



# **Report of the fifth edition of the Lost in Migration conference: A Seat at the Table - Young Newcomers Driving Discussions on Going Missing in Migration**

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1





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MissingChildrenEurope 

MissingChildEu 

Rue de l'Industrie 10, 1000, Brussels, Belgium 

+32 2 894 74 84 

[www.missingchildreneurope.eu](http://www.missingchildreneurope.eu) 

## Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Day one of the final conference.....	4
2.1 Opening session.....	4
2.2. Session 1: What are the key policy challenges for children (at risk of) going missing.....	5
2.3. Session 2: Are the voices of children in migration heard?.....	7
2.4. Session 3: How many children are going missing?.....	10
2.5. Session 4: Local hub outcomes: what are the challenges faced by young newcomers?....	10
2.6. Session 5: Outcomes of the first day.....	13
3. Day two of the final conference.....	16
Opening session.....	16
Session 1: Parallel workshops.....	16
Session 2: Looking to the future: responses from politicians and policy-makers.....	20
Conclusions of conference.....	22
Annex 1: Biography of speakers.....	24
Annex 2: Conference programme.....	30
Annex 3: Miro board from the workshop outcomes.....	33



## 1. Introduction

[Lost in Migration](#) (LIM) is an annual conference where young newcomers, professionals and European policy-makers meet to discuss migration-related issues that affect children and young people and that lead them to go missing. In 2021, for the first time, Lost in Migration was shaped and led by young refugees and migrants with the support of Missing Children Europe, the Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society and local partners. The conference took place in two parts. First, in-person 'local hubs' across European cities connected young people and key stakeholders to discuss the challenges faced by children in migration and potential solutions.

Drawing upon the [outcomes of the local hubs](#), the final online high-level conference brought together high-level European and national policy-makers and young newcomers to discuss policy responses to the challenges they face. The aim was to inform the future of the EU's migration policy. 142 persons preregistered for the two-day final conference. Finally, a total of 179 participated in the Lost in Migration conference (109 in local hubs and about 70 in the final event), including NGOs, policy-makers, etc.

### Child safeguarding during the conference

Given the participation of young people during the conference, including minors, a number of measures were put in place in order to safeguard their participation. Upon registering, participants agreed to respect Missing Children Europe's child protection policy and code of conduct for online events. Participants were reminded of this during the conference, and they were requested not to contact young persons directly. For this reason, direct messaging between participants was disabled. Young persons were also reminded that they can leave the sessions at any time if they want to, and a member of staff was available to respond to any questions/concerns. they were able

Ruben Loodts from Otherwhere provided the technical facilitation over the two days of the final conference.



## 2. Day one of the final conference

### 2.1 Opening session

This first session started with the presentation of a video of a young person testifying about his life in a camp in Bosnia. Following this testimony, HE Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca officially opened the 2021 conference with her welcome speech. She was then followed by Aagje Ieven, the Secretary General of Missing Children Europe.

#### **Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society**

In her welcome speech, HE Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca provided a brief overview of the history of the conference. She explained that the first edition of Lost in Migration took place in 2017, in Malta. The Lost in Migration conferences have brought together numerous policy-makers, non-governmental- and civil society organisations, professionals, and practitioners to share, exchange and develop strategies and recommendations for decision-makers on the need to provide effective safeguards for migrant and asylum-seeking children. She explained that, over these years, the conferences have taken different formats, but the aim remained constant: through these conferences, Missing Children Europe and the Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society want to ensure that children's human rights are effectively safeguarded.

She also introduced a new perspective to this year's conference, namely the participation of children and young people who have lived migration experiences. These children and young people had the opportunity to share their stories and challenges in one of seven European cities.

Finally, she addressed some upcoming legislative proposals, like the Pact on Migration and review of the EU anti-trafficking rules, that should reflect on issues discussed during the conference. As the conference brought together a wide range of stakeholders: politicians, policy-makers, practitioners, and civil society organisations, she emphasised that the conference provides a significant opportunity to have a broad policy discussion and it should be ensured that the outcomes reach decision-makers, both at national and EU level.

#### **Aagje Ieven, Missing Children Europe**

Aagje Ieven started her welcome with a brief overview of the progression of the conference: over the years, the Lost in Migration conference served as a forum for exchange and dialogue, to monitor the implementation of the Communication by the European Commission and keep the protection of children in migration high on the political agenda. She explained that over time, the realization grew that key stakeholders were absent from the conversation so since 2018, young people were invited to the conference to share their stories. In 2020, Lost in Migration was organized in the format of an online youth conference, which helped to overcome travel barriers that children and young people face due to their migration status. 16 young newcomers from Afghanistan, Iraq, Gambia, Bangladesh, and Venezuela were brought together and were



empowered to become leaders in the development of the next edition of Lost in Migration conference. They proposed several ideas for the future of the Lost in Migration conference, including 'local hubs'. Therefore, prior to the 2021 conference, young people organized local hubs: small, closed events that brought together key stakeholders to discuss the challenges faced by children in migration going missing. These took place during November, in Antwerp, Berlin, Bad Homburg, Malta, Palermo, Naples and Athens.

## **2.2. Session 1: What are the key policy challenges for children (at risk of) going missing**

### **Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, Missing Children Europe**

The keynote speech was addressed by Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, the president of Missing Children Europe and former UN Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. She focused her intervention on five key policy challenges that children in migration are currently facing:

#### **Lack of data, underreporting**

First, the issue of children going missing is gravely underreported with significant barriers around data collection. There are no agreed upon definitions between Member States and between professionals of what the concept of children going missing in migration really represents. As a result, data are not collected in a systematic or comparable way and are not segregated. In addition, children missing in migration are not reported in the same way as other children missing in their own jurisdiction, nor are their disappearances followed up in the same way. Without accurate, segregated and updated data, it is impossible to devise good policies. She advocates for harmonized and disaggregated data, recording and management for the purpose of protecting children in migration going missing – with a strong “firewall” between this system designed to offer protection and those data used for migration management.

#### **Human rights exceptions at the borders**

Second, the EU has a strong legal framework in place to ensure the protection of children, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union to the Common European Asylum System and the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive. However, these rules do not mean much if they are not implemented in practice, and if, under pressure, exceptions to human rights are being tolerated or even legalised.

#### **The Migration Pact and detention of children**

Third, under the UN Convention for the Rights of the Child, children's rights and their best interest should always be a primary consideration. This means that those rights should be put above the enforcement of immigration rules, such as the reform of the EU's asylum and migration system, as



presented by the European Commission in its [Pact on Migration](#). The proposals under the Pact on Migration raise many concerns – including the real possibility that for the first time under EU law, immigration detention of children could become the accepted rule. As the CRC Committee has stated “the detention of a child because of their or their parent’s migration status constitutes a child rights violation and always contravenes the principle of the best interests of the child.”<sup>1</sup>

### Trafficking and exploitation

Fourth, Europol has warned that children in migration are at high risk of trafficking and exploitation, and they are likely to be increasingly targeted by traffickers.<sup>2</sup> Also, signs of trafficking or abuse are often missed: unaccompanied migrant children found in contexts that suggest they had been engaged in criminal activity are often considered perpetrators and not victims, and not referred to the appropriate services to support them and their disengagement from criminal networks. More needs to be done to pro-actively identify, and respond to, child victims of trafficking. It is also important that closer attention is paid to the impact of EU policies on young people’s lives, and how these policies are reinforcing the smuggling and trafficking. Severe restrictions on legal and safe pathways for children to move to and across Europe will continue to push children to dangerous routes with inherent risks of exploitation within Member States and across borders by unscrupulous traffickers, be it for sexual exploitation or labour exploitation or otherwise.

### Lack of cross-border cooperation

Data from Missing Children Hotlines show that only 42% of surveyed hotlines handled cases of missing children in migration this past year.<sup>3</sup> This is because those children are often not considered missing (they just “left for their country of destination”) and are not reported on in the same way. Significantly, only 43% of cases opened in 2020 resulted in finding the child, which means that in over half of the cases concerning missing children in migration that were reported, the child was not found within the year. As a comparison, 79% of lost injured and otherwise missing are found within the year, almost 93,2% of runaways found within the year and the same is true for criminal abductions (92,7%).<sup>4</sup> While limitations exist with these figures because few hotlines were able to report on it, it does show that cases of children in migration do not get solved as much as others.

It is essential that disappearances of children are reported, investigated, and that these investigations do not stop at the borders. Beyond cross border police cooperation aimed at identifying criminal networks, cross border case management services and information sharing

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<sup>1</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC). (2012). Report of the 2012 Day of General Discussion on the Rights of All Children in the Context of International Migration. Available at: Refworld | Committee on the Rights of the Child, Report of the 2012 Day of General Discussion on the Rights of All Children in the Context of International Migration

<sup>2</sup> European Commission. (2020). Third report on the progress made in the fight against trafficking in human beings. Available at: [third\\_progress\\_report.pdf](#)

<sup>3</sup> Missing Children Europe. (2021). Figures and Trends 2020. Available at: <https://missingchildreneurope.eu/?wpdmdl=2558>

<sup>4</sup> Missing Children Europe. (2021). Figures and Trends 2020. Available at: <https://missingchildreneurope.eu/?wpdmdl=2558>



between NGOs and national child protection systems are needed, including strengthening the network of guardianship systems to ensure follow-up across borders and the network of hotlines for missing children.

### 2.3. Session 2: Are the voices of children in migration heard?

This session was structured as a panel discussion. It was facilitated by **Anila Noor**, a Member of the European Expert Group on the view of migrants in the field of migration, asylum and integration. Participants of the panel included **Nahid**, a young person with lived migration experience; **Cyrus Engerer**, a Member of the European Parliament; **Colin Scicluna**, Head of Cabinet to the Vice President of the European Commission responsible for Democracy and Demography, Dubravka Šuica and **Adam Elsod**, The Young Republic and Voicify.eu. Anila Noor invited the panellists to reflect on whether the voices of children in migration are currently heard in EU policy-making. The main outcomes are outlined below.

#### Current difficulties regarding child participation in policy-making

Nahid, a 16-year-old girl with lived migration experience, indicated the incorrect perceptions of migrants by policy makers and the current lack of young persons' participation in policy-making. She also highlighted the importance of reflecting young migrants' voices in policy-making.

#### The role of EU institutions in supporting child participation

Cyrus Engerer, Member of the European Parliament, highlighted the important role of young people. He presented the different initiatives of the European Parliament in which children are being included, e.g., the [European Youth Event](#), where politicians were given the opportunity to listen to young people who presented their ideas, concerns and beliefs. He also highlighted that the European Commission's new child rights platform, which will connect existing child participation mechanisms with EU level platforms, will be an opportunity to get innovative ideas for the future. In addition, Mr Engerer pointed out the importance of strengthening continuous child participation in decision making, including the voices of marginalized groups.

Dr. Colin Scicluna, Head of Cabinet to the Vice President of the European Commission responsible for Democracy and Demography, Dubravka Šuica, confirmed the importance of youth participation in decision making. He discussed the current initiatives by the European Commission, including the adoption of the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, in which over 10.000 children from all over the world were involved, the upcoming conference on the Future of Europe, which will involve people starting from the age of 16 in several panels and the 2022 European year of youth. He explained that the Commission encourages events being held with the involvement of children to create an exchange between people of different generations, as intergenerational solidarity is extremely important.







## The role of civil society in promoting child participation in EU policy-making

Adam Elsod, The Young Republic and Voicify-eu highlighted the necessary change of approach and perception of youth with lived migration experience. He explained that the current discourse is a charity one, although an equal partnership approach should be adopted. In addition, he identified the need to acknowledge the intersectionality of youth's experiences and stop using them as storytellers. Also, the EU should support and involve the already existing youth-led organisations, by advancing partnerships and opening to young people with lived migration experiences, through their already existing initiatives.

## Improving child participation in EU policy-making

Nahid acknowledged the future EU plans but highlighted the current shortcomings. She called for taking action instead of merely asking refugees to keep sharing their stories. In addition, she recommended drawing attention of the public opinion to this issue, as negative impressions of young migrants and refugees still exist.

Dr. Colin Scicluna suggested to build an approach to EU policy-making that creates a balance between the different perspectives: the individual situations and the political context. He also pointed out the importance of protecting children by applying safeguards considering children's specific needs. He highlighted that a number of instruments are currently available for this purpose, including the Strategy on Children's Rights, the 2017 Communication on Children and the Asylum and Migration Pact.

## The role of civil society in holding policy-makers accountable

Adam Elsod highlighted the importance of accountability. Accountability seeks to guarantee participation being taken into consideration and not only being part of picturing participants in events. He advocated for being as representable as possible and institutionalising participation by using existing structures. In addition, civil society and politicians should be accountable to the people they represent. Drawing upon the Voicify project, he recommended increasing accountability by working in partnership with policy-makers and public institutions to develop multiple criteria for self-assessment included in their own evaluations. To foster accountability and action, the participation of people who are affected by policies must be institutionalised in policymaking itself. This way, they can be part of the evaluation processes. Finally, he highlighted that by working in partnerships, a minimal outcome that is built on the acknowledgement of the importance of youth with lived experience into evaluation experiences can be ensured.

### Poem: Dogs barking lullaby

Nahid wrote a poem during her attempts to cross the border. Unfortunately, her family was pushed back but testifying about these experiences made her feel like a strong woman and motivates her to fight for ending this situation for other migrants. She expressed her gratitude for being able to speak at the conference.







**Missing  
Children  
Europe**



*There is still hope ...  
I will go on my way with hope ...  
While walking in the dark night ...  
While I see the city lights from far away ...  
Despite to cold , rainy and warm weather ...  
Still going on my own way ...  
Sleeping under the tent with the hope of having a house ...  
Spend the nights by thinking about my dreams ...  
And wake up my days with hope of reaching my dreams ...  
My adventures are a lot ...  
Sometime I cross the forests ...  
Sometime I go up from the hills and sometime pass through the rivers ...  
At night in the forest I sleep with lullaby sounds of animals ...  
I listen to the sound of birds and feel free and comfortable like them ...  
But this is only an impression ...  
I would like to here the sound of dry leaves , but I'm facing with the voice of " BE SILENT " ...  
I see a light away , but I hear the voice of " RUN AWAY " "People shouldn't see us " ...  
I see would like to run fast but my heavy bag doesn't let me ...  
I would want to walk but my tired legs doesn't let me ...  
My clothes are wet under the rain but I don't have any umbrella ...  
My body is frozen from the cold weather but I don't have any cloths ...  
I'm hungry but I shouldn't eat a lot ...  
I am thirsty but I don't have enough water ...  
people call me with name of " REFUGEE " oh I think it means an invisible person ...  
The only thing which left for me is HOPE even if sometime I fail ...  
But there is still hope ...*

## Concluding remarks

Dr. Colin Scicluna acknowledged the need for more to be done and to change the perception of migrants and refugees in public opinion. He indicated the European Commission's child rights platform as a tool to create coordination and coherence of efforts and the European Year of Youth as an opportunity to raise attention to migration-related issues. Mr Adam Elsod invited Mr Scicluna to also involve youth-led organisations in the platform so they can represent themselves. In addition, he highlighted the importance of youth participation, as young persons with migrant lived experiences made up for a large part of the European population and are the future of Europe. If they are not involved in decision making, it creates a democratic deficit.



## 2.4. Session 3: How many children are going missing?

The third session of the first day of the conference consisted of a presentation by **Geesje van Haren** and **Adriana Homolova**, from the [Lost in Europe](#) initiative. Their presentation was dedicated to bringing the participants' attention to the large number of unaccompanied children going missing, but also the gaps in the current data. Between 2018 and 2020, 18,292 children went missing from reception centres in Europe, which is equivalent to about 17 children a day. However, this number is likely to be much higher, because of the existing gaps in the data. The Lost in Europe team organized a data 'bootcamp', in which they contacted authorities in different Member States to request data on missing unaccompanied minors. They noticed several issues: some countries, such as France, do not collect any data on this subject. Some countries, such as the UK, do collect data but it is not available. The Member States also have different ways of recording data. According to Lost in Europe, Member States should at least document the gender, country of origin and age of the child that went missing.

## 2.5. Session 4: Local hub outcomes: what are the challenges faced by young newcomers?

The fourth session was dedicated to presenting the local hubs that took place during the month of November. It began in plenary with **Syed Hasnain** explaining the process and methodology of the local hubs, how many took place, etc. In these local hubs, 60 young people ages 15 to 25, from more than 10 different countries of origin, participated. Then, the seven local hubs were presented by their facilitators and the young people that helped organise them and who participated. An overview of these local hubs is visible in the image below. The outcomes were presented using a creative form of output which was prepared by the young people themselves, for instance, pictures, videos, PowerPoint presentations, etc. Different challenges and recommendations were discussed, that were often reoccurring over the different hubs.

### Berlin, Germany

*"I am living in a shelter it is not a house or apartment it is a container, and with 6 persons living in [it] is very difficult. If you use kitchen or bathrooms you have to wait [for] 6 persons finish, then you got chance of use. In total there is no privacy at all".*

*Young person, Berlin Local Hub*

First, the **Berlin** local hub was presented, discussing a quote from a participant, followed by a video of participants discussing the conclusions of the hub. In the Berlin hub, the lack of access to information was indicated as an issue for many young people who go missing: they are not informed about their rights and the services they can access. It is important to improve this and provide reliable sources of information. Another issue identified was forced deportations. In addition, the poor reception conditions, including the lack of privacy, the prevalence of violence, lack of information about services, lack of (psychosociological) support, etc. were identified as

reasons for children going missing. Finally, there is currently no mechanism in place for complaints, so it is unclear for young people how to contribute to improving the system.

### Bad Homburg, Germany

*"In [the camp in] Athens, I didn't get any support. No one asked about our decision or idea, but they made decisions and then asked us to do them. At the same time, no one [is] helping you [to know] about your rights or helping you about [with the] correct information of [the] Asylum process. As in our family, we are making our decisions together it was difficult for me to understand".*

*Young person, Bad Homburg Local Hub*

The **Bad Homburg** hub was presented using a video in which the participants summarized the most important outcomes of the hub. In the video, the young participants mostly emphasized the importance of sharing their stories, awareness-raising and efforts.

### Valletta, Malta

*"We can contribute much more to this country, we need to be taken into consideration, we need to count".*

*Young person, Valletta Local Hub*

For the local hub that took place in **Malta**, a young person who participated in the hub used a PowerPoint to present the outcomes of the hub during the conference (see image below). In this PowerPoint, multiple migration-related issues were presented, including reasons for children going missing. For instance, a lack of education and support were identified as reasons for children leaving. The young person also used his PowerPoint to call for action by all actors, including NGOs, governments, etc.

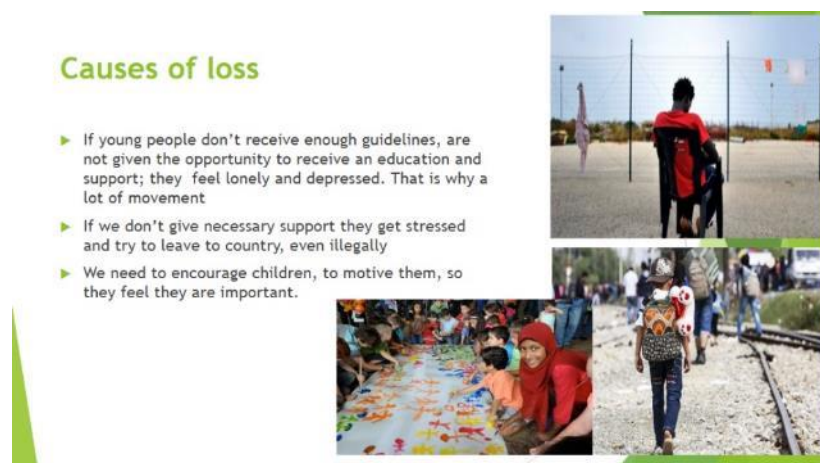


Figure 1 Example of slide from young person's presentation from the Malta local hub

### Naples, Italy

*"When I arrived in Italy I was 14 years old. I was accommodated in a shelter with Italian minors, I was the only foreign minor living in the shelter. The services provided were very good and I could also play football, but the staff didn't know how to help me with the documentation. Once I tried to escape after school and took the train to go to France. Before arriving at the border, I was stopped by the police and brought back to the shelter".*

*Young Person, Naples Local Hub*

Next, a young participant and co-organiser of the **Naples** hub used pictures to present the main challenges and recommendations discussed, including fair distribution for better integration for minors, residence permits and training for staff working in shelters.

### Palermo, Italy

*"The local hub of Palermo seemed very interesting to me. It is important for us young people to grow through every activity and to know the reality that migrant children lost in Europe and in the world live. Now it is our job, young activists, to find solutions, especially through school and the new generation".*

*Young person, Palermo Local hub*

Then, the **Palermo** local hub was verbally presented by a young person who helped organise and participated in the hub. The young person highlighted that "Youth is the future and we must understand the main problems why children disappear. We must create more opportunities for young people through education in schools, so that they are the protagonists of a better future and society". She further shared that during the local hub "we were able to listen to experiences and understand other realities in order to seek new solutions. Youth activism must push to overcome barriers and develop a new vision".

### Antwerp, Belgium

*"You are a nice kid and you don't make trouble often, that's why I [the guardian] do not meet you often. Other kids create more problems and I have to see them often".*

*Young person, Antwerp Local hub*

Given the unavailability of young people to present some of the outcomes of the **Antwerp** local hub, two participants from Missing Children Europe team shared some impressions, in particular focusing on the question of guardianship. Guardians are often responsible for more than one young newcomers, so they do not have adequate time for all of them. In addition, they elaborated on the issue of young people being denied asylum who then run off to another country to try again.

### Athens, Greece

*"Why are our classes separate from each other? Even the break times are not the same, when they were outside the classroom, we were inside and whenever we were inside, they were going out. It seemed, in a way, that we were not worthy enough to communicate with them. How can we find a good understanding of who we are and who they are, without communicating with each other?"*

*Young person, Athens Local Hub*

Finally, for the **Athens** local hub, two videos, prepared by two young persons who participated and helped organise the hub, were shown. The first video showed young persons living in a camp that were interviewed about their experiences. The second video consisted of an animation video presenting the main outcomes of the local hub (see image below). Multiple challenges were identified that contribute to young people going missing in migration, in the local hub. These challenges include a lack of trust in professionals, lack of information and support, being stuck in asylum procedures, a lack of access to education, a lack of communication between young newcomers and staff, sexual harassment and lack of support for this. The young participants emphasized that they do not want their voices to be represented but they want to express themselves.



*Figure 2 Snapshot of animation made by a young person of the Athens local hub*

The plenary session was followed by five breakout sessions to discuss the outcomes of the local hubs in smaller groups. A detailed overview of the results of the local hubs can be found in the [local hub outcomes report](#).

## 2.6. Session 5: Outcomes of the first day

In the final session of the day, **Aagje Ieven**, Secretary-General of Missing Children Europe, invited **Syed Hasnain**, Project Officer for Missing Children Europe and **Isabela Atanasiu**, Policy Officer and



Asylum Infringements Coordinator in the Asylum Unit of DG HOME, European Commission to reflect on the outcomes the local hubs. The main points of the discussion are described below.

### **Protection of young people in migration**

Isabela Atanasiu indicated the role of the EU in supporting local-level efforts, including financial support. She explained that issues identified in the local hubs are already known at the EU level but that they struggle with implementing the solutions to tackle these. A reason for this is the differences between Member States. Obligations are often in place but they are not always well implemented. Another reason for the lack of implementation is a lack of funding.

### **Common issues identified in the local hubs**

Syed Hasnain explained the different issues that were discussed during the seven local hubs. Some recurring issues are poor conditions of reception centres, including a lack of services, lack of trust and communication between staff reception centres, living in isolated areas, etc.

Syed Hasnain also indicated some common reasons for young people to go missing as identified in the local hubs. These include not receiving documents before reaching the age of 18 years. Also, a lack of correct information, the issue of statelessness, etc. contribute to children deciding to disengage from the system.

### **EU level follow-up to identified challenges**

Isabela Atanasiu explained that the difficulty of tackling these issues is that EU legislation must be formulated in a general way instead of detailly describing conditions, e.g., for reception. She suggests that reception centres hire personnel with lived migration experience as they know best the needs of young newcomers.

Regarding the Pact on Migration, Ms Atanasiu hopes that the proposals will improve the current situation. She exemplifies this by highlighting some of the European Commission's proposals, namely the appointment of a guardian, quicker access to education, easier rules for family reunification etc.

To conclude, she highlights several upcoming opportunities to hear young people's voices. She contributes these opportunities to the Strategy on the Rights of the Child, which created awareness of the need for child participation.

### **Main takeaways by Aagje Ieven, Missing Children Europe**

To conclude the first day, Aagje Ieven, the Secretary General of Missing Children Europe shared her main takeaways from the conference. She indicated the currently existing knowledge on the issue but, more importantly, the hopes and feelings of the young people. She believes that these issues are not to be solved by policies and legislations, but by structural changes and encouraging







people, governments, local organisations etc. to be good guardians and support young newcomers. She calls for reflection on how to change people through policies and legislations and how to make the system more caring.

## **Musical performance (video) by Tajeddin, 2020 Lost in Migration Youth Conference participant**





### 3. Day two of the final conference

#### Opening session

In the first session of the second day, a video was first presented of a young person testifying about her life in a camp in Bosnia. Afterwards, **Louise Bonneau**, Senior Policy and Advocacy Officer for Missing Children Europe summarized some of the outcomes of the first day of the conference. These include young people who feel invisible in the system and their daily lives. They don't trust authorities and adults that are supposed to help them. Moreover, services are not prepared to respond to their questions and needs, the reception conditions are poor and they often experience violence in the reception centres, lack of information about their rights, access to education, and the slow asylum procedures. All these issues drive them to go missing from the system, to try their luck somewhere else. She also briefly introduced the different sessions on the second day of the conference.

#### Session 1: Parallel workshops

After the opening session, participants were divided into four different workshop sessions. During the workshops, participants were invited to identify gaps and recommendations on the key issues children (at risk of) going missing face. These key issues were identified during the first day of the conference and the local hubs, namely: access to information; relocation and family reunification; reception conditions and transition to adulthood. The different sessions were facilitated by experts on the topics.

During the workshops, a visual collaboration platform called Miro was used to summarize the outcomes of the workshops. This summary can be retrieved in Annex 3.

#### Workshop 1

##### Access to information – facilitated by Syed Hasnain, Missing Children Europe

During this workshop, participants discussed both the challenges and possible solutions regarding access to information. Participants shared their takeaways from the first day, good practices and **challenges** they have encountered. In general, young people receive information from peers, family, smugglers and online, but not from official authorities, because it is easier to express themselves to them, including considering language. Young people also often receive information before arriving in the country, which influences their destination choice. This also contributes to them not trusting authorities. Other reasons for this are that they believe authorities only provide information that is based on their own interest, instead of the child's. Also, the lack of personalized services and trained professionals were indicated: frontline professionals need to be trained to provide updated information in a child-friendly way. Young people are also often confused by the decentralisation of information: different types of information are provided by different organisations. Also, accommodation is often located far from the city where they need to go for



information. This physical access to information also became more difficult because of Covid restrictions.

An **existing imitative** that was suggested is the [Miniila application](#). This application provides reliable information in a child-friendly way and in multiple languages. It provides information about services close by the individual using the application.

Participants also brainstormed on multiple recommendations and **solutions**. First, information should be provided regularly, not only upon arrival. Information should be provided especially in reception centres, by independent NGOs as young people do not trust authorities. Youth-led organisations and cultural mediators could play a role in this. In addition, information should be reliable and regularly updated and provided in a child-friendly manner. Also, the correct location and time for providing the information is important: trust is necessary. In this regard, information should also be provided by using online tools, e.g., a chatbox. Capacity should be built for organisations and professionals, to organise training. Young newcomers should inform professionals about their needs and how to provide information in their best interests.

Summarising the workshop, the following **conclusions** emerged: access to information has a big impact on the lives of young people. If they receive the correct information, they can make the right decision about their future and legal procedures. Three recommendations were formulated:

1. All professionals should be trained in providing information in a child-friendly manner, in a trusted environment while being aware of cultural differences. These trainings should be provided by independent organisations (e.g., NGOs), at the EU level.
2. Information should be centralized, which can only be achieved when organisations collaborate with each other.
3. Updated information should be provided in a child-friendly way and in multiple languages, using online means, such as chat boxes, hotlines, apps, etc.

## Workshop 2

### Relocation and family reunification - facilitated by Jyothi Kanics, Child Circle and Stephanie Pope, Safe Passage International

During this workshop, participants discussed both the challenges and possible solutions regarding relocation and family reunification. The workshop participants first identified multiple **challenges** regarding relocation and family reunification. In general, EU law lacks a clear legal entitlement to safeguards. Currently, there is no right to free legal aid and qualified legal assistance in all relevant procedures, which is important because relocated children do not always have a clear status and need to go through asylum procedures after relocation and procedures are often complicated and lengthy. In addition, provided legal assistance and guardianship often vary in quality. Guardians and legal assistance providers are also often difficult to access, also because there is a lack of these professionals. There is also an insufficient multidisciplinary and inter-agency case management at the national level, as well as weak or non-existent cross-border cooperation. More



specifically, the participants highlighted the lack of a replacement family reunification agreement between the EU and UK following the Brexit, which particularly affects unaccompanied minors in the EU trying to reach their families in the UK. In general, different Member States have unharmonized procedures which are complicated for young people.

The participants also discussed possible **solutions** for the identified challenges. They indicated the need for clear entitlement and clear procedures for safeguards. They also suggested enhancing the quality of support by legal guardians and legal support, this should be achieved by providing trainings. Also, stronger safeguards and procedures, even in 'emergency' driven relocation schemes, should be established. Regarding privacy, the appropriate storage of children's data and data protection must be ensured in balance with information sharing when appropriate between agencies, respecting the child's best interests and their consent. In general, cross border cooperation needs to be strengthened.

Summarizing the workshop, the following **conclusions** emerged: everyone has the right to family reunification and children also have the right to specific (legal) assistance. However, in practice, a lot of gaps are noticed, especially for unaccompanied children. They don't have a legal guardian, legal assistance or relocation. Three recommendations were made, based on a recent [joint statement](#) by NGOs and a [report](#) by Child Circle and KIND:

1. The EU legal framework should be updated to ensure both a legal guardian and free legal assistance for every unaccompanied child.
2. EU institutions should develop a transparent operational framework for transnational procedures in the EU, including family reunions and relocation.
3. The EU commission should appoint an EU relocation coordinator to facilitate relocations across the EU.

### Workshop 3

#### Reception conditions - facilitated by Federica Toscano, Save the Children Europe

During this workshop, participants discussed both the challenges and possible solutions regarding reception conditions. Multiple **challenges** were discussed during this workshop. First, regarding the new Pact on Migration, concerns were expressed regarding border procedures that include conditions that hinder a fair asylum process (e.g., fast track procedures), but also regarding the lack of transparency and accountability of monitoring mechanisms. The participants also indicated the issue of EU funded new reception centres in Greece, where the freedom of movement of migrants is restricted turning into a de facto detention (for example in Samos) and the lack of access to basic services. Organisations often experience difficulties with reaching these facilities to support children and families which also leads to a lack of testimonies from the field. Participants from different Member States indicated the issues that occur in their countries. Also, the negative impact of Covid-19 on effective access to services and support from civil society was often mentioned.

Regarding **solutions** and recommendations, the participants suggested monitoring the implementation of legal frameworks and standards, such as access to education. Also, reporting and feedback mechanisms should be improved at the national level and by the Commission to indicate structural violations and respond to these. In addition, funding should be redirected to where it is needed, away from investing in detention centres. Funding should go to strengthening child-friendly reception solutions, namely small family centres, and access to education.

Summarizing the workshop, the following **conclusions** emerged: reception conditions are often extremely inadequate which is a reason for children to decide to move forward to find better conditions elsewhere, as good conditions are motivators for children to integrate and engage with the system. In addition, concerns arise regarding the new legislation proposed under the Pact on Migration and Asylum, which risks leading to systematic restriction of movement and detention for unaccompanied children and families at borders. Detention is never in the best interest of the child and should never be supported at the EU level. The workshop participants recommended:

1. Investing existing funding into small reception facilities and in trainings for staff to support unaccompanied children.
2. Funding by the EU and local level should be transparent to avoid it being used for human rights violations.
3. Stakeholders should be involved in the discussion around reception centres, including young people and local authorities.

#### Workshop 4

#### Transition to adulthood – Facilitated by Laetitia Van der Vennet, Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)

During this workshop, participants discussed both the challenges and possible solutions regarding a smooth transition to adulthood, focusing on unaccompanied children. The workshop participants identified multiple **challenges** regarding the transition to adulthood. They indicated a tension between the policies before and after turning 18: before they turn 18, adolescents' agency is limited because they are treated as children first, while they have full agency once they have reached 18 but are no longer protected or assisted, despite their vulnerability. Children transitioning into undocumented adulthood are particularly vulnerable and prone to disappearances as they leave reception facilities close to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Also, the methodology of age assessments was highlighted, as they can cause a premature ageing out. For instance, in Switzerland, young people are subjected to a physical examination, while in Germany, a psychosocial assessment is made. In general, participants perceive young persons in the transition to adulthood as a vulnerable group.

Multiple possible **solutions** and recommendations were brainstormed. The participants suggested that support should be extended beyond the 18<sup>th</sup> birthday (irrespective of residence status), that guardians (appointed from arrival) and care workers prepare children for their upcoming independence, and that connections with the broader care leavers movement should



be built. In addition, there should be more pathways to resolve insecure residence status and there should be more awareness-raising around the needs, challenges and available support for young people and professionals.

Summarizing the workshop, the following **conclusions** emerged: the transition to adulthood is a difficult period for young people, especially for children who have not acquired a secure residence status before turning 18 and become undocumented adults. Challenges all unaccompanied minors experience when ageing out are losing the support of a guardian, losing the support of the social network surrounding them and becoming responsible for everything themselves. In addition, they often must change accommodations, or, if they do not have a secure residence status, leave it and become homeless, and at risk of detention and deportation. Access to education is also not ensured any longer. Local initiatives exist to support young adults, but these are often limited.

In addition to the above points, the workshop participants formulated the following recommendations: to make relevant funds (both national and EU) available to sustain local welfare services, integrate child protection systems and initiatives supporting young people in the transition; and extend material and psychosocial support and access to services beyond the 18<sup>th</sup> birthday to facilitate a smoother, safer coming of age.

## **Session 2: Looking to the future: responses from politicians and policy-makers**

This session was structured as a panel discussion. It was facilitated by **Veronika Pisom**, Defence for Children – ECPAT. The questions of this panel were based on the outcomes of the workshops and local hubs and focused on the future. Participants of the panel included **Michael Shotter**, Director of Migration, Asylum and Visa at DG HOME; **Isabela Atanasiu**, policy officer in the Asylum Unit of DG HOME; **Guyène Sandjo**, Counsellor for Home affairs at the Permanent Representation of France and **Oleksandr Kyrylenko**, Programme Officer at the Office of the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. The main outcomes are outlined below.

### **Future priorities of the European Commission to address the discussed issues**

Michael Shotter, Director of Migration, Asylum and Visa DG HOME emphasized the Commission's priority to adopt the Pact on Migration and Asylum as soon as possible. In this Pact, he explained that a stable legislative framework is set out, by including the child's best interest's principle and ensuring children are heard in procedures, such as the appointment of a guardian and family reunification. Regarding the border procedures, unaccompanied minors below 12 years old are excluded and alternatives to detention are preferred, according to Michael Shotter. He also indicated that the Commission would continue implementing and monitoring the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, which reaffirms the approach set out in the 2017 Communication on the Protection of Children in Migration. He also acknowledges the need for further efforts, especially regarding reception conditions and access to basic rights. For this, they will use the AMIF funding,





which is closely monitored. However, more important is monitoring the implementation in the Member States.

### Expansion of detention

Regarding the expansion of detention in the EU, Isabela Atanasiu, policy officer in the Asylum Unit of DG HOME emphasized to taking into account the political context in which proposals for reforms are tabled, as not all Member States want to ban detention of children. She suggested investing in realistic alternatives to detention, as solutions should be accommodated to all States.

Guyène Sandjo, Counsellor for Home affairs at the Permanent Representation of France, indicated some procedures, such as detention and taking fingerprints, as a measure of protection for children in migration.

### Link with anti-trafficking

Oleksandr Kyrlyenko, Programme Officer at the Office of the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, highlighted the importance of access to information to identify victims of human trafficking, as victims often do not know that they can be protected. In addition, he also indicated the lack of knowledge on the supplier side: 'frontline workers often do not understand the difference between smuggling and trafficking in human beings'.

Regarding reception conditions, Mr Kyrlyenko advocated for immediately moving suspected victims of trafficking from their reception centre to a safe environment with trained professionals, as traffickers and recruiters might be around. He recommended that durable solutions for children should go beyond their basic needs. However, this is complicated by the lack of communication with countries of origin.

Regarding the transition to adulthood, Mr Kyrlyenko suggested developing a detailed pathway plan to ensure that this transition is smooth, and child victims of trafficking are equipped with social and educational skills to be able to live independently.

### Relocation

Guyène Sandjo indicated that the Permanent Representation of France aims to bring back solidarity and responsibility to the agenda during the upcoming French presidency in the first half of 2022, although there are different views by Member States on this. She explained that an agreement on developing communication with the external dimension, namely countries of origin, already exists. In addition, she ensured that the French Presidency would consider all discussed issues in their term.

Isabela Atanasiu encouraged the French Presidency's aim to establish a balance between responsibility and solidarity, as there currently is a lack of responsibility, which she believes could







be caused by the current system that only foresees responsibility but not solidarity. She also suggested increasing solidarity to increase responsibility.

### Final remarks

The panellists were asked to provide a question they would ask children and young people with lived experience in migration, if they had the chance. First, Isabela Atanasiu asked how it is possible for someone, who works in the system, to persuade young migrants not to continue a dangerous migratory route to another country, based on information they received that the situation is better there, and build a future life in that country. Next, Guylène Sandjo's question focused on why some of the young people, who are students, skilled workers, etc., consider dangerous routes instead of regular migration pathways based on the EU framework. In addition, she wondered how they can make young people aware of the dangerous routes they take although others are available. Finally, Oleksandr Kyrylenko expressed an interest in asking young people about their experiences and if they would decide to make the journey again, from a retrospective view.

## Conclusions of conference

### Aagje leven, Missing Children Europe

In the penultimate session, Aagje leven, Secretary General of Missing Children Europe, summarized the conclusions of the conference. She repeated the multiple opportunities, namely the EU Child Rights Strategy and the Platform of child participation and the importance of linking these efforts to existing initiatives, connecting young newcomers and funding to facilitate this. Aagje leven also expressed her concerns about the Pact on Migration and Asylum and more specifically detention: detention can never be in the best interest of young people, which is already been highlighted by civil society and in research.

Finally, Ms leven proposed three ways to tackle the lack of solidarity and responsibility for human rights by Member States. First, stronger monitoring mechanisms for implementation by Member States are needed. Second, cross border follow-up: there exists an issue of systemic blindness to these issues, contributing to children feeling invisible to the system. Aagje leven also advocates for starting to perceive children arriving as the children we once were, with the same hopes and dreams. To conclude, a positive narrative and trust should be built which is only possible by bringing young people to the table, not to only tell their stories but to have an equal seat at the table and include them.

### Conclusions by Dursa, young person

This session marked the closure of the conference, with some final remarks by Dursa. Dursa is a young man with lived migration experience, who also participated in a local hub. He first asked participants to take 10 seconds of silence, 'to remember the children whose lives have been lost

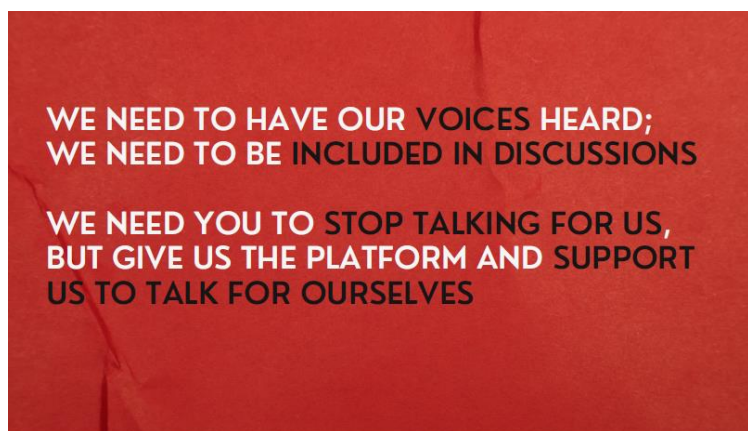






on this journey, whether it's through the desert, sea or from human trafficking, these lives should be remembered.

Dursa highlighted the equality of lives, and that change can only be achieved by working together. He emphasized the importance of inclusion and the need for opportunities to be given to young newcomers: "learn us how to fish, not give us the fish", as young newcomers are the future generation. Also, Dursa indicated that young people with lived migration experiences are always talked about but this needs to change. He believes that the migration setting can be changed by including young newcomers at the table. He also advocates for repeating the conference to raise attention to the topic.



*Figure 3 Slide of Dursa's presentation*

## **Musical performance by Murtaza**





## Annex 1: Biography of speakers

### **Ruben Loodts**

#### **Chief Innovation Officer of Otherwhere**

As a process facilitator and trainer Ruben Loodts supports teams and organisations in pursuing their strategic goals. Through tailor-made processes, he creates an inspirational, appreciative and collaborative context where teams co-create innovative solutions to their challenges. Ruben specialises in co-creation and participatory processes, social innovation, design thinking and appreciative inquiry. He is the founder of the Brussels-based social innovation agency [Otherwhere](#).

### **HE Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca**

#### **President of the Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society**

President Coleiro Preca served in politics for 45 years. She was the first elected female General Secretary of one of the two main political parties in Malta. She also served in the National Parliament for 16 years and served at the Council of Europe. As Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity, she initiated numerous social reforms. The Maltese Parliament unanimously elected Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca as President of Malta in 2014 (-2019). Coleiro Preca founded and chairs The Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society, The Malta Trust Foundation and The Emanuele Cancer Research Foundation Malta. HE Coleiro Preca is President of Eurochild, UNIDO Goodwill Ambassador for Equality, Member of the Council of World Women Leaders, and Member of the WPL Global Forum Advisory Board, among other appointments.

### **Aagje leven**

#### **Secretary General of Missing Children Europe**

Aagje leven is Secretary General at [Missing Children Europe](#), where she is responsible for the strategic development and day-to-day management of the organization. She has a background in Health (Bachelor, Leuven 1998) and Political Philosophy (Master, Leuven, and Nijmegen, 2002). For over 15 years she has worked for several EU civil society organisations as a policy analyst and advocate for the rights and wellbeing of children and their families. She previously coordinated advocacy campaigns for the rights of children in vulnerable situations and managed a European membership network supporting families affected by ill mental health.

### **Maud de Boer-Buquicchio**

#### **President of Missing Children Europe**

Maud de Boer-Buquicchio was a Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children from 2014 to 2020. Between 2002 and 2012, she served as Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, the first woman elected for this post. She joined the Council of Europe in 1969 and worked in different capacities in the human rights protection mechanism set up under the European Convention on Human Rights. In 1998, she was elected Deputy Registrar of the European Court of Human Rights. She is currently President of [Missing Children Europe](#).





## **Anila Noor**

### **Member of the European Expert Group on the view of migrants in the field of migration, asylum and integration**

Anila Noor is a refugee activist, TEDx Speaker and Researcher based in the Netherlands. She recently became a member of the European Commission Expert Group and evaluator for AMIF calls. As an Advisor and expert consultant, she works with different institutions on designing engagement projects related to inclusion and diversity. Anila Noor also initiated [New Women Connectors](#), a movement striving for mainstreaming the unheard voices of migrant and refugee women living across Europe.

## **Dr. Colin Scicluna**

### **Head of Cabinet to the Vice President of the European Commission**

In December 2019, Dr. Colin Scicluna was appointed Head of Cabinet to the Vice President of the European Commission responsible for Democracy and Demography, Dubravka Šuica. The Šuica cabinet is responsible for coordinating the Child Guarantee and the new comprehensive EU strategy on the rights of the child. Previously he held different positions at the national and EU level, including at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malta (1994-1999), the Office of the Prime Minister (2000-03), the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (2006-10) and the European External Action Service (2011-12), Cabinet of the EU High Representative for CFSP and Vice President of the European Commission (2013-2014), Cabinet of the Commissioner for the European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (2014-2016) and European External Action Service (2017-2019).

## **Cyrus Engerer**

### **Member of the European Parliament**

Graduated in European Union Politics and Law, Cyrus Engerer became a Member of the European Parliament in 2020 where he sits as a full member on the Committee for Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) and on the Special Committee Beating Cancer. He is also a substitute member of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) and on the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE). He has also been appointed as the S&D spokesperson on the recast of the EU's Reception Facilities Directive and the Home Affairs Committee's legislative initiative on Legal Migration- Law and Policy.

## **Adam Elsod**

### **Co-founder of The Young Republic, Voicify-eu**

Adam has a long experience in running creative start-ups working with learning and social change. He is an award-winning educator, campaigner, and social entrepreneur. He is a former member of the advisory council of the Council of Europe, and the pool of trainers and experts of the European Youth Forum. Adam has been working for the last 10 years for democracy, human rights and social inclusion in the Middle East, North Africa and Europe, in different capacities and sectors, including management, marketing, CSR, and project management, but also politics in several

25



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MissingChildrenEurope

MissingChildEu

Rue de l'Industrie 10, 1000, Brussels, Belgium

+32 2 894 74 84

[www.missingchildreneurope.eu](http://www.missingchildreneurope.eu)



countries and contexts. Adam has an extensive experience in civil society and self-organizing. He has advised and supported tens of organizations and institutions in more than 30 countries on issues related to learning, democratic participation, social inclusion, strategic communication, etc. He is co-founder and former chairman of [The Young Republic](#), an organisation based in Sweden working with young refugees to support their democratic participation and social inclusion in their host communities in Europe.

## **Geesje van Haren**

### **Lost in Europe**

Geesje van Haren has run her own media organization VersPers for over 15 years. Geesje is the driving force of the [Lost in Europe](#) project and leads a growing team of journalists in Europe. She coordinates the research on the ground, brings the team together, works in the field and is responsible for fundraising. Geesje also has extensive experience as a media producer in the Netherlands and she teaches investigative journalism, entrepreneurship and photography. She is also the founder of the private school for investigative journalism Open Eyes Amsterdam.

## **Adriana Homolova**

### **Journalist Lost in Europe**

Adriana Homolova is a Slovak born Netherlands-based data journalist. She has worked mainly for Dutch newsrooms Investico and the One World magazine. After a short stint with the Dutch broadcast project Pointer, she is now involved as a data specialist in multiple international projects at the OCCRP, Arena for Journalism in Europe and [Lost in Europe](#). She is also the project leader of Elvis – map me tender, an online tool for making European public tenders visual.

## **Syed Hasnain**

### **Project Officer Children in Migration for Missing Children Europe**

Syed Hasnain is a 32-year-old refugee born in the Helmand region of Afghanistan. His mother helped him to escape from Afghanistan when he was 10 years old as his family members were forcing him to fight for the Taliban during the civil war. After a long journey, he arrived in Italy and started a new life upon recognition of refugee status to have the right to regular stay. After learning the Italian language, he became engaged with refugees, asylum seekers and unaccompanied foreign minors as a social worker, cultural mediator, and legal adviser. He worked with several humanitarian NGOs, such as Save the Children, Jesuit Refugee Services, UNHCR, Intersos and MSF. In 2018, he joined the Network for Refugee Voices to advocate for refugees' basic right to become involved in policy-making processes and spaces and to be self-represented in all refugees related public events. In 2019, together with other 6 refugees, he founded the first national union of refugees in Italy called UNIRE (Italian National Union of Refugees and Exiles). As president of UNIRE, Syed is member of the Expert Group on the Views of Migrants In the Field of Migration, Asylum and Integration at the EU Commission. Currently, he is working as a project officer on children in migration with [Missing Children Europe](#).





## **Isabela Atanasiu**

### **Policy Officer Asylum Unit DG HOME**

Isabela Atanasiu is the focal point of contact on the protection of children in migration in DG HOME of the European Commission. She joined DG HOME in 2015 as a policy officer in the Asylum Unit, where she is also the asylum infringements coordinator. Isabela holds a PhD in EU Law from the European University Institute in Florence, Italy.

## **Louise Bonneau**

### **Senior Policy and Advocacy Officer for Missing Children Europe**

Louise Bonneau is Senior Policy and Advocacy Officer at Missing Children Europe. Prior to Missing Children Europe, she held advocacy and policy-making roles at the EU level in the fields of social inclusion of marginalised people, child rights, deinstitutionalisation, and EU funds. Louise holds master's degrees in international migration and refugee law.

## **Jyothi Kanics**

### **Associate Member of Child Circle**

Jyothi Kanics is a human rights advocate with a specialization in children's rights. She has been working on children's rights on an international and European level for more than twenty years. Her areas of expertise include child protection, child participation and strategic planning of advocacy work. She has previously worked with UNHCR, UNICEF, the Irish Refugee Council, Save the Children and OSCE ODIHR. She is currently an Associate Member of [Child Circle](#).

## **Stephanie Pope**

### **EU Advocacy lead at Safe Passage International**

Before joining Safe Passage in 2021, Stephanie worked for the NGO Refugee Rights Europe since 2019, leading RRE's EU & UN policy and advocacy work. Previously, she has worked in Hotspots and refugee camps throughout Greece, in humanitarian assistance as well as legal aid. In addition, Stephanie has work experience with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in London as well as the UNHCR Liaison Office to the OSCE in Vienna. Stephanie graduated with an MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies from Oxford University in 2018, specializing in international and European human rights and refugee law.

## **Federica Toscano**

### **Senior Advocacy Advisor at Save the Children Europe**

Federica Toscano leads Save the Children's advocacy work for changes in policy and law to better support and protect migrant children at the EU level. Previously, she was Head of Advocacy at Missing Children Europe, where she also managed the projects on missing children in migration, including the development of the Miniila app and the EU co-funded project SUMMIT (Safeguarding Unaccompanied Migrant Minors from going Missing by Identifying Best Practices and Training Actors on Interagency Cooperation). She co-authored the study 'Best practice and key challenges for interagency cooperation to safeguard unaccompanied migrant children from going missing'.





Before Missing Children Europe, she worked at the Directorate for Asylum and Migration of the European Commission and in the international management of the European Law Students' Association, one of the largest international youth organisations. Federica holds a LLM in International and European Law from the Institute of European Studies of the Vrije Universiteit Brussels and an Italian law degree

### **Laetitia Van der Vennet**

#### **Advocacy Officer at PICUM**

Laetitia leads [PICUM](#)'s work on undocumented children, families and youth. She joined the organisation in 2019, after a decade of advocating for the fundamental rights of migrants at the national and global levels. Together with Missing Children Europe and Child Circle, PICUM is one of the focal points of the [Initiative for Children in Migration](#).

### **Veronika Pišorn**

#### **Project Coordinator Children's Rights and Migration at Defence for Children – ECPAT Netherlands**

Veronika Pišorn is Project Coordinator Children's Rights and Migration at [Defence for Children – ECPAT Netherlands](#), and advocates for the equal rights of all children, in particular children in migration and child victims of trafficking. Within Mind the Children, she calls for better protection of unaccompanied children who go missing after arrival in Europe. Additionally, she coordinates the European Child Rights Helpdesk, whose partners provide individual legal assistance to children in migration, while exchanging and advocating for the best interests of the child to be central in the national and European policy and practice. Before joining her current team, she led a legal aid organization supporting undocumented refugees and migrants. She holds a degree in law from the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia.

### **Michael Shotter**

#### **Director of Migration, Asylum and Visa at the European Commission, DG HOME.**

Michael Shotter, is a director in the European Commission's Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, responsible for Migration, Protection and Visa. He was earlier head of the unit, which is responsible for civil justice policy, having been a member of the European Commission's Legal Service over a number of years. Before his present post, he was Senior Legal Adviser in the private office of European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and previously worked in the private office of Commissioner Viviane Reding. He has a degree in law from Cambridge University and a licence spéciale from the Institut d'Etudes européennes in Brussels.

#### **Counsellor for Home affairs at the Permanent Representation of France to the EU**

As official of the Ministry of the Interior, Ms. SANDJO has been, since September 2020, an adviser for home affairs within the Permanent Representation of France to the European Union. She is in charge of certain elements of the European Pact on Asylum and Migration presented by the European Commission in September 2020, still under negotiation, in particular the EURODAC







regulation, which relates to the registration of migrants arriving in Europe irregularly. She is also in charge of negotiations relating to legal avenues of access to the European Union.

### **Oleksandr Kyrylenko**

#### **Programme Officer Office of the OSCE Special Representative and Coordinator for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings**

Oleksandr Kyrylenko joined the Office of the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings in 2016. His current portfolio covers victim protection issues, including in crisis contexts and in addressing child trafficking. Prior to this, Oleksandr implemented anti-trafficking projects with the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, including piloting, adopting and implementing of Ukraine's National Referral Mechanism for victims of trafficking in human beings. Oleksandr formerly headed the British Council's regional centre in South-Eastern Ukraine and taught English at Donetsk National University. He holds a specialist diploma in English and French and an MA in Mass Communications.







## Annex 2: Conference programme

### Day 1: Thursday 9 December

<b>Time</b>	<b>Session</b>
<b>10.00 – 10.35</b>	<b>Welcome</b> Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca <i>Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society</i> Aagje leven <i>Secretary General, Missing Children Europe</i>
<b>10.35 – 10.55</b>	<b>Keynote Speech</b> Maud de Boer-Buquicchio <i>President of Missing Children Europe</i>
<b>10.55 – 11.10</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>11.10 – 12.15</b>	<b>Political panel: Are the voices of children in migration heard?</b> Facilitated by: Anila Noor, Member of the European Expert Group on the view of migrants in the field of migration, asylum and integration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nahid <i>2020 Lost in Migration Youth Conference participant</i></li> <li>- Colin Scicluna <i>Head of Cabinet of Vice-President Dubravka ŠUICA</i></li> <li>- Cyrus Engerer <i>Member of the European Parliament, S&amp;D, Malta</i></li> <li>- Adam Elsod <i>Director, The young republic</i></li> </ul>
<b>12.30 – 13.30</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>13.30 – 14.00</b>	<b>How many children are going missing?</b> Geesje van Haren, Lost in Europe coordinator Adriana Homolova, journalist, Lost in Europe
<b>14.00 – 14.45</b>	<b>Local hub outcomes: What are the challenges faced by young newcomers?</b> Syed Hasnain, Missing Children Europe Young people who led local hubs
<b>14.45-15.30</b>	<b>Local hub breakout sessions</b> <i>Participants are randomly divided into breakout sessions. Each breakout is facilitated by a local hub facilitator.</i>
<b>15.30-15.45</b>	<b>Break</b>





<b>15.45- 16.30</b>	<p><b>Outcomes of local hubs and conclusions of the day</b></p> <p>Facilitated by Aagje Ieven, Secretary General, Missing Children Europe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Isabela Atanasiu <i>Policy Officer, DG HOME, European Commission</i></li> <li>- Syed Hasnain <i>Project Officer children in migration, Missing Children Europe</i></li> </ul>
<b>16.30 – 16.45</b>	<p><b>Ending of day one</b></p> <p><i>Musical performance by Tajeddin, 2020 Lost in Migration Youth Conference participant</i></p>

## Day 2: Friday 10 December

<u>Time</u>	<u>Session</u>	
<b>10.00 – 10.20</b>	<p><b>Welcome to day 2 and recap day 1</b></p> <p>Louise Bonneau, <i>Senior Policy and Advocacy Officer, Missing Children Europe</i></p>	
<b>10.20-10.30</b>	<p><b>Introduction to the workshops</b></p> <p><i>Drawing upon the local hub outcomes, participants are invited in the thematic workshops to share their expertise.</i></p>	
<b>10.30 – 11.15</b>	<b>Part 1: Gaps</b>	
	<p><b>Workshop 1: Access to information</b></p> <p>Facilitated by: Syed Hasnain, Missing Children Europe</p>	<p><b>Workshop 2: Relocation and family reunification</b></p> <p>Facilitated by: Jyothi Kanics, Child Circle and Stephanie Pope, Safe Passage International</p>
	<p><b>Workshop 3: Reception conditions</b></p> <p>Facilitated by: Federica Toscano, Save the Children EU</p>	<p><b>Workshop 4: Transition to adulthood</b></p> <p>Facilitated by: Laetitia Van der Vennet, PICUM</p>
<b>11.15- 11.30</b>	<b>Break</b>	
<b>11.30-12.15</b>	<b>Part 2: Solutions</b>	
	<p><b>Workshop 1: Access to information</b></p> <p>Facilitated by: Syed Hasnain, Missing Children Europe</p>	<p><b>Workshop 2: Relocation and family reunification</b></p>



		Facilitated by: Jyothi Kanics, Child Circle and Stephanie Pope, Safe Passage International
	<b>Workshop 3: Reception conditions</b> Facilitated by: Federica Toscano, Save the Children EU	<b>Workshop 4: Transition to adulthood</b> Facilitated by: Laetitia Van der Vennet, PICUM
<b>12.15 – 13.30</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	
<b>13.30 – 14.00</b>	<b>Reporting back from the workshops</b>	
<b>14.00 – 15.00</b>	<b>Looking to the future: Responses from the politicians and policy-makers</b> Facilitator: Veronika Pisom, Defence for Children – ECPAT Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mr Michael Shotter <i>Director of Migration, Asylum and Visa, DG HOME, European Commission</i></li> <li>- Gylène Sandjo, <i>Counsellor for Home affairs, Permanent Representation of France to the EU</i></li> <li>- Oleksandr Kyrlyenko <i>Programme Officer, Office of Special Rep/Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking OSCE</i></li> </ul>	
<b>15.0 – 15.20</b>	<b>Conclusions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca <i>Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society</i></li> <li>- Aagje Ieven, <i>Secretary General, Missing Children Europe</i></li> <li>- Dursa, young person <i>Malta Hub</i></li> </ul>	
<b>15.20-15.30</b>	<b>Ending of Conference</b> Musical performance	



## Annex 3: Miro board from the workshop outcomes

