended a GP practice		
Not enrolled in school		
Has money, expensive clothes, mobile phones or other possessions without plausible explanation		

Exploitation	Y	S
Required to earn a minimum amount of money every day		
Involved in criminality highlighting involvement of adults (for example recovered from cannabis farm / factory, street crime, petty theft, pick pocketing, begging)		
Performs excessive housework chores and rarely leaves the residence		
Reports from reliable sources suggest likelihood of sexual exploitation, including being seen in places known to be used for sexual exploitation		
Unusual hours / regular patterns of child leaving or returning to placement which indicates probable working		
Accompanied by an adult who may not be the legal guardian and insists on remaining with the child at all times		
Limited freedom of movement		



Movement into, within or out of the UK

Gone missing from local authority care		
Unable to confirm name or address of person meeting them on arrival		
Accompanying adult previously made multiple visa applications for other children / acted as the guarantor for other children's visa applications		
Accompanying adult known to have acted as guarantor on visa applications for other visitors who have not returned to their countries of origin on visa expiry		
History with missing links or unexplained moves		
Pattern of street homelessness		

Other risk factors

Unregistered private fostering arrangement		
Cared for by adult/s who are not their parents and quality of relationship is not good		
Placement breakdown		
Persistently missing, staying out overnight or returning late with no plausible explanation		
Truancy / disengagement with education		
Appropriate adult is not an immediate family member (parent / sibling)		
Appropriate adult cannot provide photographic identification for the child		

Exploitation

Y	S
Located / recovered from a place of exploitation (for example brothel, cannabis farm, involved in criminality)	
Deprived of earnings by another person	
Claims to be in debt bondage or "owes" money to other persons (for example for travel costs, before having control over own earnings)	
Receives unexplained / unidentified phone calls whilst in placement / temporary accommodation	



No passport or other means of identity		
Unable or reluctant to give accommodation or other personal details		
False documentation or genuine documentation that has been altered or fraudulently obtained; or the child claims that their details (name, date of birth) on the documentation are incorrect		
Movement into, within or out of the UK		
Entered country illegally		
Journey or visa arranged by someone other than themselves or their family		
Registered at multiple addresses		
Other risk factors		
Possible inappropriate use of the internet and forming online relationships, particularly with adults		
Accounts of social activities with no plausible explanation of the source of necessary funding		
Entering or leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults		
Adults loitering outside the child's usual place of residence		
Leaving home / care setting in clothing unusual for the individual child (for example inappropriate for age, borrowing clothing from older people)		
Works in various locations		
One among a number of unrelated children found at one address		
Having keys to premises other than those known about		
Going missing and being found in areas where they have no known links		

Source: *The Glasgow Child Protection Committee (CPC), 2019, Child Trafficking & Exploitation Inter Agency Guidance*, available at: <https://www.glasgowchildprotection.org.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=12917&p=0>



Template of actions to be taken by carers in case of concern for or risk of disappearance

- > Make sure all information has been collected and that the consent of the child has been received to allow this information to be shared if needed.
- > Keep the lines of communication open. Talk to the child (if necessary with the assistance of an interpreter), as soon as possible after their arrival.
 - > Introduce yourself, and if relevant, the organisation and unit they will be staying in or which will be in charge of them. Make sure they know that you (and if relevant, your organisation) have NO connection to law enforcement activities. Additionally, try to explain that you will help them as much as possible.
 - > Ask about their own desire to leave.
 - > Point to the dangers and risks of leaving/living outside the protection system, and make sure they know you are concerned for their wellbeing.
 - > Ask whether the child feels threatened, make sure they know they are safe.
 - > Suggest they use the time at your home/the centre to rest, wait for more information and plan daily activities.
 - > Listen to the worries and thoughts of the child, try your best to keep them calm and reassure them, try to buy as much time as you can.
- > Let them shower, eat and rest.



Attention points

- › Passport, cash money and a mobile phone are the most important tools when travelling under the radar/in secret. If a child still has these things on them:
 - › Make a copy of all their identification papers (this will make it easier to have access to the right information when completing forms) and write down their telephone number and any other information you deem important.
 - › Offer to keep their documents (passport, etc.), mobile phone and money in your care for safe keeping. If they really do not want this, give them back to the child.
 - › If the risk of a disappearance is really high, you can contact the police department involved in placing the child to let them know what is going on. You may also want to let the police know that you are not authorised to confiscate any of these items from the child.

Keep in mind that **the Internet** is a tool which can be used to contact others outside the centre using apps and programmes such as Skype, Facebook, email and chat programmes. If you judge the risk of a disappearance high, [unsupervised] Internet usage might also be a problem.

- › Ensure that someone monitors the situation and keeps a close eye on the child. All the available and important information will have to be handed to this one person. In reception centres, during each shift there should be one person who is specifically appointed to look after the child. This person should always (as much as possible) be aware of where the child is.



Tips for carers and reception facilities

- › Who has placed the child in your care, why they are in your care and for how long will they stay in your care?
- › The specific mission and role of your centre
- › It's very important to make sure the child knows that you and your organisation are independent and separate from the person or institution that has placed the child in your care. Your role and organisation are in between the child and whoever placed the child in your care.
- › What can they expect at the centre?
- › Make sure you explain what is not allowed in the centre in general and specifically in their case. Additionally, explain who has decided that something is not allowed, such as the judge, police, you yourself...
- › Inform the child of the protection that an unaccompanied child receives, such as shelter, the appointment of a legal guardian, etc.
- › Talk to the child about the agenda for the next couple of days or even hours.

The first 24 hours are critical. After the first day, the risk usually gradually decreases.

- › Try to make mini plans to stall for time, for example washing their clothes. This is nice for the child but also makes it harder for them to leave. When their clothes are being washed or still wet, they are less likely to leave.
- › Make appointments (and communicate these to the child) with different members of the team. For example, 'at 2pm I will introduce you to the nurse, she will have a look at that cut you have on your leg. And then at 5pm we will call...'



- › Offer them things (food, something to drink, etc.) while respecting their choice if they refuse.
- › Do not put yourself between the child and their goal (for example a child that wants to travel to their mother who is already in the UK) but advise against dangerous ways of travelling.
- › Answer any questions the child may have to the best of your abilities, even if the answer is 'I don't know, but I will look into it and give you an answer tomorrow'. This way, you show that you value their questions and encourage them to ask more questions.
- › You must be reliable and trustworthy; the child must know they can trust you. Say what you do and do as you say; try to be as transparent as possible.
- › It's very important that everyone in the team is on the same page. Everyone should give the same information and message to the child. If there is any specific information relating to the child, make sure everyone on the team is aware of this.
- › The child should be allowed to call their parents, but only in the presence of a translator. Let the parents know that you and the translator are listening in on the conversation from the start. Tell the parents about the centre, what kind of care their child receives and why they are staying here. Make sure to prepare this conversation well and be prepared for all the questions the parents may have.
- › If there is an appointed guardian, let them visit the child. Tell them about your experience and approach to this situation. If the guardian has no experience with these kind of situations, suggest that you communicate the most important thing to the child yourself.
- › Only use other children from the group as translators if there is no other options. Child translators are not impartial and there is a good chance that the translation will be distorted when one child translates for another.

Source: Minor Ndako, Reception Centre in Belgium



Access the SAFE e-learning resource aimed at frontline practitioners and care professionals, foster carers, kinship and Dublin family caretakers by enhancing their knowledge, skills and confidence and enabling them to provide better quality family-based care to unaccompanied and separated children. This project was implemented by the British Red Cross (UK) in partnership with KMOP (Greece), the Danish Red Cross (Denmark) and CARDET (Cyprus). <https://safeproject.eu/elearning-course/>

ECPAT UK has created the 10 principles for the safe accommodation of child victims of trafficking²⁰

Principle 1 The best interests of the child should be at the centre of all decisions regarding the provision of safe accommodation and related support

Principle 2 Children should be asked about what makes them feel safe

Principle 3 Children should be given sufficient information to help them make informed decisions about their accommodation and care

Principle 4 Safety measures should be implemented to reduce a child's risk of going missing, especially within 24 to 72 hours after first contact with the child

Principle 5 Safe accommodation should be understood as multi-faceted, involving physical and psychological elements, with particular recognition of the impact of trauma on a child's perceptions and behavior

Principle 6 A child's accommodation and safety needs will change over time and should be regularly assessed

Principle 7 A child should not feel punished or overly restricted by measures taken to help keep them safe in accommodation

Principle 8 A child should be given access to a range of psychological, educational, health, social, legal, economic and language support that 'brings safety to the child' and helps them recover

²⁰ ECPAT UK (2011) On the Safe Side. Available at: <https://www.ecpat.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=d61788dc-0969-4134-a1cf-fc7cf494b1a0>



Principle 9 Everyone working with child victims of trafficking should be trained to recognise and respond appropriately to their needs

Principle 10 Efforts to keep children safe should involve the wider community in ways that help create an environment that is difficult for traffickers to operate in

Family tracing

Making steps early to reconnect the child with their family who may be located in Europe or in another country is a key prevention measure. Children in migration may often have the aim to reunite with one of their family members in another country, or they may be mandated by their family to seek better opportunity for themselves and their family. By

making steps at the earliest stage to inform them of the possibilities to reconnect with their family and/or to legally reunite with them, professionals may reduce the incentive for the child to look for illegal and sometimes faster ways to reunite with their families outside of the protection system.



Checklist for guardians and carers on restoring family links and activating family reunification

- ✓ Assess whether reconnecting or reuniting the child with their family is in their best interest. For more information on how to assess the Best Interests of the Child in family tracing and reunification, please see the European Commission Study on high-risk groups for trafficking in human beings: https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/eu-policy/study-high-risk-groups-trafficking-human-beings_en
- ✓ If the child is still in contact with their family in Europe or in another country, offer your assistance and support.
- ✓ If the child has lost contact with their family and wishes to reconnect, provide more information on the possibilities and offer them your assistance. For instance, you can contact the Red Cross Family tracing programme (see below).
- ✓ Try gathering as much information as possible by contacting other professionals the child has been in contact with in your country or in another EU country the child may have been in previously (e.g. a guardian, carers, social workers). To find these contact details, view the contact booklet in Annex III.
- ✓ If the child is applying for asylum, inform them of the family reunification procedure under Dublin if applicable to his case (if one or more family members are legally present in another member state). Assist the child in the procedure and follow-up regularly to speed up the process. Make sure the child's case is treated as a priority.
- ✓ Always keep the child informed of the possibilities, the next steps and the progress made so far, so as to keep them engaged in the process, all the while managing expectations.



Restoring Family Links:

The ICRC and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies work together around the world to locate people and put them back into contact with their relatives. This work includes looking for family members, restoring contact, reuniting families and seeking to clarify the fate of those who remain missing.

The EASO Practical Guide on Family Tracing (2016) provides a set of reference and guidance materials on family tracing, as well as a mapping of the current state of play in the EU+ States.

The 116 000 hotlines for missing children can play a role in reuniting families who have been separated on the way to or in Europe. For more information, see page 114.

Training actors to be better informed

Various actors from law enforcement, care and reception must be well-informed and trained in the background and situation of the target group.

- › In several countries joint training courses have been set up to educate professionals to recognise signs of human trafficking. One example is training on the use of spiritual abuse in certain cultures and how it is used by traffickers to
- keep their victims under control. In this case, more knowledge leads to a more sensitive approach with the cooperation of all actors. The development of training is often financed with European funds or directly by the central governments.
- › ECPAT UK and the Refugee Council have jointly delivered a national training course in England for foster carers and support workers on



the care of separated and trafficked children, with the aims of reducing their risk of going missing. The project was funded by the Department for Education (DfE). They also delivered a multiagency course designed to help professionals working with separated children and child victims of trafficking understand and prevent vulnerable children going missing from care. These courses are booked on demand or through rolling yearly contracts. For more information, visit: <https://www.ecpat.org.uk/Pages/Events/Category/training> and/or <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/latest/training-events/>

- › The OSCE project “Combating Human Trafficking along Migration

Routes”, aims to enhance the ability of interested participating States and Partners for Co-operation to effectively investigate and prosecute human trafficking and to promptly identify victims of trafficking along migration routes by promoting a multiagency and human rights-based approach. Several simulation-based training exercises based on scripts were developed in the framework of this project, and a training handbook was created that includes an innovative methodology to counter human trafficking. OSCE (2019), Practical Handbook on How to Conduct Simulation-based Training Exercises to Combat Human Trafficking, available at : <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/413510>

Responding to protection needs

Foster care and care plans

Unaccompanied children need foster care with fully trained and knowledgeable carers that understand the needs of unaccompanied young people. Good quality support, like supervising social workers and guardians, is essential in terms of prevention of disappearance.

- › The creation of safety and/or care plans triggered by a thorough assessment of the risk that the child could go missing and created by all those in charge of the care of a child, taking into account indications from law enforcement and national



authorities, is a successful practice in several countries.

- › Individual care plans are longer term and look at the best interests of the child, their current needs and

their long term aspirations. Individual care plans are standard practice in Finland, Germany and Ireland, for instance.²¹ They should be adapted on a regular basis based on the evolving needs of the child.

Who should be involved in the creation of a care plans?

- › reception centres or foster families
- › guardians (or similarly qualified professionals)
- › NGO experts in certain issues, for example trafficking

²¹ Let Children be Children (2018) Lessons from the Field on the Protection and Integration of Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe, Eurochild and SOS Children's Village, available at: https://www.sos-childrensvillages.org/getmedia/32eeb951-d731-48ae-86fb-96b9aff63f3e/Let-Children-be-Children_Case-studies-refugee-programmes.pdf



One of the main gaps in safeguarding children at risk of trafficking or going missing lies in the difficulty of engaging children who, for various reasons, are distrustful of the system and as such, are not in contact with child protection authorities. Gaining their trust and being able to support them can prove to be complex and varies according to the different backgrounds and experiences of children and young people. Various NGOs have adopted different approaches to tackle this issue; some of which could be replicated.

Brabantia- antenne Caritas International and Minor Ndako, with the support of civil, associative and state actors, achieved positive results with the pilot project “Xtra Mena” (2019). This project aims to develop, propose and test a comprehensive approach for the supervision and care of unaccompanied minors in transit. Awareness raising, meetings with minors in order to provide them information about their rights and the system in Belgium, training sessions for professionals and support have proven effective in only a few months. In fact, close to 50 minors received support from the project team and 27 were referred to the guardianship service, to a reception center and/or to the asylum authorities. Xtra MENA shows that when sufficient time is invested in creating trust, children can be reached and integrated into the protection system.

In Sweden, the “Projekt BABA – råd och stöd för ensamma barn på flykt” by Stockholms Stadsmission, a local NGO, is adopting innovative outreach approaches. BABA’s counsellors offer help and advice both in social and legal issues, aiming to support these individuals to gain control of their situation by identifying which options they have.



Promising Practice: The Barnahus Model as a multidisciplinary and comprehensive approach to respond to the child's protection needs

The European Barnahus Standards represent the first attempt in Europe to define the principles of the interventions and services referred to as the “Barnahus” model. The name Barnahus (“a house for children”) originates from Iceland where the first Barnahus was founded in 1998. Since then, many more Barnahus have been set up, mainly in the Nordic countries.

The Barnahus model embraces a multidisciplinary and interagency approach, ensuring collaboration between different agencies (judicial, social, medical) in one child-friendly premise, which offers comprehensive services for the child and family under one roof. The core of the Barnahus model is the assumption that the child's disclosure is key both to identifying and investigating child abuse for criminal, protective and therapeutic purposes.

Barnahus is never a fixed model but rather an evolving practice, ready to adapt to the complex needs of children who are victims or witnesses of violence.

Recently, European Barnahus Standards have been developed and can be found here <https://www.childrenatrisk.eu/promise/standards/>

Source: The Barnahus Quality Standards, PROMISE Project series, 2019

Actions to be taken when the child is at risk of being (re)trafficked

When facing a child that is suspected to be at risk or a victim of exploitation, professionals must know who to refer the child to in

their country. See the contact booklet in Annex III for a mapping of the key professionals involved in such cases, per country.

See European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2018), Gender-specific measures in anti-trafficking actions: report'. <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-specific-measures-anti-trafficking-actions-report>



Professionals must respond to a child suspected of being a victim of trafficking in the same way they would to other incidences of child abuse. The suspicion must trigger child protection responses which ensure:

- › Application of the non-discrimination principle to all children in all procedures
- › Access to support
- › Appointment of a qualified and trained guardian
- › Regular review of their care plan
- › Access to quality translation and interpretation services
- › Appropriate placement in the context of risk
- › Referral to free and quality legal advice
- › All possible efforts to locate their family if there is no risk associated and if it is in their best interest
- › That the child is not criminalised for offences committed as a result of their exploitation
- › That the benefit of the doubt is given regarding their age
- › Access to education
- › Access to health care services
- › Access to specialist mental health support
- › Access to fulfil their religious and/or cultural needs
- › Access to information regarding the state's various procedures
- › Material assistance
- › Access to a reflection and recovery period²²

²² ECAT Article 13 – Recovery and reflection period



- › Access to a durable solution²³
 - › Cooperation in search of a missing child²⁴
 - › Protection of their private life and identity²⁵
 - › Access to compensation if in the best interests of the child²⁶
- If the child wishes to participate in a police investigation and/or court proceedings, professionals must ensure that they:
- › Provide explanations and support the child through the process
 - › Do not make assistance conditional on the child's willingness to act as a witness
 - › Ensure the child is given special protection measures according to their best interests (such as giving evidence via video link, child friendly interviews, and other special measures)
 - › Ensure the child is protected from intimidation and retaliation
 - › Ensure the child's identity is not disclosed in court proceedings

²³ To mean one that protects the long-term best interests and welfare of the child and is sustainable and secure from that perspective. The outcome should ensure that the child is able to develop into adulthood, in an environment which will meet their needs and fulfil their rights as defined by the CRC and will not put the child at risk of persecution or serious harm. When assessing possible solutions for a child, States have a responsibility to investigate the implications of the options under consideration. Committee on the Rights of the Child in Joint General Comment No. 22 (para 32(j)).

²⁴ ECAT Article 33

²⁵ ECAT Article 11 – Protection of private life

²⁶ ECAT Article 15



What is a National Referral Mechanism?

A National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a cooperative framework through which state actors fulfil their obligations to protect and promote the human rights of trafficked persons, co-ordinating their efforts in a strategic partnership with civil society. The basic aims of an NRM are to ensure that the human rights of trafficked persons are respected and to provide an effective way to refer victims of trafficking to services. In addition, NRMs can work to help improve national policy and procedures on a broad range of victim-related issues such as residence and repatriation regulations, victim compensation, and witness protection. NRMs can establish national plans of action and can set benchmarks to assess whether goals are being met.

Effective NRMs require effective cooperation between government agencies and civil society. Often, victims of trafficking are first identified by law enforcement personnel, but it is civil society organisations that provide shelter and other services to victims. Thus, an NRM can be an essential structure for referring trafficked persons. NRMs should develop a dynamic process to ensure the participation of civil society. Internal monitoring, evaluation, and feedback should be a continuing part of NRM activities. An NRM should therefore seek to be as inclusive as possible in its membership and participation.

An NRM should incorporate:

- › Guidance on how to identify and appropriately treat trafficked persons while respecting their rights and giving them power over decisions that affect their lives.
- › A system to refer trafficked persons to specialized agencies offering shelter and protection from physical and psychological harm, as well as support services. Such shelter entails medical, social, and psychological support; legal services; and assistance in acquiring identification documents, as well as the facilitation of voluntary repatriation or resettlement.
- › The establishment of appropriate, officially binding mechanisms designed to harmonise victim assistance with investigative and crime-prosecution efforts.



- › An institutional anti-trafficking framework of multidisciplinary and cross-sector participation that enables an appropriate response to the complex nature of human trafficking and allows its monitoring and evaluation.

Source: OSCE "NATIONAL REFERRAL MECHANISMS Joining Efforts to Protect the Rights of Trafficked Persons A Practical Handbook"

Promising Practice: The NSPCC's Child Trafficking Advice Centre (CTAC)

CTAC is a multidisciplinary team of qualified social workers, a police officer seconded from the National Crime Agency (NCA) and a seconded immigration officer. The team are accredited child protection trainers and have experience in both statutory and international work.

The CTAC team has a range of other qualifications including international social work and refugee studies, women and child abuse, counselling skills, teaching, theology and psychosocial sciences.

CTAC:

- › Delivers training to professionals who come into contact with trafficked children
- › Provides professionals with up to date specialist safeguarding advice and information about child trafficking via telephone and email
- › Carries out work internationally to prevent children from being trafficked
- › Promotes and coordinates multiagency responses with a child protection focus for children who may have been trafficked
- › Advocates for foreign national children in the UK where there are trafficking or safeguarding concerns, for example through attending child protection meetings, making recommendations to child protection plans and producing child trafficking reports for courts and immigration tribunals



- › Is a First Responder for child referrals to the National Referral Mechanism (a system to identify trafficking victims) – also supporting other agencies to make referrals
- › Raises awareness about child trafficking through media, influencing work and conferences
- › Responds to policy consultations
- › Analyses and reports on trafficking trends

What happens if someone contacts CTAC with concerns for a child or young person?

Cases are allocated to social workers and supervised by a manager. The allocated social worker advocates on behalf of the child by referring and working with other agencies, contributing to the children's services assessment and making recommendations to child protection plans and pathway plans. They also represent the child at child protection meetings, reviews and court hearings and give expert witness reports at court as necessary.

The police officer works with the social worker when there are child protection concerns, referring and liaising with the police and the NCA, contributing to child trafficking investigations, and providing intelligence to prevent trafficking, protect children and secure prosecutions.



Cooperation between actors and across borders

Collaboration with other agencies in prevention activities

The situation of a child in migration involves many actors, including asylum authorities, carers, the police, medical staff, etc. However, research reveals that cooperation to prevent the disappearance of unaccompanied children is often hindered by the lack of training and understanding of the problem of missing children. It is also often unclear who is responsible for a certain task in relation to prevention or other action that may be useful in the event that the child goes missing.

- › Collecting all information in one place, with due regard for the confidentiality of certain information and data protection regulations, would simplify access to information in case of need; not only in cases of disappearance but also when deciding on the best care approach for each child, as information may be scattered because it is collected by different services at different times.
- › Law enforcement agencies can play a key role in the prevention of disappearances by providing information on migration paths, national and international patterns of trafficking and known criminal activity that could have an impact on the safety of the child. Periodic consultations between agencies could foster timely exchange of information.
- › Cooperation should be based on formal procedures of cooperation and strategic planning of such activities, not on the motivation and willingness of the professionals involved. It is essential to establish clear definition of the roles of agencies involved, as well as ways in which communication is organised.



Identifying counterparts and allies within the country and across borders

It is crucial for professionals to know who their counterparts and allies are in dealing with cases of trafficked and/or missing children in migration, within the country and across borders. In annex III, we provide a contact booklet which includes, for each country that participated to the Interact Simulations (October 2018), a contact list of some of the main agencies and organisations involved in the

prevention and responses to cases of missing and trafficked children in migration. It also includes the processes that are followed nationally.

The European Commission Anti-Trafficking Office equally compiles comprehensive information on how each EU Member State tackles, prevents and identifies instances of trafficking in human beings.²⁷

A tool facilitating the identification of roles and responsibilities of actors in cases of the disappearance of unaccompanied children was developed in the framework of the EU co-funded project CONNECT. The tool includes suggestions on how to identify who are the relevant actors and how to create a table to assess the capacity and tasks of each one of them.

See more in the CONNECT tool “Who is responsible?”, p. 26-18, available at: http://www.connectproject.eu/PDF/CONNECT-ITA_tool.pdf

²⁷ See: https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/member-states_en



Information sharing

For child protection purposes²⁸, information sharing is crucial to proactively inform professionals in other Member States of the potential journey of a child, or to inform professionals in another Member State of the presence of a child, hence allowing that country to close the case. It is above all important to reduce the number of similar processes that a child goes through when moving across borders, such as being interviewed and having to tell their story multiple times.

GDPR concerns

Within the context of child protection, information sharing has been recognised as vital to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully. This regulation is not a barrier to sharing information, where the failure to do so would cause the safety or wellbeing of a child to be compromised. Similarly, respecting the right to a private and family life would not prevent information sharing when there are real safeguarding concerns and the child's right to safety and integrity is (at risk of being) compromised.

²⁸ For more on the need of a firewall between the child protection and migration management boards, see the section on "collection of identifying information" (page 37), as well as the Interact Simulation Report, available at: <http://missingchildreurope.eu>



Confidentiality, data protection and information sharing

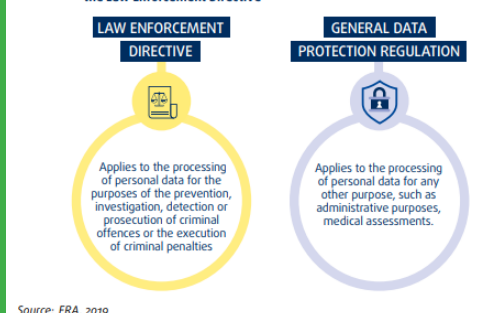
Source: FRA (2019), Children deprived of parental care found in an EU Member State other than their own.

With the need to share information with several authorities involved within and across different EU Member States set against the right of the child, to respect private life and protection of personal data, authorities will need to consider procedures that respect the privacy of the child and protect confidential information.

Article 8 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union establishes the right to protection of personal data, and Article 7 establishes the right to respect private and family life. EU law comprises of two instruments relevant to this guide, which came into force in May 2018: the General Data Protection Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2016/679, also known as the GDPR) and the Data Protection Directive for Police and Criminal Justice Authorities (Directive (EU) 2016/680, also known as the Law Enforcement Directive).

As shown in Figure 14, where a competent authority processes personal data for the purposes of the prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of criminal offences, Directive (EU) 2016/680 applies. Where competent authorities process personal data for purposes other than the ones mentioned above, the general regime under the General Data Protection Regulation applies.

Figure 14: Scope of application of the General Data Protection Regulation and the Law Enforcement Directive



Some provisions are the same or similar in both legal instruments. The data protection principles of lawfulness and fairness, purpose limitation, data minimisation, storage limitation, data accuracy, integrity and confidentiality serve as the starting point for any processing operation (Article 5 of the GDPR; Article 4 of the Law Enforcement Directive). Moreover, most of the rights of the data subject are applicable in both settings (see Articles 12-23 of the GDPR and Articles 12-18 of the Law Enforcement Directive). In crime prevention and investigation, the rights of any individual are subject to specific limitations because they could jeopardise ongoing investigations and procedures. The obligations of the data controllers with regards to data breach notifications (Articles 33-34 of the GDPR; Articles 30-31 of the Law Enforcement Directive) or the records of processing activities (Article 30 of the GDPR; Article 24 of the Law Enforcement Directive) are similar under the two contexts.

Children merit specific protection, because they may be less aware of the risks and consequences involved in data processing. When information and communication about processing are addressed to a child, they should be in clear and plain language that the child can easily understand (Article 12 of the GDPR).

The need to respect confidentiality, privacy and data protection rules does not prevent the sharing of information to protect a child, provided certain safeguards are respected. The General Data Protection Regulation establishes that it is lawful to share information to protect vital interests of the data subject (in this case, the child) or to perform tasks carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority (Article 6 of the GDPR).

When assisting children who are deprived of parental care and in need of protection, the right to respect for private life, protection of personal data and confidentiality entails the following in practice.

- › When authorities collect personal data about the child, the child needs to receive concise, transparent, intelligible and easily accessible information, using clear and plain language.
- › Information collected needs to be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the case and the purpose.
- › Information must never be shared with persons who are not related to the case; avoid sharing with the public or the media any personal data that could lead to the identification of a child.



- › Information registered must be accurate and kept up to date.
- › Children need to be told what information will be shared with whom and why; child protection professionals should obtain consent from the child, in consultation with the guardian, unless it is not safe or appropriate.
- › The information can be shared without consent if necessary to protect the vital interests of the child or of another person; a record should be kept of what information was given and to whom. Children deprived of parental care found in an EU Member State other than their own
- › Child protection services involved could instruct Central Authorities on how to share information with the other EU Member State to ensure privacy (e.g. replacing names with codes).
- › Authorities must respect the national data retention rules, and not keep data longer than necessary.
- › Measures are needed to ensure security and prevent loss, destruction or damage. For example, code the case files and do not use the individual's name; if paper files are used, they should be under lock and key and in a safe location; protect electronic files with individual passwords with limited access and secure them on safe servers, never on private computers, USB sticks or other storage devices.

See also: Handbook on European data protection law



Sharing information in respect of the child's safety and privacy

Besides GDPR-related concerns, it is crucial to ensure that information about a child's case and whereabouts is shared in respect of their privacy, and that a firewall exists between the need for child protection and immigration enforcement²⁹. Information shared for the protection of the child should never be used against the child's best interests or for immigration enforcement purposes.

The following are fundamental principles to guide the processing of personal data. Personal data shall be³⁰:

- › Adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose for which they are processed;
- › Accurate and kept up to date;
- › Not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose;
- › Processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects, which implies the right and possibility of the person concerned to access and amend data;
- › Adequately protected, which implies appropriate technical and organizational measures against unauthorized or unlawful processing of personal data;
- › Not transferred to any country or territory outside the European Union and the European Economic Area without adequate level of protection for the rights and freedoms of data subjects.
- › Given with informed consent;
- › Processed fairly and lawfully;
- › Obtained only for clearly specified and lawful purposes;

²⁹ For more on the need of a firewall between the child protection and migration management boards, see the section on "collection of identifying information" (page 37), as well as the Interact Simulation Report, available at: <http://missingchildreneurope.eu>

³⁰ Council of the Baltic Sea States (2015), Transnational child protection: practical guide for caseworkers and case officers, available at: http://www.childrenatrisk.eu/public/PROTECT/Guide_for_case_workers_and_officers.pdf



Promising practices:

In the UK, officials' emails are automatically secured through a Criminal Justice Secure Email Service.

In Greece, the Smile of the Child shares sensitive information only via phonelines.

In Sweden, stakeholders involved in cases of child disappearances and trafficking use encrypted messages to communicate sensitive information. When it is assessed to be in the best interests of the child, information is shared to a restricted number of stakeholders for the child's protection.

In December 2018 OSCE simulation training³¹, participants representing civil society and child protection services created a common database for cases of victims of trafficking, hence allowing every relevant stakeholder to find information in a common place.

³¹ OSCE (2018), Fifth OSCE simulation-based training in combating human trafficking along migration routes concludes in Vicenza, available at: <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/407036>



Checklist of steps to take when sharing information across borders

- ✓ Take the best interests of the child into consideration
- ✓ Always involve the guardian; they are the first contact point for the child
- ✓ Identify relevant counterparts in the country where the child is suspected to have gone missing to, or is suspected to have been beforehand:
 - Through the contact booklet (see Annex III)
 - Through the 116 000 hotlines
 - Through the contact list of the EU Anti-trafficking platform (DG Home)³²
 - Through existing networks' contact lists, such as the European Network for Guardianship or Missing Children Europe, among others
- ✓ Use secured ways of communicating such as phone calls or encrypted emails or messages
- ✓ Discuss with your counterpart what their privacy policy is concerning the child's information and make sure the information you are sharing will not be used against the child's best interests
- ✓ Respect GDPR and the fundamental principles for the processing of personal data (see above)
- ✓ Ask for an update on the case once new information is received

³² https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/node/4598_en



Memorandum of understanding or protocols of cooperation

As mentioned above, it is important that the tasks and responsibilities of every involved professional in the situation of the child are clarified in every step taken for their protection, including prevention of disappearance. For this reason, it is important to formalise cooperation between actors working on the care of unaccompanied children and actors that are involved in cases of children who have gone missing.

- › The signature of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) specifically dedicated to the treatment of cases of missing unaccompanied children (or more generally, children disappearing from

alternative care) is highly recommended. The MoU should be agreed among all professionals involved in the situation, including the police, magistrate, guardians service, immigration office, hot-lines and shelters. It is important to understand each other's work, to see what information is crucial for the partners, and to speed up the exchange of information and collaboration.

See also Annex I to the Practical Guidance is the European Model Protocol of Cooperation between Law Enforcement and Civil Society Organisations in Cases of Missing Children.



Checklists of elements to be included in a MoU related to prevention of disappearances

- ✓ Authorities that need to be informed of the presence of the unaccompanied child on the national territory and relevant procedures
- ✓ Authorities and other actors in charge of deciding on the accommodation of the child
- ✓ Authorities and other actors that are allowed to collect, modify and retrieve information included in the child's personal file
- ✓ Authorities and other actors in charge of monitoring the application of this section of the MoU
- ✓ Practical information and contact details of the relevant services, including anti-trafficking services

Formalisation of cooperation across borders

It is crucial that not only are procedures clear nationally, but also internationally.

The formalisation of cooperation across borders can include:

- › A MoU (see above) between two or more countries.
- › Designating a national focal point (e.g. unit, office or person) that will serve as liaison between the national stakeholders in their country and the focal point of the other

countries. Assigning a focal point for transnational cooperation can and should be part of a national MoU.

- › Drafting Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for cooperation across borders. SOPs can also be included in the national MoU. SOPs clearly identify the different steps to take when a child has gone missing, is at risk of trafficking and/or is suspected to be in another country.



5.2 Response

“When confronted with an increasing number of disappearances of unaccompanied children, we initiated a Memorandum of Understanding with all the relevant actors in the field: the police, the magistrate, the tutors, the immigration office and the shelters. It doesn’t work miracles, but it allows the different actors to understand each other’s work, to see which information is crucial for the partners and to speed up the exchange of information. It’s our duty to continue to break through the indifference towards this group of children.”

(Child Focus, running the hotline for missing children in Belgium)

The disappearance of an unaccompanied child is to be treated as any other child disappearance. For this reason, it is very important that:

- › carers are trained on procedures related to child disappearances and the tools available to report and follow this up.
- › Police officers and magistrates are trained on specific issues related to children in migration, trafficking and smuggling.
- › It should NEVER be assumed that an unaccompanied child left the reception centre or the foster family out of their own free will. It is important to assess the reasons that could be behind the disappearance and the risks which the child could incur.



Responses and approaches to the disappearance of an unaccompanied child should be based on specific and detailed procedures, highlighting who is responsible for each step, what the actions to be taken are and who is monitoring the effective functioning of the protection procedure triggered. As the disappearance of a child naturally involves several actors, it is important that all of them are trained on how the particular cooperation process works.

Several aspects should be considered when responding to the case of disappearance of an unaccompanied child. In this handbook, we will analyse a (non-exhaustive) selection of them:

- › Clear ownership of the case and division of tasks is essential from the moment the case is opened.
- › Staff must be well informed and well-trained on procedures linked to missing children
- › Reporting a disappearance must be timely and exhaustive
- › The protection system needs an action perspective; when a risk to a child's safety is assessed as high, measures must be in place for professionals to be able to react quickly and efficiently
- › Within the protection system and across borders, actors should work together closely



Responsibility for a case of a missing child in migration

As in the case of activities aimed at preventing the disappearance of an unaccompanied child, a clear and well-understood division of tasks between each party involved is crucial to ensure an appropriate reaction to the case of a missing child and consistency of service.

- › It is important to provide training on 'missing' for all professionals working with unaccompanied migrant children.
- › Training on 'missing' should include a clear explanation of the procedures triggered in the case of a missing child and the steps comprising follow up actions to all professionals involved in the situation of an unaccompanied child.

For this reason, it is important to formalise the cooperation between actors working on the care of unaccompanied children and any actors that are involved in the missing case.

Hotlines for missing children usually play an important role in supporting those who are responsible for a missing child's case, in both national and cross-border cases. However, data collected from the hotlines illustrates that they are only rarely called upon in cases of missing unaccompanied children.

- › The role of hotlines for missing children must be clarified for carers of unaccompanied children, as they are not often aware of the potential added value brought to the case by these organisations in terms of expertise and resources.



The role of 116 000 hotlines when an unaccompanied child goes missing

- › Legal and administrative support to reception centre operators and guardians
- › Direct emotional, psychological support to families in cases of separated children
- › Contact point between carers who reported the case and agencies involved in the missing child case, such as the police, social services and prosecutors
- › Collection of data related to missing unaccompanied children for further analysis
- › Provision of expertise and advice on procedure related to a missing child's case
- › In some cases, collection of testimonies or facilitation thereof (e.g. by being present at the interview with family or carers)
- › If appropriate, management of the public appeals campaign
- › In (suspected) cross-border cases, swift activation of the European network of hotlines for missing children (see below)

You can find more information on the 116 000 hotline operated in your country by visiting <http://missingchildreneurope.eu/hotline>



Reporting of a missing child in migration

The disappearance of a child should always be reported as soon as their whereabouts become unknown or there is a suspicion that the child may be at risk. In any case, it is important that the same rules applied to the disappearance of any child in the country are applied in the case of missing unaccompanied children. In the absence of formal procedures, the disappearance shouldn't be reported later than 24 hours after the last time the child was accounted for.

Lengthy reporting procedures may hinder swift reporting of cases of missing unaccompanied children, especially when human resources in social centres are limited. It is therefore important to make sure that the

reporting system is created in a way that does not discourage reporting.

- › Easier reporting should not lead to superficial reporting: It is important that simpler procedures still allow complete reporting of the situation of the child and all information that could be useful to ensure a proper follow up.
- › Reporting by phone or email could facilitate the process. However, this would require that the collection of information related to the unaccompanied child is already centralised, to allow for a faster decision making process on the most appropriate response to the disappearance of the child.



Who to report to?

If there is a formal cooperation in place (MoU, protocol), the body receiving the missing reports would be indicated. From country to country, the police and the hotlines should be alerted.

> zHotlines could play an active role in the follow up of the case and in ensuring communication between the carers and the police, similar to the support they provide in other missing cases.

The creation of unique **personal files on unaccompanied children** (preferably digital, for sharing purposes) allows for a swifter cooperation in cases of missing children, as retrieval and sharing with the authorities that are competent for the follow up will be easier.

As mentioned above, the development of a **centralised system** (e.g. databases) to register information on unaccompanied children will also simplify cooperation between authorities in charge of the protection and/or the missing case, on the condition that a clear firewall is in place between the immigration enforcement and child protection purposes. These databases should be different from the asylum databases and managed by child protection authorities. Data should be used only in the best interest of the child.

For more information on what we mean by “firewall”, please see: <https://picum.org/firewall-3/>

The use of **standard forms** to report the missing case, in a consistent manner within the country, will also create the benefit of a quicker and more efficient cooperation between

concerned services. Ideally, the form should be included in the MoU between the agencies involved in the situation of unaccompanied children.

Promising practice about reporting

In Belgium, the template used to report the disappearance of an unaccompanied child is already available to carers that are responsible for reporting. In the event that a child goes missing, the template filled in is sent via email or fax to the police and to the guardianship service.



TEMPLATE FOR REPORTING A DISAPPEARANCE

Document to be sent to the police via email or fax at:

.....
(insert email address and fax number)

Document to be sent to the guardianship service via email or fax at:

.....
(insert email address and fax number)

1. Date and time the disappearance was noticed

2. Name, organisation and position of the person reporting

3. Information on the identity of the child

Surname:

Name:

Nickname:

Gender:

Date of Birth:

Nationality:

(any number or reference that his file has in the national system)

PICTURE

4. Description

Size:

Eye colour:



Colour and length of the hair:

Particularities (tattoos, scars, visible disabilities, ...):

Clothing at the time of disappearance

Jewellery:

Did they carry any document? If yes, specify.

5. Information about the procedure

6. Information on the disappearance

Presumed moment of disappearance (date and time)

Place of the disappearance

Circumstances of the disappearance

Presumed reason for disappearance

Who was the last person who saw the child, when, and in which circumstances

Was the child in anyone's company



Presumed place where the child is

Contact details of family or relevant acquaintances

Is the child presumed to have left the country? If yes, to go where?

7. Elements that could reveal the existence of high risk for the child

Is this the first time that the child has gone missing?

If not, how many times has the child gone missing before?

Did the child take any luggage?

If yes, what?

Does the child have money or a bank card?

If yes, what type?

Does the child have any kind of visible or less visible disability or illness?

If yes, which kind and how serious?

Does the child depend on a medical treatment or medicines?



If yes, please explain what and what would happen if the child is not given the abovementioned treatment or medication?

Do you think that the life of the child is in danger?

If yes, please explain

Does the child know any person that in your opinion could put them in danger?

If yes, please explain

8. Various

Have the police already intervened?

If yes, please mention which police officer and the reference number of the case

Which measures were taken after the reporting of the disappearance?

Was the room verified?

If yes, please mention anything interesting that was found

Any other element that should be considered?



Actions to be taken after the disappearance

When a child goes missing, it is important that carers are aware of the procedures that need to be triggered and demand that they are put in place.

- › The carer that represents the child and monitors that decisions are taken in their best interests (e.g. the guardian) should call the national 116 000 hotline for missing children. The case managers will be able to suggest which steps need to be taken, to provide information on national procedures and to provide support to both the carer and the police throughout the investigation and the follow up. In some countries, hotlines are not equipped, allowed, or resourced to deal with the disappearance of children in migration.

In these cases, it is necessary to liaise with the police directly.

- › It is important that the carer or reporting person demands that the police insert an alert in the Schengen Information System (SIS II) if it is suspected that the child is in another EU Member State, and the publication of an Interpol yellow notice if it is suspected that the child has left the EU. Due attention should be paid, if using the SIS II, that information shared is not used for immigration enforcement purposes.
- › If the child is suspected to be in another EU Member State and at risk of exploitation and trafficking, it is important to contact Europol to launch a joint investigation



Promising practice: The approach of the Belgian Police

The Missing Persons Unit of the Belgian Police has developed basic principles that should apply to all missing cases, including those regarding unaccompanied children:

- › Every case is different: Routine kills
- › The first 24 hours after a disappearance are crucial
- › “Never say, never!” Tunnel vision in missing persons investigations is dangerous

The search for a missing person should be based on a logical assessment, and every decision regarding the search action should follow this assessment:

- › Who is missing, what is the profile of the missing person?
- › Definition of whether the disappearance is worrying or not. This is also based on the profile, circumstances of the disappearance, the place of disappearance, and is established on the basis of well-defined criteria.

A disappearance of a person, including a child, qualifies as ‘worrying’ when one or more of the following conditions are fulfilled:

- › The missing child is less than 13 years old
- › The missing child has a physical or mental handicap or is not autonomous
- › The missing child is under medical treatment or needs to take drugs that are essential to their health
- › According to available information, the missing child may be at risk of death
- › According to available information, the missing child may be with a third person that may be a threat to their safety, including because they are a victim of a criminal act (e.g. kidnapping)
- › The absence is contrary to the habitual behavior of the missing child.

In worrying cases, the local police will refer to the Missing Persons Unit, which will coordinate all search efforts and will provide support to the police service in charge of the investigation.



- › A missing case does not end with the reporting. Timely and regular follow-up with the police is needed to make sure the case remains a priority at all times.

The following recommendations were presented in the IOM Resource Book for law enforcement officers on Good Practices in Combating Child Trafficking (2005) and should be an inspiration for investigative methods in cases of missing unaccompanied migrant children:

- › Child victims of trafficking have special needs and vulnerability that should be taken into account and reflected throughout the investigation; a child-friendly approach should be used and the **investigator should be guided by the best interests of the child.**
- › In case of a child as victim of trafficking or a victim in danger, the **police have to intervene immediately.**
- › **Prioritize child trafficking cases, as other crimes against children. For this purpose, the files should be made clearly recognizable and flagged.**
- › Every investigator and all actors involved have a clear duty to **conduct a risk assessment** in respect of the safety and welfare of the child victims and their families at every stage of the investigative and judicial process and beyond. The risk assessment must be started as soon as the victim comes to the police's notice.
- › **Pro-active or intelligence-led investigations should be preferred,** whenever possible.
- › Flagging suspects and convicted offenders can be a useful tool. The disruptive investigative method should be used only if there is no other option.



- › In the interest of an investigation it is of utmost importance to be aware of where, when, which **specific information is available and can be retrieved, and through or via which obligatory channels** – both on a national and cross-border level. The management of the law enforcement information is bound by national and global regulations, which need to be respected.
 - › Each country should **feed the national database** with all child abuse related information and should in particular organize themselves in view of **enhancing the international cooperation** by connecting to the I 24/7 (Interpol) and sending the relevant information on child traffickers or other cross-border child related offences to Interpol. Moreover, European Member States should ensure the availability of the Europol information (TECS) and include all child trafficking and child abuse offender or suspect related information in the Information System of Europol.
-
- › The opportunity to give publicity to a case of a missing unaccompanied child needs to be carefully considered, as in all cases of missing children. An option could

be to inform relevant professionals rather than the larger public about a missing person if publicity is not appropriate.

Promising Practice

Missing People, the hotline for missing children in the UK, uses a Support Partner Network of 400+ local agencies who provide a support or safeguarding role as an alternative to publicity, e.g. in cases where publicity would make a person more vulnerable. In these cases, Missing People can alert all or some of their Support Partners, send them information about the missing person and ask them to look out for them without publicising them or putting posters up. If the person does access their service they can report the sighting to the hotline or the police, and can provide effective support knowing they are missing (which could include referring them to our 116 000 hotline)”

Source: Missing People, running the hotline for missing children in UK



- › Missing Children Europe has published guidance notes on the use of publicity appeals³³, which are currently being updated. They will be downloadable from Missing Children Europe's website as of early 2020.

Promising Practice:

Thames Valley Police developed and changed their way of thinking when improving their services for children who go missing and are at risk of exploitation. The guidelines detail best practice for officers such as:

- › Persistence of staff who are trained to 'never give up on a child'. This provides greater confidence to victims to disclose and give evidence, and also provides better support for victims and their families
- › Persistence and continuity in the services
- › A partnership focus is to understand what sits behind the behaviour
- › Links are made between the missing children, human trafficking, child sexual and/or criminal exploitation

³³ Available at: <http://missingchildreneurope.eu/publicityappeals>



Cooperation with other agencies in response to a missing unaccompanied child

The following recommendations were presented in the aforementioned IOM Resource Book and should be an inspiration for cooperation at the national level between civil society and law enforcement as well as in cases of missing unaccompanied children:

- › Law enforcement authorities and the judiciary should recognize the **need to be assisted by and work together with experts including social service providers in relation to the sector of exploitation.**
- › **Cooperation should be based on the mutual commitment** of law enforcement authorities and NGOs/social service providers to work together (...)
- › In view of **institutionalizing cooperation, protocols and agreements** on cooperation between the law enforcement authorities and NGOs/social service providers should be developed, stating the role of each party, their responsibilities and the type of cooperation.
- › **Focal points for trafficking issues** should be established at a national and international level, which should be known and used by all actors within and outside the country.
- › **A permanent communication strategy of multi-agency teams on child trafficking issues** should be elaborated. This could be reached through periodic meetings, a network of contact persons in each organization involved, newsletters as well as common training. Multi-agency intelligence enriches police data and improves operational and strategic police analysis.
- › **Integrated training seminars** should be organized with people in charge from national agencies on a regular basis and from time to time with responsible officers from concerned countries (origin, transit and destination) in order to share information and good practices and strengthen dialogue among all actors involved.



Protocols of cooperation

As mentioned above when talking about the need to clarify who is responsible for each task in a missing child case, it is important to formalise roles and procedures in a multi-agency protocol of cooperation or MoU. The MoU could be a general text to be applied to all cases of children disappearing from alternative care, or it could be specifically dedicated to the response to cases of missing children in migration. The MoU should be agreed among all actors involved in the response to the disappearance, including police, magistrates, guardians' services, immigration offices and shelters.

- › Hotlines for missing children can be key players in bringing together all stakeholders that could have a role in providing an appropriate response to the disappearance of an unaccompanied child. Particularly useful are their knowledge of the matter of disappearances, their already established cooperation with law enforcement agencies and other actors (e.g. magistrates, social services) and their experience in developing multilateral protocols.
- › Periodical review of the cooperation agreement is recommended.



Checklists of elements to be included in a MoU related to responding to a disappearance

- ✓ To which authority does the disappearance need to be reported
- ✓ To which authority the missing case is assigned
- ✓ Which authority is responsible for collecting information related to the disappearance
- ✓ What are the tasks of each service after the disappearance of a child
- ✓ If there are special procedures to be triggered in specific cases, what are the criteria to trigger these procedures and who are the authorities in charge
- ✓ Who needs to be informed about the results of the investigation
- ✓ Authorities and other actors in charge of monitoring the application of this section of the MoU
- ✓ Practical information and contact details of the relevant services

In Belgium, the Institute for International Research on Criminal Policy (IRCP) of the Ghent University developed the European Model Protocol dealing with missing children in collaboration with Child Focus. The model can serve as inspiration for establishing official relationships between civil society organisations and law enforcement officers. **The main goal of the protocol is to establish a functional, cooperative relationship based on reciprocity, aiming to:**

- › optimise the possibility of retrieving missing children in good health
- › deal with the problem of extra-familial sexual abuse of children
- › deal with international parental abduction.=

The Model is annexed to this handbook (Annex I)



It is advised to hold periodic multi-agency meetings to analyse data collected and intelligence developed, monitor the application of procedures and protocols and, if necessary, review them.

- › Some countries have experimented with the creation of

multiagency hubs involving, for example, police, children's services, migration services and anti-trafficking experts to support the work of grassroots professionals, to improve cooperation between services, especially in terms of information sharing, data collection and research.

In the UK, Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) is a core group of professionals working collaboratively. The core group tends to include the police and children's services safeguarding leads, alongside representatives from probation and the youth offending service, and in many cases health and mental health practitioners. The core group usually has access to many other services and agencies that might be able to paint a more detailed picture of that individual's criminal, social and family history. Sometimes specialist workers may be brought in to tackle an area of concern for a local place.

Source: UK Home Office, Multi Agency Working and Information Sharing Project Final report, 2014



Cross-border cooperation

Cross-border cooperation in cases of missing unaccompanied children is very important, as in many of these

cases it is assumed that children are moved or move across countries.

The following recommendations were presented in the aforementioned IOM Resource Book and should be an inspiration for cross-border cooperation between civil society and law enforcement as well as in cases of missing unaccompanied children:

- › Member States should promote police cooperation between special units to combat human trafficking in the Member States and countries of origin, in line with EU standards. The development of common projects to set up and enhance the capacity of special units in countries of origin is encouraged. It is necessary for NGOs/social service providers in countries of origin, transit and destination to establish and formalize relationships and cooperation to ensure input into counter trafficking prevention activities, criminal investigations, return assessments and reintegration initiatives.
- › Increased use should be made of provisions to establish joint investigation teams made up of personnel from the specialist units in the countries of origin and destination in order to conduct properly funded and equipped investigations in appropriate cases.

It is important that all actors are aware of the tools and procedures available in case a missing child is suspected to have crossed the border.

Several networks of professionals and expert organisations have been developed to support the work of authorities in the protection of children in migration across borders.

- › As mentioned above, in these cases it is important that the carer demands the insertion of an alert in the Schengen Information System (SIS II) and the publication of an Interpol yellow notice.
- › The European network of 116 000 hotlines for missing children.
- › The Separated Children in Europe Programme (SCEP) seeks



to improve the situation of separated children through research, policy analysis and advocacy at the national and regional levels. SCEP developed a European NGO network, comprising of at least one NGO member from each country, aiming to become a key platform in the protection and promotion of the rights of separated children. The network enables the exchange of information, expertise and good practices and supports grassroots professionals working with children³⁴.

- › The European Guardianship Network is a network that aims to improve services for unaccompanied children in the Member States of the European Union through guardianship development and assistance to practitioners and

their organisations. Among other activities, EGN has worked towards the improvement of the service of guardians in Dublin procedures, in particular family reunification. A helpdesk was created to assist guardians on several elements of the reunification under Dublin³⁵:

- › Making the best interests of the child concrete
- › Aid with getting insight into the factors that are important in a reunification process
- › Providing contact details
- › Information about the process in any EU country
- › Positioning of the guardian in the legal Dublin procedures

Proactive cooperation

A protocol of cooperation, MoU or Standard Operating Procedures (see above) might not be in place yet, might be in the making or discussions may be ongoing. In the meantime, it is crucial to know who does what in your region and how to handle cases of disappearance and exploitation.

In the contact booklet (see Annex III), you will find the contact details of the main stakeholders involved with children in migration in Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, Sweden and the UK. With the best interests of the child in consideration, carers, social workers and police officials should make

³⁴ For more information, see <http://www.scepnetwork.org/>

³⁵ For more information, see <http://engi.eu/projects/dublin-support-for-guardians/>



- the best use of these resources and initiate cross border cooperation on a proactive basis. You may decide to contact counterparts in another member state if:
- > Stakeholders (e.g. carers, guardians and the police) may have additional information to find the child and bring them back to safety
 - > The child has been found in that country before.
 - > The child is suspected to be in another country

In the UK, the **Refugee Youth Service (RYS)** and the **NSPCC's Child Trafficking Advice Centre (CTAC)** work together to safeguard children who live in Northern France, in the so-called Calais 'Jungle'. RYS refers children to CTAC when it suspects that they have moved from France to the UK. CTAC then shares child protection information with relevant UK agencies and tries to establish the children's whereabouts. Between August 2016 and November 2017, 196 children of 12 different nationalities who had been living in the Calais 'Jungle' in France were referred to CTAC. RYS and CTAC call for a formal referral system between France and the UK both to better protect children and to ensure that receiving local authorities in the UK know as much as possible about children entering their care. If implemented with a clear firewall between protection and migration management boards, these initiatives can inspire other concrete cooperation mechanisms elsewhere in Europe. In 2019, the cooperation was put on hold.

Two **Transnational Referral Mechanism** initiatives have recently developed: the Transnational Referral Mechanism Model by the International Organisation of Migration, available on their online platform, an outcome of the EU-funded Transnational Action (TACT) project; and the RAVOT-EUR project 'Referral of and assistance for victims of human trafficking in Europe', between Hungary, Belgium and the Netherlands. The latter contributes to the assistance, safe return and referral of victims of trafficking related to sexual and labour exploitation. The project also facilitates transnational networking and trust building among professionals. If a firewall is in place and transnational referral mechanisms are not solely focussed on returns, these examples of formalised cooperation could easily be exported to other countries in Europe.



You inform the authorities or the child protection system of the potential arrival of the child. By doing so, you

create a channel of communication and make sure it stays open as long as the child remains missing.

The European network of hotlines for missing children

Hotlines for missing children have solid expertise in cross-border cases of missing children. Well-established and efficient internal procedures for cooperation and exchange of information within the network have been developed and used in multiple occasions. The founding imperatives

of the working methods of hotlines for missing children are complementarity and collaboration with authorities, in full respect of the Convention on the rights of the Child and child protection principles, including the best interests of the child.

Cooperation within the European network of hotlines for missing children in cases of missing children in migration³⁶

When?

116 000 hotlines are requested to share information about a case when there is clear indication that there is an added value in informing counterparts abroad.

- › Examples of circumstances, inter alia: when the child disappears close to (up to 100 km) a border within the Schengen area; when one of the parents of the missing child is believed to be in another country; when the child is reportedly a victim of (re)trafficking; etc.
- › In all cases, the information will be passed on after consultation with and approval from competent national authorities, in accordance to the cooperation agreement.

³⁶ "Cooperation between civil society organisations and law enforcement services in the area of missing and sexually exploited children: possibilities and limits from a European legal perspective", G. Vermeulen and H. De Pauw (Ed.); Maklu 2004, pp 90-95.



Who to inform?

Once the country where the child could be are identified, a contact with the 116 000 hotline of that country will be established. Contact details for all the 116 000 hotlines are available in Missing Children Europe's contact booklet and emergency list. This booklet is available upon request from info@missingchildreneurope.eu

How to inform?

Any information exchange occurs in a systematic and standardised way, according to a well-defined and clear procedure. In this way, information is better understood and the cooperation among organisations is easier and more effective. To this end, the European network of hotlines for missing children uses a cross-border cooperation template (see below)



European network of 116 000 hotlines for missing children

Cross-border cooperation template

This document is the tool that a hotline for missing children will use in the event of a cross-border disappearance, to send key information about the missing child to another NGO running the hotline in a foreign country, and if necessary ask for action. A copy of the template is sent to the Missing Children Europe Secretariat.

Requesting organisation:

Country:

Date:

Contact details responsible case manager:

Name:

Direct phone:

Email address:

To – contacted organisation:

Country:

Date:

Purpose of contact:

Information exchange: please tick the relevant box

- ☐ the case involves a national from the country of the contacted organisation
- ☐ there is a clear indication for added value in informing the counterpart abroad
- ☐ following the launch of a Child Alert
- ☐ other, please specify

.....



You are submitting this information after consultation with and approval from competent national authorities

☐ yes ☐ no

You are submitting this information after consultation with and approval from person with parental authority

☐ yes ☐ no

Request for action: several options are possible

- ☐ establish a contact with national police
 - ☐ establish a contact with other relevant authorities
 - ☐ establish a contact with parent/family of the child living in the country
 - ☐ help with translation/interpretation
 - ☐ other, please specify
-



Information about the child:

Name and surname of the child:

.....

Nickname (if any):

.....

Nationality:

Passport number:

Date of birth:

Description (height, weight, eye colour, hair colour, particular signs etc.):

.....

Need for medical treatment:

.....

Name and surname of parents/
legal representative³⁷:

.....

Mother:

Phone no:

Father:

Phone no:

Other:

Phone no:

Address of residence:

.....

Mother:

Father:

³⁷ In case of an unaccompanied child, please provide details about the child's guardian and legal situation (e.g. the child is placed under a relative's care, in foster care or in an institution).



Information regarding the disappearance:

Date and place:

.....

Disappearance reported to the police in requesting organisation's country:

☐ yes

Case reference number:

.....

Contact police officer in charge:

.....

☐ no

Dossier forwarded to Interpol by the police:

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ not known

Type:

☐ Runaways

☐ Parental abduction

☐ Criminal abduction

☐ Lost, injured or otherwise missing

☐ Missing children in migration

☐ Not clear



Description of the situation:

Please refer to the questions of the tools contained in the “Practical guide for hotline operators” in order to give specific information about the disappearance (the guide contains different examples for each kind of disappearance).

Attached:

Picture of the child

☐ yes ☐ no

Proof of police acknowledgement³⁸

☐ yes ☐ no

Court order

☐ yes ☐ no

Other, please specify:

³⁸ A document proving that the case is a real case of disappearance, and that the police are aware of the information exchange.



Cooperation in cases when a child is trying to locate the family and vice versa – ‘matching’

Through the European Network, hotlines for missing children can provide support in matching unaccompanied children and members of the family that are looking for them, and vice versa.

- Hotlines are invited to disseminate child-friendly information on their

services, ideally in the main languages spoken by unaccompanied migrant children, i.e. Arabic. Flyers can be made available in reception and accommodation centres as well as on websites, at police stations, hotspots, etc. An example was developed by The Smile of the Child.



www.hamogelo.gr
116000
European hotline for missing children





<p>Are you a refugee or a migrant who has just arrived to Greece?</p> <p>Have you lost your child? Have you lost your parents?</p> <p>Call 116000</p> <p>All around the clock, you can call with no charge from a telephone, mobile telephone or public telephone booth WITHOUT USING ANY COINS OR TELEPHONE CARD.</p> <p>We will talk to you in your language and immediately start the procedures in Greece or abroad for tracking the persons that you are looking for.</p> <p>Any citizen or organization who has found any unaccompanied child can call 116000</p> 	<p>Είσαι πρόσφυγας ή μετανάστης και μόλις έφτασες στην Ελλάδα?</p> <p>Έχεις χάσει το παιδί σου? Έχεις χάσει τους γονείς σου?</p> <p>Κάλεσε στη Γραμμή 116000</p> <p>ΟΛΟ ΤΟ 24ΩΡΟ, ΔΩΡΕΑΝ από κινητό, σταθερό ή οποιοδήποτε δημόσιο τηλεφωνικό δίκτυο ΧΩΡΙΣ ΤΗ ΧΡΗΣΗ ΚΕΡΜΑΤΟΣ ή ΤΗΛΕΚΑΡΤΑΣ</p> <p>Θα σου μιλήσουν στη Γλώσσα σου και αμέσως θα ξεκινήσουν οι διαδικασίες στην Ελλάδα και το εξωτερικό για τον εντοπισμό των προσώπων που αναζητείς.</p> <p>Στη Γραμμή 116000 μπορεί να καλέσει και ο κάθε πολίτης ή φορέας που έχει εντοπίσει ένα ασυνόδευτο παιδί</p>	<p>Êtes vous réfugié(e) ou immigré(e) qui vient d' arriver en Grèce?</p> <p>Avez-vous perdu votre enfant? Avez-vous perdu vos parents?</p> <p>Appelez 116000</p> <p>pendant 24 heures sur 24, GRATUITEMENT par téléphone fixe ou portable, ou par une cabine téléphonique sans l' usage de pièces de monnaie ou de carte téléphonique.</p> <p>Nous vous parlerons en votre langue et tout de suite nous initierons la procédure nécessaire pour trouver les personnes que vous cherchez</p> <p>En Grèce ou à l'étranger.</p> <p>Tous citoyens ou organisations qui trouvent des enfants non accompagnés peuvent s' adresser à 116000</p>	<p>هل انت لاجئ او نازح وصلت للتو إلى اليونان؟ هل فقدت ولدك؟ هل فقدت أمك؟</p> <p>اتصل على الرقم التالي 116.000 مجاناً ولمدى 24 ساعة من الهاتف الجوال أو الثابت أو من أي هاتف عام دون اللزوم لاستعمال النقود أو البطاقة الهاتفية</p> <p>سوف يرون عليك بلغتك وعلى الفور سوف تبدأ الإجراءات اللازمة للمعور على الأشخاص المفقودة سواء في اليونان أو في الخارج.</p> <p>على الرقم 116.000 أيضاً أي مواطن أو أية جهة معنية أخرى الاتصال في حال المعور على أي طفل بدون مرافق</p>	<p>آيا شما یک پناهنده یا مهاجر هستید و تازه در یونان رسیده اید؟ شما فرزند (بچه) خود را گم کرده اید؟ یا اینکه پدر و مادر خود را گم کرده اید؟</p> <p>به شماره تلفن 116000 زنگ بزنید ۲۴ ساعته، بصورت مجانی از موبایل و تلفن خطی ثابت و یا هرگونه تلفن عمومی روی جاده بدون ضرورت به سکه یا کارت تلفن گفتگو به زبان خود شما صورت گرفته و مراحل جستجوی و اسکان شما چه در یونان و چه در خارج از یونان فوراً آغاز میگردد.</p>
---	--	---	---	---



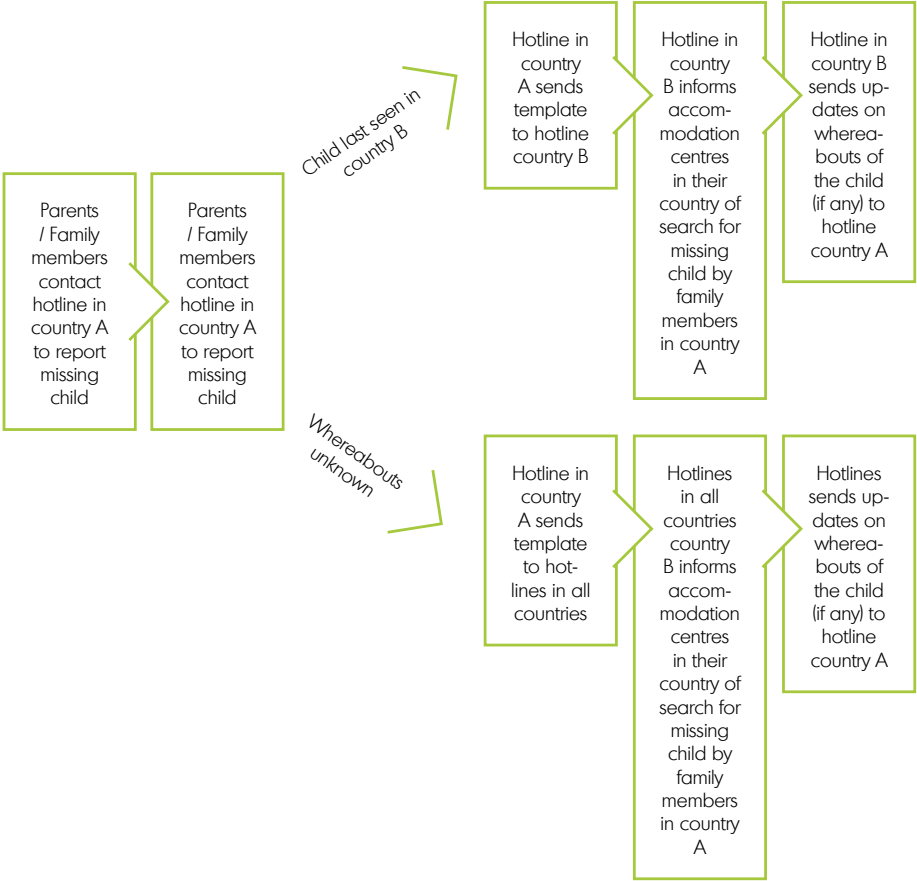
General principles:

1. Hotlines which have information about a missing family member, should immediately contact all hotlines or the hotline in the specific country concerned. The national hotlines should immediately make contact with the national accommodation centers.
2. When matching is successful, information on the family members should be shared only if all parties involved agree. Without this agreement, the results of the matching should not be shared with the parties involved.
3. Matching is a procedure that should be triggered only with the genuine willingness of the family member to be reunited with other members of the family. Matching should not be triggered by the request of an authority, or serve asylum or return procedures (e.g. Dublin procedures). In addition, the content of the forms should not be shared with authorities without the consent of the parties involved. Parties may decide to give approval only for some of the information provided to be shared.
4. Every matching procedure should be initiated or conducted in close cooperation with the guardian of the unaccompanied child, in order to guarantee that the best interest of the child is respected.
5. A risk assessment is necessary to prevent trafficking: if a child says that their parents or family members are missing, due diligence and scrutiny is needed to assure family members or parents are legitimate. The risk assessment should be conducted with the guardian and the centre where the child lives. Cooperation with law enforcement should be considered when assessing this risk. If the safety of the child is considered at risk, DNA investigation can in some cases be applicable.

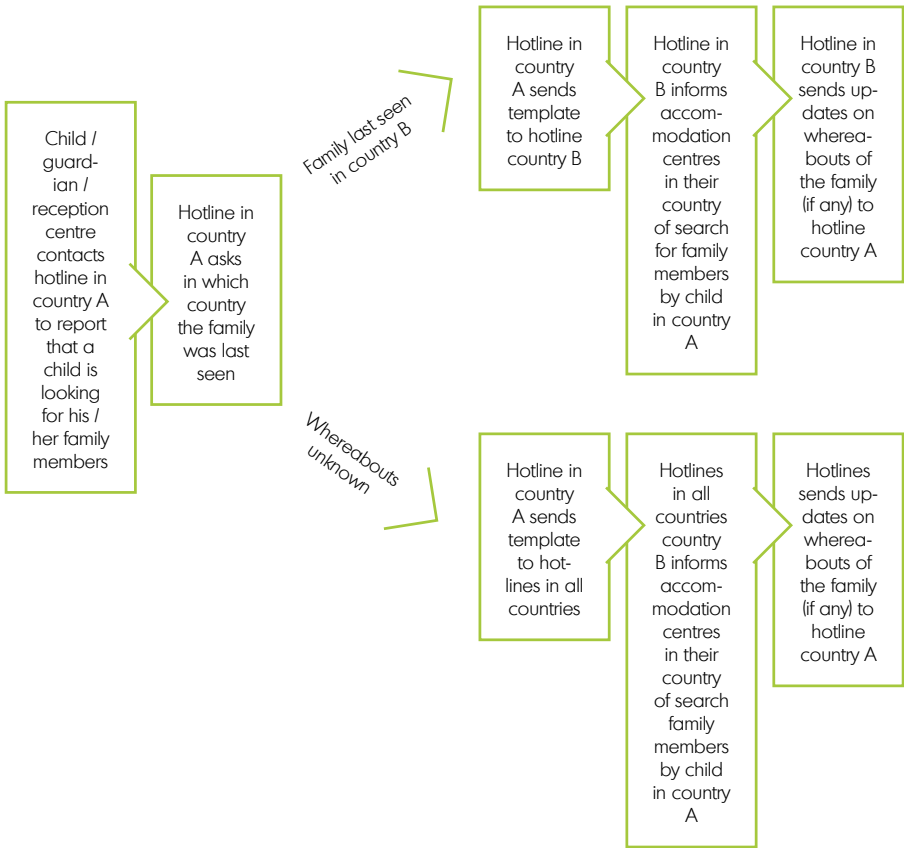


Examples of implementation of procedure:

A. Parents searching for missing child



B. Child searching for parents



European network of 116 000 hotlines for missing children Template for child(ren) seeking parents or family members

This document is the tool you will use to send key information about the missing child or family member(s) to another NGO running the hotline in a foreign country, and if necessary, ask for action.

Requesting organisation:

Country:

Date:

Contact details responsible case manager:

Name:

Direct phone:

Email address:

To – contacted organisation:

Country:

Date:

Purpose of contact:

Information exchange: please tick the relevant box

- ☐ unaccompanied child looking for family members in other country
☐ family members looking for missing child in other country
☐ other, please specify
-

You are submitting this information after consultation with and approval from competent national authorities

☐ yes ☐ no



You are submitting this information after consultation with and approval from person with parental authority (in case of unaccompanied child: guardian appointed to the child or legal representative – if applicable)

☐ yes ☐ no

Request for action:

- ☐ establish a contact with accommodation or reception centres to locate missing child
- ☐ establish a contact with accommodation or reception centres to locate family members
- ☐ other, please specify

.....

Information about the child:

Name(s) and surname(s) of the child:

Nickname (if any):

Nationality:

Identification documents available (if any – please provide number):

.....

Contact details (telephone no. if available):

.....

Child's date of birth:

Reception or accommodation centre where child is residing (if applicable):

.....



Migration path of the child (known countries travelled- journey from country of origin to current place of residence):

.....

Description of the child (height, weight, eye colour, hair colour, particular signs etc):

.....

Need for medical treatment:

.....

.....

Asylum application ongoing:

☐ yes ☐ no

Contact with official body (Red Cross, etc.) established for reunification:

☐ yes, please specify:

.....

☐ no

Possible contact persons:

☐ Guardian

Name:

.....

Telephone number:

.....

☐ Legal representative

Name:

.....

Telephone number:

.....

☐ Other contact person

Name:

.....

Telephone number:

.....



Information about missing family members:

Persons with whom the child is seeking to re-establish a contact:

☐ Mother

Name and surname:

.....

Nickname (if any):

.....

Nationality:

☐ Father

Name and surname:

.....

Nickname (if any):

.....

Nationality:

☐ Sibling

Name and surname:

.....

Nickname (if any):

.....

Nationality:

☐ Uncle / Aunt (please specify):

Name and surname:

.....

Nickname (if any):

.....

Nationality:

☐ Grandparent

Name and surname:

.....

Nickname (if any):

.....

Nationality:

Gender:

☐ Other (please explain):

Name and surname:

.....

Nickname (if any):

.....

Nationality:

Gender:



Information on country / place last seen:

Information on circumstances of the separation / situation of last contact:

Description of missing family members (height, weight, eye colour, hair colour, particular signs etc:

☐

Mother:

☐

Father

☐

Sibling:

☐

Uncle / Aunt (please specify):

☐

Grandparent

☐

Other (please explain):



A. Template for parents or family members seeking a child

Information about a family members seeking a child:

Persons seeking to locate their child:

☐ Mother

Name and surname: _____

Nickname (if any): _____

Nationality: _____

☐ Father

Name and surname: _____

Nickname (if any): _____

Nationality: _____

☐ Sibling

Name and surname: _____

Nickname (if any): _____

Nationality: _____

Gender: _____

☐ Uncle / Aunt (please specify):

Name and surname: _____

Nickname (if any): _____

Nationality: _____

☐ Grandparent

Name and surname: _____

Nickname (if any): _____

Nationality: _____

Gender: _____

☐ Other (please explain):

Name and surname: _____

Nickname (if any): _____

Nationality: _____



Reception or accommodation centre where requesting family member(s) are residing (if applicable):

Migration path of requesting family member(s) (known countries travelled – journey from country of origin to current place of residence):

Contact details of requesting family member(s) (tel. no. if available):

Asylum application ongoing:

☐ yes ☐ no

Contact with official body (Red Cross, etc.) established for reunification:

☐ yes, please specify:

.....

.....

☐ no



Information about missing child:

Name(s) and surname(s):

.....

Nickname (if any):

Nationality:

Information on country / place last seen:

.....

Information on separation / situation of last contact:

.....

Description of missing child (height, weight, eye colour, hair colour, particular signs etc):

.....

Other relevant details on the case:

.....

Attached:

Picture of the child

☐ yes ☐ no

Proof of police acknowledgement³⁹

☐ yes ☐ no

Court order

☐ yes ☐ no

Other, please specify:

.....

³⁹ A document proving that the case is a real case of disappearance, and that the police are aware of the information exchange.



5.3 After care

"Young people do not often disclose much and will often not say where they've been, where they've gone – it would be hard to get any information about them, as to where they've been. I think perhaps it should not be a one-off event but a series of questions that can be answered over a few months to explore that issue. You're not going to get anything at one meeting. Just keeping some questions on the back-burner to bring up again and explore or again continue to talk about safety planning for the future. A lot of our young people wouldn't necessarily disclose where they've been and what happened during that episode."

(Social worker, UK)

When a missing child is found, whether in the same country or in another country, it is important that they are immediately put in touch with carers. They will proceed with an assessment of the child's short, medium and long term needs.

- › Contact with the guardian and/or other carers that have previously worked with the child, in the country or in another country, is essential in this assessment, as they may have gathered information or developed an expert opinion on the situation of the child that is essential to identify their needs.



In the Netherlands, all unaccompanied children are brought to one centre where all intakes take place. In the centre, all relevant actors are present: police, immigration services, guardians and the reception organisation. Going through the intake, seeing all relevant actors, the child's information is taken down. At the same time, the risk of the child being a victim of trafficking or being specifically vulnerable – both could indicate an increased risk of going missing – is assessed by all actors, who will have received specific training. When actors other than the guardian see a specific risk, the guardian is informed. Upon information from those other actors or upon their own observations, unaccompanied children with increased risk are placed in protected reception – reception specialised in increased protection, set up and run in close cooperation between reception professionals, guardians and police.

Source: Nidos

- › It is very important to take measures to prevent the child from going missing again. Please apply what has been described in the section related to prevention.
- › Carers and law enforcement should cooperate in the case of a missing child who has been found: information owned by the police may be important in decisions about the care and future of the child, while information that the child reveals to the carer could be a source of intelligence in combating criminal organisations.



Non-punishment of forcibly committed crimes

When children are found in specific contexts that suggest that they have been engaged in criminal activity, they should be primarily considered victims and not perpetrators. Some children may have forcibly committed crime or have been exploited to commit crimes.

crime should be conducted without delay, together with child protection authorities and the child's responsible carers – if possible, including the carers who were responsible for the child before they went missing.

- › A thorough analysis of the reasons the child is involved in a
- › In these cases, it is necessary to identify the child's vulnerabilities and act to protect them.

Please see the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) (2013), 'Policy and legislative recommendations towards the effective implementation of the non-punishment provision with regard to victims of trafficking'



Checklist of immediate actions to be taken when a child is found after going missing

- ✓ Identify who is responsible for them
- ✓ Identify who was responsible for them in your country and if applicable, in other EU countries, and inform them about the fact that the child is safe (see section on “Identifying counterparts and allies within the country and across borders” (page 80))
- ✓ Assessment of physical and/or medical needs
 - ✓ Identifying whether they have injuries
 - ✓ Identifying whether they suffered abuse
 - ✓ Identifying whether they are malnourished
 - ✓ Identifying whether they suffer from addiction
- ✓ Assessment of psychological needs
 - ✓ Identifying whether they suffered trauma
 - ✓ Identifying whether they suffer from PTSD, depression, etc.
 - ✓ Considering whether they are being listened to
 - ✓ Receiving information about what will happen to them
 - ✓ Ensuring that they are put in a nurturing environment
 - ✓ Enabling them to be able to trust someone

Avoid re-traumatisation

Asking a child that has or might have been through exploitation and trafficking to tell their story multiple times can be difficult and may discourage the victim from cooperating with authorities. It is counterproductive to both their recovery and the investigation. Similarly, asking a child

multiple times for their picture and fingerprints within the same territory does not contribute to a welcoming environment. Further cooperation and exchange of information, at the national and international level, could have helped avoid this situation



Taking the views of the child into account

If an unaccompanied child went missing after being placed in care, it is possible that the care plan previously in place to ensure their safety was not appropriate to the child, or was not trusted by the child. It is very important to make sure that the child's views are properly taken into account when making decisions about the next steps to protect the child.

> Please see section "Informing and hearing the child", page 45.

A thorough interview with a trained professional is important for the collection of information needed for the development of an appropriate care plan for the child and for preventing the child from going missing again. The interview should be followed up with tailored support based on the child's needs.

In cases where a child should be interviewed, a phased approach should be taken. This approach consists of four main phases:

- > **Introduction/Rapport** including presentation of people present as well as their role vis-à-vis the child, asking the child how they like to be called (if not known), including interviewer, translator if applicable, ... This should be followed by a moment to engage the child in conversation around neutral topics in order to help settle the child as well as the interviewer.
- > **Free narrative** where the child is invited to respond to open questions ("Tell me...", "Explain to me..." "Describe to me...") helping the child to recount their account in their own words and at their own pace
- > **Clarification** if necessary, using short and simple questions to clarify issues that were unclear, ideally still starting with open questions.
- > **Closing**, including a moment to give the child a chance to correct any misunderstandings. This phase should also include an opportunity for the child to raise question, and importantly a moment to thank the child.

See also IOM and B.M.I. Resource Book for Law Enforcement Officers on Good Practices in Combating Child Trafficking, 2006 <http://www.unhcr.org/4d94852b9.pdf>



Promising practice for return home interview with runaways – also to be considered for missing children in migration

The Department for Education (DfE) describes return home interviews as in depth discussions with the purpose to 'identify and deal with any harm the child has suffered... understand and try to address the reasons why the child or young person ran away, help the child feel safe and understand that they have options to prevent repeat instances of them running away [and] provide them with information on how to stay safe if they run away again, including helpline numbers' (DfE, 2014:15). Local authorities are responsible for ensuring protocols are in place to enable return interviews to be undertaken, and the guidance states that it is advantageous for these to be conducted by an 'independent person'; that is, someone not directly involved in the care of the child or young person.

- > When: Return interviews should take place within 72 hours of a child or young person being found or returning from running away or going missing, according to statutory guidance (DfE, 2014:14).
- > Who: statutory guidance suggests that it is advantageous for an independent person (that is, someone who is not involved in caring for the child or young person) to conduct the return interview (DfE, 2014:14).

Source: Missing People Information Sheet: Return Interviews



5.4 Summary template on ownership, complementarity and coordination between different agencies involved.

The following overview provides suggestions for possible roles in prevention, response and aftercare for missing unaccompanied children. It foresees a list of actions, including some that could be taken jointly between two actors, and for which the lead is to be defined by the stakeholders involved. How roles are defined will eventually depend on the specific situation at the national level. The template can serve as a basis for discussion around how to

build a process responding to the national realities and needs of children. It is recommended that the cooperation established be formalised in a formal cooperation agreement and be reviewed periodically. It is also suggested that actors be trained jointly to fulfill their respective roles. The template does not aim to provide a comprehensive and exhaustive list of the roles and actions needed for the protection and care of the child.



Prevention

Housing facilities ⁴⁰ and social workers		Guardian	Lawyer	Hotline for missing persons	Law enforcement
Build trust with the child and respond to immediate needs, including the provision of adequate housing		Safeguard the child's best interests	Inform the child of their rights	Provide child friendly information on services available across the 116 000 network	Inform partners of known risks, specific target groups related to trafficking and/or smuggling rights operating in the country
		Promote the child's safety and wellbeing as well as their participation	Liaise with the guardian and/or legal representative to assist the child in the asylum procedure or in the court proceedings related to the recognition of the status of victim of trafficking		
Act as link between the child and others					
Gather information from other EU countries the child is known to have moved through, in line with their best interests in order to avoid re-traumatisation through multiple interviews, to inform the counterparts on the status of the case, and to have the most complete information from the child					
Hear the child → see best practices in hearing the child on page 45					
Collect information on the child > see template for collection of information about a child page 39				Inform guardians and carers of the role of hotlines and functioning of the European network	Immediate identification of risks and appropriate referral to child protection systems
Assess risk of child going missing > see checklist page 55				Work with law enforcement to make sure general missing children responses are also provided in cases of missing unaccompanied children	
Provide information on procedures in age and gender appropriate and culturally sensitive ways > see checklist information to unaccompanied children as means to prevent disappearance page 54				Train carers and guardians on identifying risks and responding to disappearances	
Support the child in maintaining family links, when in their best interests					
Discuss alternatives to unsafe migration, including the proposal to discuss risks for unsafe migration with the child's family					
Highlight that other children have gone through similar experiences and establish the contact					
	Assist in identifying a durable solution in the child's best interest				
	Foresee provision of healthcare, education and training				
Specific care in preparing the child to pass from childhood to adulthood					
Draft an individual care plan					

⁴⁰ First and longer term reception centers, specialized housing for children and/or child victims of trafficking, foster care, ...



Response

Housing facilities and social workers		Guardian	Lawyer	Hotline for missing persons	Law enforcement
Immediately alert law enforcement and provide information on the child > see template for reporting a disappearance, page 96			Provide information on the child to the police, hotline, and guardian in the best interests of the child and in view of safeguarding the child	Provide legal and administrative support to reception centre operators and guardians	Identify who is missing, what is the profile of the missing child, and what are circumstances of the disappearance
Request that the case is entered in SIS II and if applicable, Interpol yellow notice if the child is suspected to have left the country, in line with the child's best interests and with the condition of a strict applicable firewall -> see section on information sharing page 81				Act as contact point between carers who reported the disappearance and agencies involved in the missing child's case, such as police, social services and prosecutors	Assess the extent to which the disappearance should be considered as worrying Do not take lack of information as a sign that there is no harm
Inform hotline for missing children 116 000				Provide actors expertise on procedures related to missing children's cases	Assess investigative procedures to be triggered, including the need for SIS II art. 32 alerts, Interpol Yellow notices
Consistently request updates					If the child has been previously exploited, ensure going missing is seen as a strong indicator of re-trafficking
If not done before, gather information from other EU countries the child is known to have moved through, in line with their best interests, by contacting guardians and social workers across borders -> see section on information sharing page 81				Activate the network of hotlines for missing children (if appropriate relevant) > see Cross-border cooperation template, page 114	Initiate search actions
Consider informing members of the EGN network in countries concerned with the case of the child if the child is assumed to have left the country				Collect data for further analysis	
				Collect testimonies (if appropriate and relevant)	
				Manage public appeals (if appropriate and relevant)	
				Support efforts in family tracing or matching for separated children, in cooperation with ICK, if appropriate – in line with the best interests of the child and in liaison with the guardian and/or social worker, see page 111	Periodically inform partners of the development of the investigation
				Provide emotional and psychological support to families in cases of separated children, where possible in coordination with the SCEP member active in the country	Reject culture of professional misconceptions, minimisation of risk and disbelief
				Monitor the advancement of the investigation and use of rules and procedures for missing children in the child's specific case	Keep cases open





Aftercare

Housing facilities and social workers		Guardian	Lawyer	Hotline for missing persons	Law enforcement
Immediately identify who is responsible for the child's protection and care and inform hotline			Inform the child of their rights	If the child is found in another country, maintain an open line and exchange of information on the child's case with hotlines from other country concerned	Share relevant information with guardians and carers in charge of the case, to make sure elements of risks receive due consideration in new care arrangements
Identify who was responsible for the child previously and inform them of the situation		Identify support services and best way forward	Liaise with the guardian and/ or legal representative to assist the child in the asylum procedure or in the court proceedings related to the recognition of the status of victim of trafficking	Ensure a return interview is conducted within 72 hours and, if not possible, as soon as possible, in a child friendly way and by a specialist trained professional in trafficking and migration issues	
Identify support services and best way forward					
Assess the child's physical and medical needs				Ensure relevant information on the child is shared with those in charge of their care	If necessary, undertake investigative action regarding trafficking or smuggling
Hear the child and take their views into account --> see best practices in hearing the child on page 45					
Assess the child's psychological needs		Contribute to providing appropriate follow up to prevent the child's repeat disappearance (back to beginning; prevention of disappearance)			

Annex I – European Model Protocol of Cooperation between Law Enforcement and Civil Society Organisations in Cases of Missing Children⁴¹

Preamble

Chapter I – General Provisions

Chapter II – Description of responsibilities

Chapter III – Exchange of data and Protection of personal data

Chapter III – Other forms of cooperation

Chapter IV – Final Provisions

PREAMBLE

[name of the civil society organisation] represented by [name of the legal representative of the organisation]

and

[name of the law enforcement unit] represented by [name of the legal representative of law enforcement]

Hereinafter referred to as ‘the Parties’,

Aware of the increasing number of cases of missing children,

Aware of the need for an efficient cooperation between them in order to enhance the fight against the phenomenon of missing children,

Deeming it useful to be able to share their expertise and experience in the field of missing children,

Considering the Council Resolution on the contribution of civil society in finding missing or sexually exploited children (2001/C 283/01),

⁴¹ “Cooperation between civil society organisations and law enforcement services in the area of missing and sexually exploited children: possibilities and limits from a European legal perspective”, G. Vermeulen and H. De Pauw (Ed.); Maklu 2004, pp 90-95.



Bearing in mind the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union⁴²,

The mission(s) of *[name of the civil society organisation]* being *[description of missions]*

HAVE AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

Note: these provisions are suggested as guidelines and may be changed substantially to the wishes of the Parties concerned.

Chapter I – General provisions

Article 1

The Parties hereby establish an agreement of cooperation in cases of missing children.

Note: one or more types of missing children depending on the activities of each Party may replace the term missing children.

Article 2

In general, the Parties shall respect human rights and the rights of the child in particular. Pursuant to article 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and to Article 24 (2) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union⁴³ the Parties shall act exclusively in the best interests of the child.

Article 3

For the purpose of this agreement “missing children” includes cases of:

- > runaways
- > criminal abduction of children
- > parental abduction
- > lost, injured or otherwise missing
- > missing unaccompanied migrant children

Note: The Parties may add the definition of each type of missing children according to the national legislation.

⁴² This reference may not be operational in the UK and in Poland

⁴³ Same remark as under footnote 2.



Article 4

1. *[name of the civil society organisation]* shall ensure that all members of their staff working with victims have the required qualifications and licences..
2. *[name of the civil society organisation]* shall take all possible steps to screen their staff in order to prevent persons convicted of sexual abuse or exploitation or abduction of children from working in their organisation.

Article 5

To achieve these goals, privileged contacts will be established between both Parties, which will be based on mutual respect between the Parties and their members.

Article 6

1. Efficient cooperation requires knowledge of and respect for the specificity of the tasks and responsibilities of the respective Parties. A clear distinction must be made between the investigative and compliance tasks of law enforcement and the preventive, assistance and support tasks of civil society organisations. The *[run on]* respective tasks and responsibilities of each Party in cases of missing children must be determined and defined in a clear and transparent way and outlined in a written document .
2. Criminal investigations shall be the exclusive competence of the law enforcement authorities.

Article 7

Each Party shall take note of and respect the codes of conduct and the rules of confidentiality of the other Party, as defined in the documents attached (please attach relevant documents).

Article 8

1. Parties shall give sufficient and appropriate attention to each case of missing children, regardless of the specific circumstances and taking into consideration the very vulnerable position of the missing child and his family. Each Party shall undertake immediate action following a request for help by the other Party.
1. Both Parties shall ensure that the activities and services offered by them are not contrary to domestic law.



Article 9

In order to prevent uncoordinated activities, which might harm the common aim each Party shall consult the other Party before taking action.

Note: these provisions are suggested as guidelines and may be changed according to the wishes of each Party and according to the national legislation.

Chapter II – Description of responsibilities

Article 10

Taking into account article 6.1 of this agreement, *[name of the civil society organisation]* shall *[description of specific responsibilities and tasks of the organisation in cases of missing children]*

Article 11

Taking into account article 6.1 of this agreement, *[name of law enforcement unit]* shall *[description of specific responsibilities and tasks of law enforcement in cases of missing children]*

Chapter III – Information-related cooperation

Article 12

The Parties shall respect the data protection principles and in particular the provisions of the Recommendation No R (87) 15 of the Council of Europe regulating the use of personal data in the police sector, the Council of Europe Convention of 28 January 1981 for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data, Article 8 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, Article 16 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and Council Framework Decision 2008/977/JHA of 27 November 2008 on the protection of personal data processed in the framework of police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters.

Article 13

[name of the civil society organisation] shall take any steps needed to ensure an adequate level of data protection



Article 14

[name of the civil society organisation] expresses its willingness to *[description of each way of cooperation with [name of law enforcement unit] in concrete cases of missing children aimed at]*

Note: the content of this article 14 can be inspired and determined on the basis of the practical checklist. It is recommended to subdivide the aforementioned article depending on the kind of cooperation in view. It has to be noted that national legislation needs to be taken into account

Article 15

[name of law enforcement unit] expresses its willingness to *[description of each way of cooperation with [name of civil society organisation] in concrete cases of missing children aimed at]*

Note: the content of this article 15 can be inspired and determined on the basis of the practical checklist. It is recommended to subdivide the aforementioned article depending on the kind of cooperation in view. It has to be noted that national legislation needs to be taken into account

Chapter IV – Operational cooperation

Article 16

The Parties shall respect the privacy of the persons concerned in accordance with the provisions of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Council of Europe Convention of 28 January 1981 for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data, Article 7 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and Council Framework Decision 2008/977/JHA of 27 November 2008 on the protection of personal data processed in the framework of police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters.

Article 17

[name of the civil society organisation] expresses its willingness to *[description of each way of cooperation with [name of law enforcement unit] in concrete cases of missing children aimed at]*



Note: the content of this article 17 can be inspired and determined on the basis of the practical checklist. It is recommended to subdivide the aforementioned article depending on the kind of cooperation in view. It has to be noted that national legislation needs to be taken into account.

Article 18

[name of law enforcement unit] expresses its willingness to [description of each way of cooperation with [name of civil society organisation] in concrete cases of missing children aimed at]

Note: the content of this article 18 can be inspired and determined on the basis of the practical checklist. It is recommended to subdivide the aforementioned article depending on the kind of cooperation in view. It has to be noted that national legislation needs to be taken into account.

Chapter V – Final Provisions

Article 19

The present Protocol of cooperation shall enter into force upon signature by the duly authorised representatives of the Parties.

Article 20

The present Protocol may only be amended with mutual consent expressed in written agreement of both Parties.

Article 21

Any disputes or disagreements between the Parties with respect to the interpretation or implementation of this Protocol shall be resolved by good faith negotiations between the Parties.

Article 22

The Parties are prepared to evaluate the implementation of this Protocol 1 year after its entry into force and from that moment on every 2 years.

Article 23

Either Party may terminate this Protocol by delivering a written request for termination to the other Party. The termination shall be effective 6 weeks after the delivery to the receiving Party.



Annex II – Existing tools and networks

Eurodac matches the fingerprints of applicants in asylum procedures so that EU Member States may determine responsibility for examining an asylum application. The proposed revision of the **Eurodac Regulation** expands the purposes of the Eurodac database to also identify and track secondary movement and enforce decisions on return. It also lowers the age at which a child must be registered from fourteen to six, and introduces the use of coercion to obtain fingerprints for children aged above fourteen. The lowering of the age of registration could be used to better coordinate the protection of children, but data will also be used to enforce Dublin Regulation, restrictions on secondary movement and return decisions, which may run contrary to the best interests of the child and cause more children to avoid and disengage from contact with state authorities.

Europol is the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation. Human trafficking is currently one of Europol's priority crime areas and an EMPACT (European multidisciplinary platform against criminal threats) priority, for which a multi-annual strategic and operational plan has been devised to enhance cross-border cooperation.

Eurojust is the EU's Judicial Cooperation Unit and plays a key role in tackling human trafficking by facilitating and funding **Joint Investigation Teams (JIT)**. A JIT consists of judicial and police authorities from at least two Member States who collaboratively conduct a specific cross-border criminal investigation for a limited period. JITs are an essential tool for law enforcement to fulfil their investigative duties when the crime involves two or more Member States and there is a need for cooperation. The number of cases under JITs has risen steadily over the last few years, as did cooperation with non-EU countries.

EASO Dublin Network is the network is bringing together all Member States applying the Dublin Regulation and provides for enhanced communication and coordination between national actors. The participating experts formulate concrete proposals to better exchange information among Member States during the daily operationalisation of Dublin transfers, and to overcome practical obstacles based on common understanding.



The **European network of 116 000 hotlines for missing children** was established through the decision of the European Commission to provide the same service of social value to citizens dialling the same number across EU Member States: 116 000. Hotlines are available 24/7 and provide administrative, psychological and legal support to families and children. Hotlines cooperate with several professionals (including law enforcement) to make sure that the best interests of the child are the most important element of the whole investigation, procedure and follow up. Hotlines can have a decisive role in the resolution of cross-border cases of children disappearances, including children in migration, because of their role in connecting different actors involved in care for children and responding to the disappearance of children in migration.

European Criminal Records Information System or ECRIS is a secure electronic system for the exchange of information on convictions between EU Member States. It provides judges and prosecutors with easy access to the criminal records history of an individual in a different Member State, thereby removing the possibility that they can escape justice by moving to a new country.

Prüm Decisions grant Member States access to national databases containing DNA profiles, fingerprints and vehicle registration data across the EU. Their purpose is to simplify and increase the efficiency of EU-wide intelligence gathering processes and encourage greater sharing of information.

The **EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator (EU ATC)** was initially foreseen in the Stockholm Programme and elaborated in the EU Anti-trafficking Directive. The European Commission appointed an EU ATC, Dr. Myria Vassiliadou, who is responsible for improving coordination and coherence among EU institutions, EU agencies, Member States and international actors, and for developing existing and new EU policies to address trafficking in human beings (THB). This includes monitoring the implementation of the EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016 and the December 2017 Communication stepping up EU Action to address trafficking in human beings.

The **EU Network of National Rapporteurs or Equivalent Mechanisms on Trafficking in Human Beings** (NREMs) was established following Council Conclusions in June 2009. Furthermore, the role of the NREMs is elaborated in the Anti-trafficking Directive, Article 19. The NREMs are responsible for monitoring the implementation of anti-trafficking policy at the national level and play a crucial role in data collection on trafficking in human beings at both national and EU levels.



Annex III – Interact Contact Booklet

This contact booklet includes, for each country that participated in the Interact Simulations (October 2018), a contact list of some of the main agencies and organisations involved in the prevention and response to cases of missing and trafficked children in migration. It also includes the processes that are followed nationally.

The purpose of this tool is to clarify the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder at the national level, making it easier for individual professionals working on these cases to identify their counterpart and cooperate across borders.

For more information, the European Commission Anti-Trafficking Office compiles comprehensive information on how each EU Member State tackles, prevents and identifies instances of trafficking in human beings. See: https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/member-states_en

Sweden

The Swedish Migration Agency

Authority that considers applications from people who seek protection from persecution, want to take up permanent residence or become Swedish citizens. Appoints public counsel to help with asylum application and municipality for accommodation.

Acts as Central anti-trafficking coordinator.

Email: migrationsverket@migrationsverket.se

Phone: +46 771 235 235

The Swedish Police Authority

Border Police Officers. The Police can be contacted for purposes related to asylum applications. It is also the National Rapporteur on the trafficking of human beings.

Phone: +46 77 114 14 00



National Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings / Swedish Gender Equality Agency

Regional coordinators against the trafficking of human beings.

Email: nmtsverige@jamy.se

Phone: + 46 20 390 000

Website: <https://www.nmtsverige.se/>

National board of health and welfare

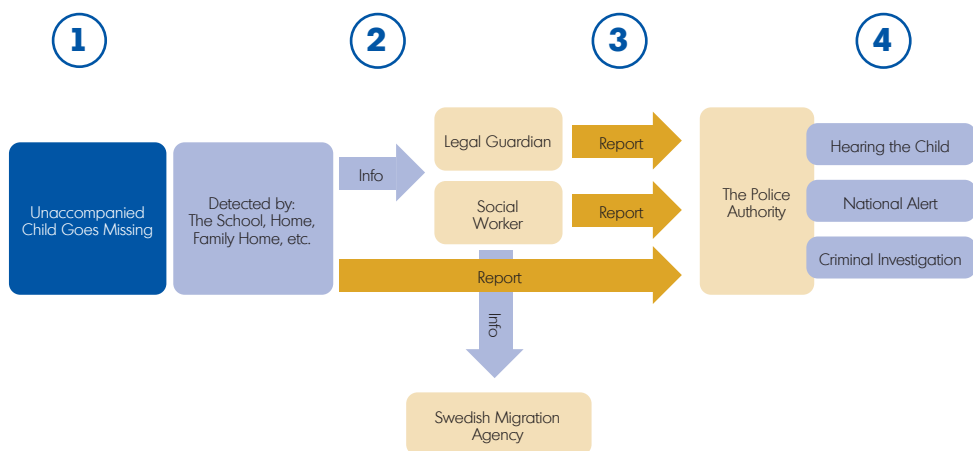
Government agency under the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs.

Knowledge Centre on unaccompanied children.

Email: socialstyrelsen@socialstyrelsen.se

Phone: +46 75 247 30 00

Sweden



Greece

Public Prosecutor for Minors

Responsible for ensuring the best interests of children. Temporary guardian of the unaccompanied child, who appoints the permanent guardian of the child. Takes decisions regarding the child and can order the activation of a missing or amber alert.

Address: Evelpidon 16, 11474 Athens

EKKA (National Centre for Social Solidarity)

National centre coordinating the network of social support services.

Manages the request for accommodation of unaccompanied children.

Address: Navarchou Notara 12, 10683 Athens

Tel.: +30 213 2039 704/ -706

Fax: +30 213 2039 763

Email: dkp_ypodochi@ekka.org.gr

Website: www.ekka.org.gr

IOM (International Organization for Migration)

The UN agency works to help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration, to promote international cooperation and to provide humanitarian assistance (e.g. accommodation and financial support) to migrants in need, including refugees and internally displaced people.

Address: Dodekanisou 6 Alimos, 174 56 Athens

Tel.: +302109919040, +302109919045

Email: iomathens@iom.int

Greek Council for Refugees (GCR)

The NGO offers free legal and social advice and services to refugees and people coming from third countries who are entitled to international protection, while special emphasis is put on vulnerable cases such as unaccompanied children, or victims of trafficking. Directorate for the management of requests for safe zones for unaccompanied children.

Address: Solomou 25, 10682 Athina

Tel.: 210-3800990

Email: gcr1@gcr.gr



Hellenic Coast Guard

Paramilitary under civilian control in times of peace. Registers refugees arriving via seaways, investigates smuggling links, and initiates referral of smuggling cases to the Prosecutor. Responsible for unaccompanied children cases, and the insertion of unaccompanied children's information to the Schengen Information System (SIS).

Address: Akti Vasileiadi, 18510 Piraeus TK

Hellenic Police

National police service with responsibilities ranging from road traffic control to counter-terrorism. Receives reports of the missing cases, informs the police headquarters central unit of missing people. Responsible for inputting date of the disappearance to the Schengen Information System (SIS).

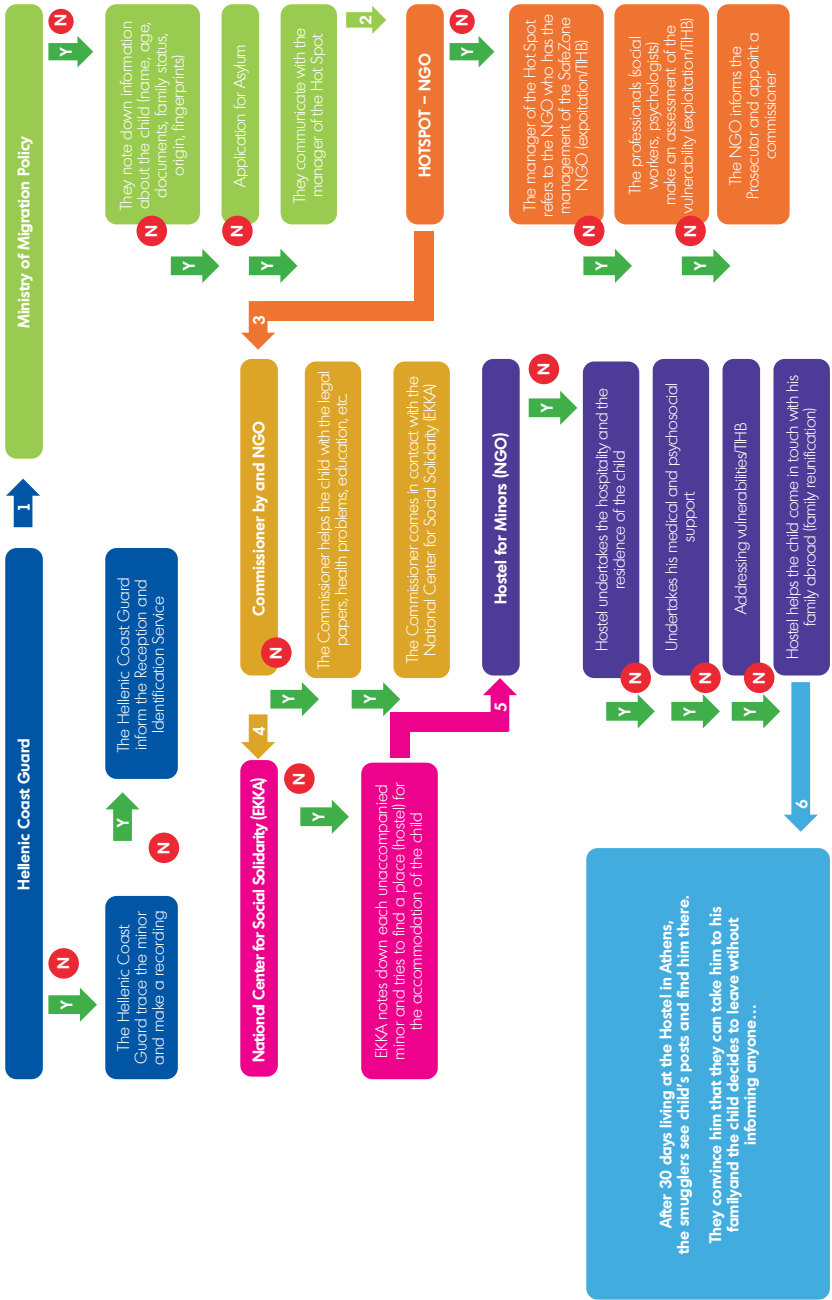
Address: Leof. Alexandras 173, 11522 Athina

Tel: (+30) 210-6977000

Website: <http://www.astynomia.gr>



Greece



France

La SPReNe

The association takes care of children in difficulties, such as a judiciary measure of child protection. Responsible for reporting to Child Unit and Prosecutor, interviewing the child, making guardianship requests, health care and child placement in dedicated centres.

Address: 169 rue de l'Abbé Bonpain – CS 56008, 59706 Marcq en Baroeul Cedex

Tel.: 0033320554880 / Fax : 03 20 55 44 21

Mail : siege.social@sprene.fr

Office of the Prosecutor / TGI

High Court of Paris (regional court). Office of the Public Prosecutor in charge of children. Responsible for investigations, studies of the situation of the child. Requests measures of educational assistance, reports to the Children's Judge.

Address: Parvis du Tribunal de Paris, 75017 Paris

Tel.: 0033144325151

National Cell of Magistrate

Decides on measures of educational assistance.

ASE (French child welfare services)/ EPDSAE (Public departmental establishment for support, accompany and educate)

Responsible for requesting child placement and hosting in dedicated shelters.

Address: EPDSAE: 60, rue Abélard – BP 454 – 59 021 Lille / ASE: many offices throughout France

Tel.: 0033320295050



PJJ (Protection Judiciaire de la Jeunesse)

Judiciary protection of children, linked to the Ministry of Justice. Responsible for following, helping and educating children having issues with justice. Compilation of socio-educative information, requesting interpreters. Reports to the Children's Judge.

Address: Ministère de la Justice et des libertés 13, Place Vendôme, 75042 Paris Cedex 01

Secours Catholique

French NGO. Provides ad hoc guardians and supports children's asylum applications with the OFPRA.

Address: 106, rue du Bac, 75341 Paris Cedex 07

Tel.: 0033145497300

OFPRA

Public institution, functionally independent. Responsible for the application of the law relating to the recognition of refugee status, stateless person and admission to subsidiary protection. Responsible for fingerprinting, examining cases of domestic slavery, making the Prosecutor aware of victims of trafficking, requesting interpreters qualified for vulnerabilities and contacting the prefecture.

UNHCR

Supports children with protection, shelter, health and education.

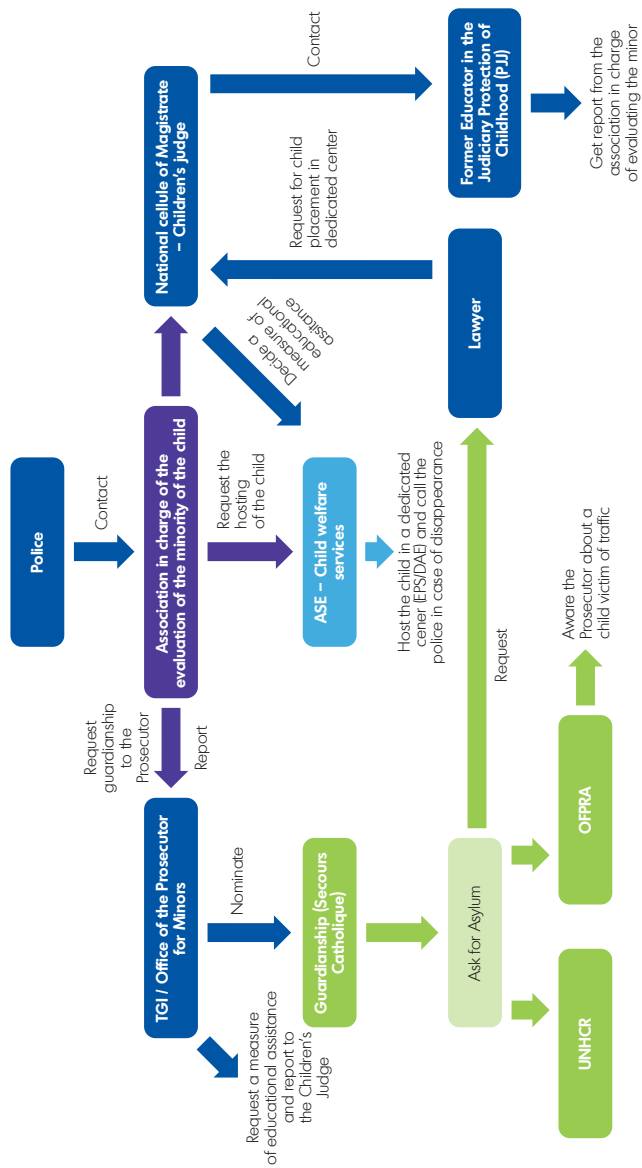
Police

Responsible for searching for children in cases of disappearance.





France



Belgium

Fedasil

Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers. Responsible for the reception of applicants for international protection and guarantees quality and conformity within the different reception structures.. Coordination of the organisation of voluntary return to countries of origin.

Email: info@fedasil.be

Tel : +32-(0)2-213 44 11

Belgian Immigration Office

Together with various partners, the Immigration Department manages migration and asylum flows. It ensures the implementation of the Aliens Act. (Law of 15 December 1980 on Entry, Stay, Settlement and Removal of Foreign Nationals).

Email: infodesk@ibz.fgov.be

Tel.: 0032 2 793 80 00

Child Focus

Belgian hotline for missing and sexually exploited children. Reporting the disappearance of children or sexual exploitation is possible 24/7 via the emergency number 116 000 (in Belgium) or 0032 2 475 44 99 from abroad.

Email: 116000@childfocus.org

Guardianship Service

Responsible for the organisation of guardianship and the identification and care of unaccompanied children. A permanent service is provided 24/7 via the emergency number 0032 78 15 43 24.

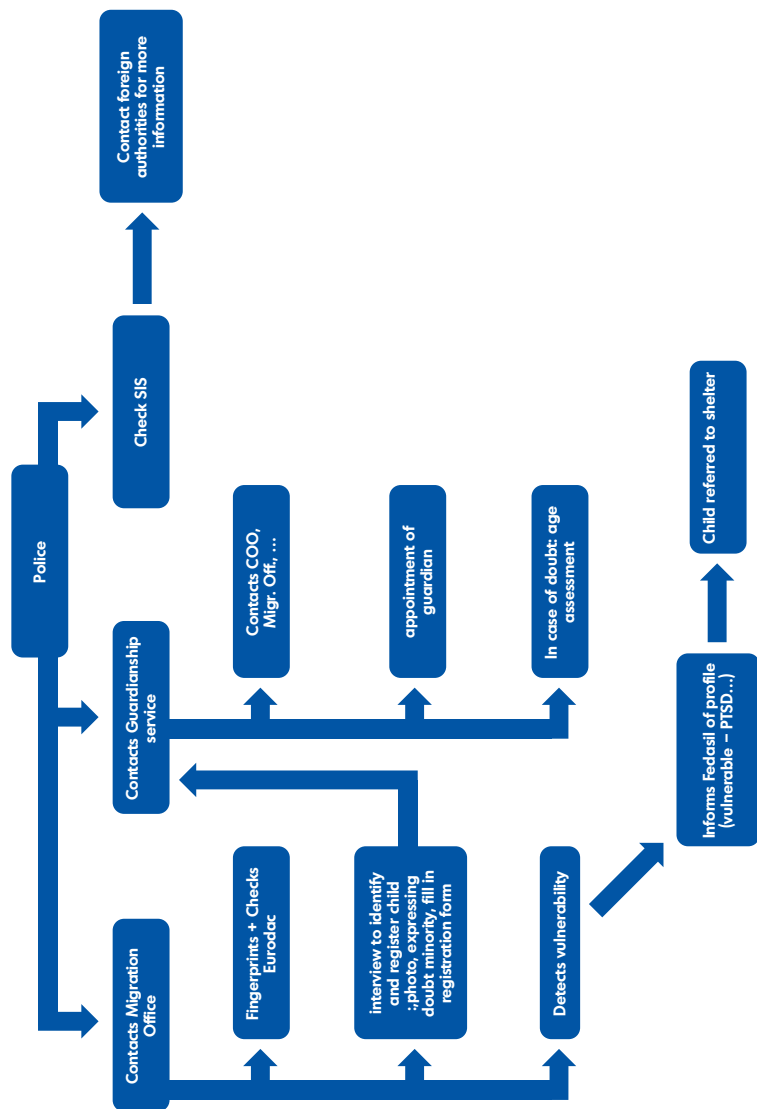
Email: voogdij@just.fgov.be





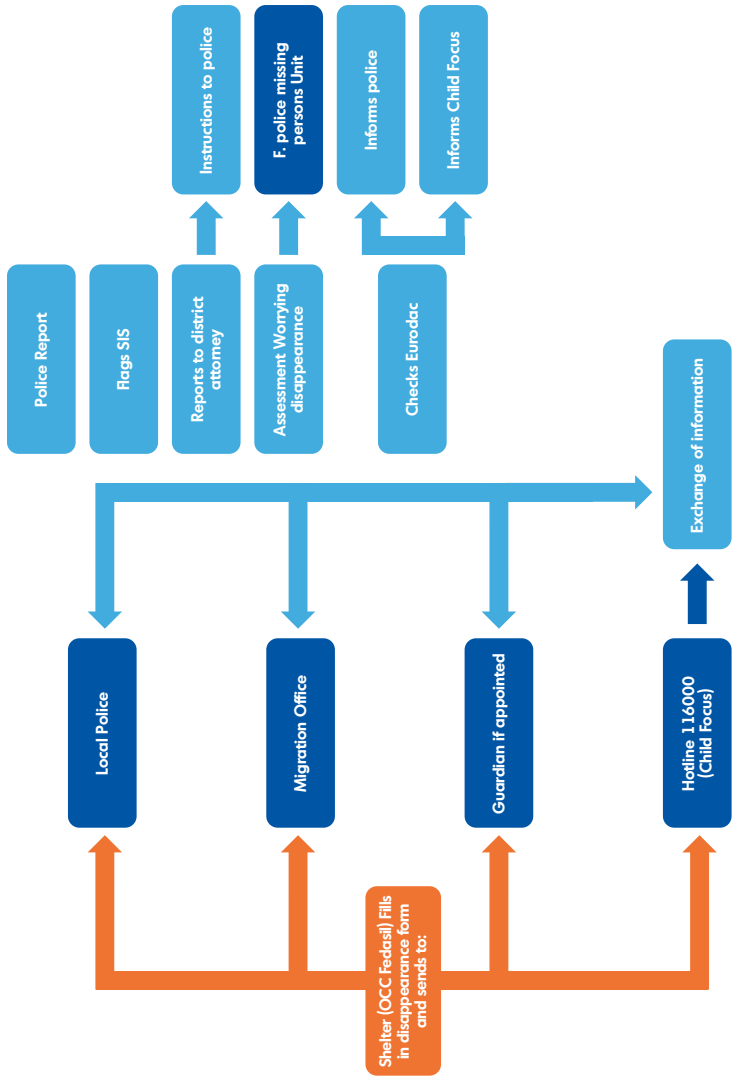
Belgium

interception, identification and referral



Belgium

Follow up to the disappearance of an (unaccompanied) child in migration



United Kingdom

Missing Persons Bureau

The Missing Persons Bureau (MPB) and the Missing Children's Team (MCT) (both of which are part of the National Crime Agency CEOP Command) work with the police and related organisations to improve services to missing person investigations.

The MPB serves all UK police forces as well as international and overseas police agencies, and is a part of a wider network of partners including other government departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and stakeholders. Police forces are required to submit case details to the MPB in relation to all:

- > people reported missing in the UK (who are still missing after 72 hours, see below)
- > foreign nationals reported as missing in the UK (via INTERPOL or any other means)
- > UK residents reported as missing abroad.

If a case is of particular concern, eg, a serious crime is suspected and/or there is significant public/media interest, it should be sent to the MPB immediately. In such cases consideration should also be given contacting the NCA Specialist Operations Centre (SOC), either via the MPB or directly on 0845 000 5463

Local Authority Children's Services

Local authorities must protect and promote the welfare of children in need in its area. Every Local Authority has their own contact details for children's services.

Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (England and Wales)

Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (ICTGs) are specialist professionals who support children who have been identified as trafficked or potentially trafficked to navigate the complex systems of social care, immigration and criminal justice. The ICTGs provision is established in six Early Adopter Sites across England and Wales, commissioned by the Home Office.

24/7 referral and support line: 0800 043 4303
countertrafficking@barnardos.org.uk



Refugee Council - Children's Advice Project (England)

Advisers work directly with separated children seeking asylum in England, helping them through the asylum system and ensuring that they are protected. They also offer advice and information to carers and other professionals working with unaccompanied children and young people. Providing advice and information for young people, carers, professionals and other stakeholders by OISC registered advisers. Helping young people access legal representation. Accompanying the young people to asylum interviews and immigration tribunal and appeal hearings. Supporting the young people during appointments with GPs, hospitals, social services and other service providers. We also help with other issues such as foster placements, getting into school, trying to help locate their family, health issues or simply being someone with whom they can talk when there is no one else they can turn to.

020 7346 1134 (Monday - Friday 9am - 5.30pm)

children@refugeecouncil.org.uk

Scottish Guardianship Service (Scotland)

Guardians help child refugees and victims of trafficking to navigate the immigration and welfare processes. First of all, they provide information and advice to make sure they feel empowered throughout the asylum process. They also act as advocates on their behalf, in order to make sure their voices are heard. Finally, they offer emotional support needed to go through the process. Our guardians help them to make informed decisions about their future and to settle into a new life in Scotland

guardianship@aberlour.org.uk

(0141) 445 8659

Independent Guardian (Northern Ireland)

The Independent Guardians are highly trained and experienced social workers and their role is to ensure all the child's needs are met.

They guide and support young people through the complex and stressful asylum process and ensure they have a legal representative with extensive experience in immigration and asylum work.

028 90658105



NSPCC – Child Trafficking Advice Centre (CTAC)

Child Trafficking Advice Centre (CTAC) provides free guidance and training to professionals concerned that a child or young person has been or is about to be trafficked into or out of the UK.

0808 800 5000

help@nspcc.org.uk

ATLEU

ATLEU delivers a comprehensive and dedicated service to victims of modern slavery helping them find legal solutions to their complex problems. This includes advising victims on their immigration status and assisting them to apply for asylum or other forms of lawful residence; securing appropriate and safe accommodation, financial support and treatment from local authorities, the Home Office or other statutory bodies; and obtaining compensation from their traffickers or the state

0207 700 7311



