



FOSTER

Fostering Child-Friendly Legal Environments
through collaborative networks

Intersectoral Cooperation Framework for Supporting Child Victims of crime



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Society of Social Psychiatry
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Intersectoral Cooperation Framework for Supporting Child Victims of crime

THE PROJECT

The project FOSTER - Fostering Child-Friendly Legal Environments through collaborative networks is an EU funded initiative which aims to facilitate a comprehensive, child-friendly approach to justice that ensures the protection of the rights and well-being of child victims of crime. Furthermore, the project aims to raise awareness about the importance of child-friendly justice and child protection among legal professionals, policy makers, and the general public, while contributing to the development of child-friendly justice policies and practices at national and EU level.

FOSTER project is implemented in Greece, Bulgaria, Slovenia and Hungary by a consortium of five partner organisations:

The Centre for European Constitutional Law – CECL, project coordinator, is a leading public benefit foundation and research institute, based in Greece. Its areas of focus include Justice and Fundamental Rights, Democracy and Public Institutions, and Social Policy and the Welfare State. CECL is a training provider with extensive experience in the training of judges, prosecutors, lawyers, and other legal professionals, closely collaborating with the Greek School of the Judiciary, Bar Associations, and other professional associations at the national and European level. CECL also hosts the national focal point for FRANET, the multidisciplinary research network of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), and is a member of the Greek National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI).

The Society of Social Psychiatry P. Sakellaropoulos – SSP. P. Sakellaropoulos is a non-profit scientific organisation, which was founded in 1986 and provides high quality mental health services in Greece as part of the National Plan for Mental Health “Psychargos” of the Ministry of Health. It focuses on prevention, timely intervention, human rights promotion in mental health, advocacy and networking and it operates 35 mental health units in 5 Prefectures, including mobile mental health units and day centres for children and adults, rehabilitation units. It also provides training to professionals, including teachers, judges, prosecutors, legal experts, police officers, journalists in the framework of community awareness rising.

The Centre for the Study of Democracy – CSD in Bulgaria, which has been long engaged in advancing child rights, with a focus on protecting the rights of child victims of crime. Over the years, CSD has conducted comprehensive research, developed policy recommendations, and implemented training programmes aimed at improving the treatment of children within the justice system. The Centre has been instrumental in promoting a child-sensitive and trauma-informed approach to legal proceedings, advocating for reforms to align national practices with international standards.

The Centre for Social Sciences Institute of Legal Science (CSS) in Hungary, CSS is a research centre for the legal sciences, conducting theoretical, empirical and comparative researches. The Centre also carries out basic, applied and comparative research in these fields and conducts its scientific work independently of political influence.

The Institute of Criminology (IK) at the Faculty of Law in Ljubljana is an organisation founded in 1954 as the first criminological institute in the former Yugoslavia. Since its establishment, its primary activities have included research, teaching, information dissemination, and the organisation of a library and documentation service.

The project is co-funded by the European Union under the Justice Programme (JUST-2023-JACC-EJUSTICE/101160568).

INTRODUCTION TO THIS GUIDE

The protection of child victims involved in criminal proceedings requires much more than the effective application of legal safeguards. It requires a coordinated, child-centred, and multidisciplinary response capable of addressing the complex and often interrelated legal, psychological, social, educational, health, and protection needs of every child. While lawyers play a fundamental role in safeguarding children's rights, ensuring access to justice, and advocating for their best interests, meaningful protection cannot be achieved through legal representation alone.

This approach also reflects the overall philosophy and practice of the community mental health services of the leading organisation of this guide, the Society of Social Psychiatry P. Sakellaropoulos. The organisation approaches child victims not solely as individuals in need of legal protection, but as persons embedded in family, school, and community systems, in the framework of action research. Drawing from principles of social and community psychiatry and the “psychoanalytic prism”, the organisation promotes a holistic, long-term, and trauma-informed intervention strategy. This includes working closely with the child, their caregivers/family, schools, and local stakeholders to ensure comprehensive care and future reintegration.

Lawyers representing children are encouraged to adopt this perspective: to advocate not only for immediate safety, but for the child's broader well-being, avoiding automatic institutionalisation, but supporting, wherever possible, the child's healing within their own social environment—when safe and therapeutically supported.

The protection of children's rights depends on coordinated action among justice, child protection, health, mental health, education, and social welfare systems. The growing implementation of integrated models, such as the Barnahus approach, further demonstrates that children benefit most when professionals work together through structured, collaborative frameworks designed around their needs rather than institutional boundaries.

The findings of the FOSTER Training Needs Assessment (TNA), conducted across Greece, Bulgaria, Hungary and Slovenia, confirmed that strengthening intersectoral cooperation is not only desirable but necessary. Research participants consistently identified gaps in communication, coordination, referrals, and collaboration between lawyers and other professionals working with child victims. These findings revealed that effective networking and interdisciplinary collaboration constitute a significant capacity-building need for legal professionals working with child victims.

Against this background, the present Intersectoral Networking Guide for Lawyers has been developed as a practical resource to support legal professionals in building and sustaining effective collaborative relationships with stakeholders involved in child protection and child-friendly justice. The Guide aims to strengthen lawyers' capacity to identify relevant actors, understand their roles and responsibilities, establish meaningful partnerships, navigate referral pathways, participate in multidisciplinary cooperation processes, and contribute actively to integrated responses that promote the rights, wellbeing, participation, and recovery of child victims.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This intersectoral cooperation guide serves as a strategic navigational tool for all professionals involved in supporting child victims, aiming for their holistic protection. Its structure, divided into three critical chronological phases — Prevention, Intervention, and Rehabilitation — allows the user to immediately identify their position within the broader child protection system, the necessary actions required at each stage, and, most importantly, the entities and colleagues from other sectors with whom they must collaborate to manage a case effectively.

To utilize this map efficiently, professionals should identify the current stage of the child's case and refer to the corresponding categories of Key Stakeholders and subcategories of "Professionals", "Competencies", "Sector" and "Legal Framework". Cross-referencing this information ensures a "continuum of care" and prevents secondary victimization by promoting coordinated actions and timely information sharing. In this way, the map is transformed from a simple diagram into a daily practical guide that places the best interests of the child at the centre of every intersectoral intervention.

For each organisation, service, or stakeholder included in the Guide, users will find information on: (a) the professionals involved and their areas of expertise; (b) the core competencies, mandates, and responsibilities of the organisation or service; (c) the sector to which it belongs; (d) the relevant legal and institutional framework governing its establishment and operation; and (e) available contact information and web links. This information is intended to facilitate referrals, clarify roles and responsibilities, strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration, and support lawyers in building effective networks around the child victim.

NOTE: In this Intersectoral Cooperation Guide for Supporting Child Victims, we outline the key steps and procedures for supporting child victims, as well as the relevant public authorities, services, and civil society organisations/NGOs active in this field. We recognize and highly value the important work and contributions of all stakeholders involved in the protection and support of children. However, due to the limited space of this guide, it was not possible to include all organisations and NGOs operating in this area, nor to provide a comprehensive account of the multiple roles they may play across the different stages of intervention. Consequently, there may be some unintentional omissions or instances where the full breadth of an organisation's involvement is not reflected.

Part I: Prevention and Early Detection

This phase focuses on strategic planning, the early detection of abuse indicators through education and healthcare systems, and intersectoral cooperation to prevent risks.

[Situation in Greece] | [Situation in Slovenia] | [Situation in Hungary] | [Situation in Bulgaria]

Step 1: Strategic Planning and Central Coordination

The first step in the prevention process involves high-level strategic planning and the national coordination of actions.

- A **central public body for social policy** is responsible for designing strategy and managing the financial resources that support child protection infrastructure.
- Simultaneously, a **central coordination agency** acts as a hub between public authorities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and social services. This agency operates a **national helpline** for 24/7 support and maintains **national registries** (e.g., for foster care, adoption, and child protection cases) to ensure data-driven decision-making.
- Supporting these efforts are **specialized advisory and research entities** that develop prevention protocols, manage abuse registries, and **independent oversight bodies** that identify systemic gaps and advocate for children's rights.
- These bodies do not only identify systemic gaps but also propose legislative reforms and conduct regular inspections of child protection facilities to safeguard children's rights.

Step 2: Integrated Monitoring and Diagnostic Filtering across Education and Healthcare

Once the coordination framework is established, the process moves to the "frontline," primarily within the **Education System**.

- Due to their daily contact with minors, educational staff are uniquely positioned to observe physical, behavioral, or emotional changes that may indicate a risk of maltreatment.
- Educational institutions function as **monitoring and reporting hubs**, responsible for referring suspected cases to the competent authorities.
- This step also includes **awareness-raising activities** for students and parents to foster a culture of safety and help the community recognize early warning signs.

When a child visits medical facilities, **Healthcare Providers** (hospitals, clinics, and private practitioners) serve as a critical "diagnostic filter."

- Using specialized training, health professionals identify clinical signs of abuse or neglect that may not be apparent to others.
- The process involves taking a **trauma-informed medical history** and detailed documentation of physical findings.
- Legal frameworks usually mandate that these professionals report any substantiated suspicion to judicial or social authorities immediately to trigger protective interventions.

Step 3: Community-Based Social Investigation (Social Services)

At the local level, **Local Social Services** and specialized **Child Protection Units** function as the primary mechanism for community-based detection.

- This step involves conducting a **social investigation** of the child's environment to evaluate family dynamics and living conditions.
- These units collaborate with local stakeholders to provide psychosocial support and parenting guidance, aiming to stabilize the family and prevent the escalation of risks before abuse occurs.

Step 4: Intersectoral Cooperation and Information Exchange

The final step in this phase is ensuring that all gathered information is shared effectively through **Intersectoral Cooperation**.

- The use of **Common Protocols** ensures that every professional—whether in education, health, or social work—knows exactly what their role is at each stage.
- A "**continuum of care**" is maintained through the exchange of information and the creation of shared digital records, which helps avoid repetitive questioning of the child and prevents secondary victimization.
- Joint Intersectoral Training ensures that legal, health, education and other professionals share a common technical language and mutual understanding of procedural requirements.
- Central agencies bear the responsibility for continuous professional capacity building and providing methodological guidance to frontline professionals.
- Finally, **Multidisciplinary Teams** meet regularly to coordinate interventions, ensuring that the best interests of the child remain the central priority of the entire system.

Part II: Intervention and Judicial Proceedings

This phase concerns the immediate protection of the child from the moment of report and the assurance of child-friendly justice to avoid secondary victimization.

[Situation in Greece] | [Situation in Slovenia] | [Situation in Hungary] | [Situation in Bulgaria]

Step 1: Immediate Reporting and Mobilization of Helplines

- The intervention phase begins the moment a suspicion is transformed into a formal or informal report. Specialized helplines and reporting mechanisms function as the primary point of entry for whistleblowers and victims.
- These services provide expert guidance, clarify legal procedures, and offer psychological first aid.

Step 2: Emergency Response and Legal Oversight

- Upon receiving a report, the system mobilizes executive and judicial authorities to ensure the child's immediate physical safety. Prosecuting authorities provide legal oversight and may issue emergency protective orders.
- Simultaneously, police units act as first responders to investigate reports swiftly and collect initial evidence.

Step 3: Specialized Legal Advocacy and Digital Investigation

- In cases involving digital abuse or complex legal needs, specialized mechanisms are activated to safeguard the child's rights. The Ombudsperson for Children Rights (or relevant authority) plays a pivotal role here, monitoring the implementation of legislation and intervening to ensure that administrative and judicial procedures prioritize the child's best interests.
- Simultaneously, when the abuse involves digital platforms, the Cyber Crime Unit conducts specialized digital forensics to trace perpetrators and secure electronic evidence (e.g., removal of harmful content), preventing further online victimization.
- Intervention includes the immediate neutralization of digital threats and the removal of illegal content, often through international cooperation with respective authorities.

Step 4: Preliminary Investigation and Evidence Collection

- This step involves the formal opening of a criminal case file and the initiation of investigative acts. Police officers and prosecutors coordinate to verify the reported crime, conduct interrogations of the accused, and gather material evidence (e.g., genetic material, video footage).
- In cases of domestic risk, a separate file may be opened to investigate living conditions and the necessity of removing the child from the family.

Step 5: Specialized Forensic Evaluation

- To prevent secondary victimization, the forensic examination and interview are conducted in child-friendly environments, such as "Children's Houses".
- Specialized mental health professionals (psychiatrists or psychologists) are appointed as experts to facilitate the interview, ensuring that the child's testimony is recorded once and accurately.
- This step also includes specialized medical examinations by forensic pathologists to document injuries while respecting the child's dignity.
- Independent representation of the child is ensured through the appointment of a special guardian or legal representative, particularly in cases involving a conflict of interest with those holding parental responsibility.

Part III: Rehabilitation

This phase aims at the comprehensive psychosocial rehabilitation and treatment of the child and the prospect of a safe future.

[Situation in Greece] | [Situation in Slovenia] | [Situation in Hungary] | [Situation in Bulgaria]

Step 1: Comprehensive Therapeutic Support and Trauma Treatment

- The rehabilitation phase aims at the long-term psychosocial recovery of the child.
- Specialized mental health services provide therapeutic support to address trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Interventions focus on stabilizing the child's emotional state and facilitating their reintegration into the school and social environment.

Step 2: Welfare Placement and Alternative Care

- If the child's environment remains dangerous, the focus shifts to securing safe accommodation. This may involve placement in public or private residential child care structures that provide holistic care and a stable living environment.
- Simultaneously, foster care and adoption services evaluate and monitor placements to ensure long-term legal and emotional safeguarding.

Step 3: Targeted Support for Vulnerable Populations

- Children with multiple vulnerabilities—such as refugees, unaccompanied minors, or LGBTQ+ youth—require specialized intersectoral interventions.
- This step includes providing guardianship services, cultural mediation, and trauma-informed therapy tailored to the specific needs of these groups.

Step 4: Continuous Follow-up and Social Re-assessment

- The final step ensures the sustainability of the intervention. Competent social services conduct regular re-assessments of the child's needs even after judicial proceedings conclude.
- This includes home visits, monitoring family stability, and ongoing coordination with schools to prevent the risk of relapse or new victimization.

Keys to Intersectoral Cooperation

For effective intersectoral collaboration, the following are required:

- Central Coordination
- Common Protocols: Clear instructions on "who does what" at each stage.
- Information Exchange: Creation of digital files accessible by all competent authorities to avoid repetitive questioning of the child.
- Multidisciplinary Teams: Regular meetings of professionals from different fields (legal, health, social workers) for each case to ensure interdisciplinary cooperation and continuity of care (Focused Psychosocial Support Groups).



Part I: Prevention and Early Detection [map]

Situation in Greece

A. Central Coordination

- Coordination of prevention actions.
- Observatory for the development of protocols, conducting research, and submitting proposals to reduce child victimization.

Keystakeholders	Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family
Professionals involved	Legal experts, Administrative Personal
Competencies	The Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family is the central public body for social policymaking and strategic planning for child protection and is responsible for managing financing tools.
Sector	Administrative
Legal framework	Arts. 1, 2 of P.D. 77/2023 (GG A 130/27.06.2023)
Link:	https://minscfa.gov.gr/

Keystakeholders	National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA)
Professionals involved	Legal experts, Psychologists, Social Workers, Social Scientists
Competencies	The National Centre for Social Solidarity coordinates child protection nationwide, bringing together public authorities, NGOs, and social services to support children at risk. It operates the 24/7 Child Protection Helpline “1107,” manages national databases, and facilitates access to shelters, guardianship, healthcare, and psychosocial support for unaccompanied minors. It also strengthens child protection through training and public awareness. With the supervision of the Office of the National Rapporteur on Combatting Human Trafficking (ONR) EKKA operates the National Referral Mechanism for the Protection of Human Trafficking Victims (NRM), a coordinating mechanism, which monitors all stages of trafficking victims' protection.
Sector	Social Welfare
Legal framework	Art. 1, par. 1 of P.D. 64/2022 (GG A 168/08.09.2022)
Link:	http://ekka.org.gr/index.php/el/



Situation in Greece

Keystakeholders	Central Scientific Council for the Prevention and Combatting of Victimization and Juvenile Delinquency
Professionals involved	Legal experts, social scientists
Competencies	Central Scientific Council for the Prevention and Combatting of Victimization and Juvenile Delinquency (“KESATHEA”) serves as the central advisory body to the Ministry of Justice, responsible for proposing national policies and protocols for the prevention and treatment of juvenile victimization and delinquency. It also provides scientific oversight to Societies for Child Protection (“Etairies prostasias Anilikon- EPA”) and ensures the implementation of multidisciplinary cooperation standards.
Sector	Justice
Legal framework	Art. 12 of Law 3860/2010 (GG A 111/12.07.2010)
Link:	https://ministryofjustice.gr/

Keystakeholders	General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons & Institutional Protection
Professionals involved	Legal professionals, Administrative professionals, Mental health professionals
Competencies	The General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection, as the competent authority for all the issues regarding the unaccompanied minors in Greece. It manages the accommodation and relocation requests for unaccompanied minors, conducts and evaluates their hosting facilities, supports their social integration and safeguards the institutional protection of unaccompanied minors. The General Secretariat is responsible for the National Emergency Response Mechanism with a hotline in 6 languages (15107 - 0030 – 2132128888 and 0030 – 6942773030) to ensure finding and protecting unaccompanied minors, immediate access to accommodation and psychological, legal and medical support and interpretation as well as immediate registration with the competent authorities.
Sector	Immigration
Legal framework	Art. 6 of P.D. 77/2023 (GG A 130/27.06.2023), in conj. with Art. 39 of P.D. 106/2020 (GG A 255/23.12.2020), as amended and in force by Art. 2 of P.D. 13/2026 (GG A 43/20.03.2026)
Link:	https://migration.gov.gr/en/grammateies/geniki-grammateia-evaloton-politon-kai-thesmikis-prostasias/



Situation in Greece

Keystakeholders	Institute of Child Health
Professionals involved	Health professionals, mental health professionals
Competencies	The Institute of Child Health (ICH) is a public research and clinical entity that develops national strategies for child abuse prevention and manages the National Registry for Child Abuse and Neglect. Its Department of Mental Health and Social Welfare provides specialized psychosocial support and offers expert training to professionals within the child protection system.
Sector	Mental Health
Legal framework	Art. 3 of P.D. 867/1979 (GG A 249/07.11.1979)
Link:	https://ich.gr/

Keystakeholders	Deputy Ombudsman for Children's Rights
Professionals involved	Legal experts, social scientists
Competencies	The Deputy Ombudsman for Children's Rights mandate identifies systemic gaps and risks that may lead to victimization of children, and issues recommendations and proposals for legislative or administrative reforms. Children's Rights Cycle specify on the protection and promotion of children's rights adapting the UN convention on the rights of the child (CRC).
Sector	Independent authority
Legal framework	Law 3094/2003 (GG A 10/22.01.2003)
Link:	https://www.synigoros.gr/paidi/



Situation in Greece

B. Education System

- Identification of changes in behavior or academic performance and referral to competent authorities.
- Awareness-raising and prevention activities for students and parents.

Keystakeholders	Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports
Professionals involved	Legal experts, Administrative Personal
Competencies	Funds, designs and implements research, educational policies and prevention programmes. The Ministry operates and supervises school support services, and university field research to reduce risk factors for victimization.
Sector	Administrative
Legal framework	P.D. 18/2018 (GG A 31/23.02.2018), in conj. with Art. 6 of P.D. 84/2019 (GG A 123/17.07.2019)
Link:	https://www.minedu.gov.gr/

Keystakeholders	Educational system (schools, kindergartens, daycare centres, sport camps)
Professionals involved	Teachers, nursery teachers, special educators, disability support workers, school and nursery directors, school psychologists and social workers, education consultants, coaches, parents.
Competencies	The educational system plays a frontline role in child protection by promoting safe environments, identifying at-risk children, and ensuring referral to appropriate support mechanisms. Schools cooperate with mental health and health services, with the justice system and monitor the outcome of interventions.
Sector	Education
Legal framework	Law 4823/2021 (GG A 136/03.08.2021)
Link:	



Situation in Greece

Keystakeholders	Professional training centres (Institute of Education Policy, NGOs, National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government)
Professionals involved	Adult trainers
Competencies	Professional training centres contribute to the prevention of victimization by providing capacity-building programmes for teachers and students, focusing on awareness, early identification of risks, and the development of protective and social skills.
Sector	Education, Welfare, Mental Health, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)
Legal framework	Law 4763/2020 (GG A 254/21.12.2020)
Link:	https://www.iep.edu.gr/en/ Eliza https://eliza.org.gr/en/get-to-know-us/ Unicef https://www.unicef.org/greece/en/press-releases/safeschools-alliance

Keystakeholders	Centre for Interdisciplinary Evaluation, Consulting and Support (KEDASY)
Professionals involved	Psychologists, Social Worker, Special Educators
Competencies	KEDASY operates as an interdisciplinary support structure within the education system, playing a preventive role in child protection through early identification of vulnerabilities, psychosocial assessment, and coordination with external child protection services.
Sector	Education, Mental Health
Legal framework	Art. 11 of Law 4823/2021, in conj. with Art. 6, par. 1 of Law 4547/2018 (GG A 102/12.06.2018)
Link:	https://kesy.dra.sch.gr/index.php/about-us/synergazomenoi-foreis?utm_source=chatgpt.com



Situation in Greece

C. Health Services

- Training in recognizing physical signs of abuse.
- Trauma-informed medical history taking.

Keystakeholders	Primary Health Centres
Professionals involved	General Practitioners (GPs), Pediatricians, Community Nurses, Health Visitors, Psychologists
Competencies	Primary health care services play a preventive and protective role in child protection through early identification of risk factors, medical evaluation of suspected abuse or neglect, and coordination with social and judicial services. With preventive health and mental health promotion programmes they provide community-based care for families.
Sector	Health
Legal framework	Law 4486/2017 (GG A 115/07.08.2017)
Link:	https://www.moh.gov.gr/articles/health/dieythynsh-prwtobathmias-frontidas-ygeias/monades-p-f-y-dhmosioy-tomea-tmhma-a/10451-dhmosies-domes-prwtobathmias-frontidas-ygeias-kentra-ygeias-k-y

Keystakeholders	Private Practitioners
Professionals involved	Pediatricians, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Developmental Physician, General Practitioners (GPs), Psychologists
Competencies	Private practitioners play a complementary role in child protection through early detection of victimization, provision of therapeutic or medical support, and compliance with legal and ethical obligations to report and refer cases to appropriate authorities.
Sector	Health
Legal framework	Arts. 23, 23A of Law 3500/2006, as amended by Law 5172/2025 (GG A 10/29.01.2025)
Link:	



Situation in Greece

Keystakeholders	NGO's (e.g. Medecins du Monde – Greece, Medicines sans Frontieres, Babel Day Centre)
Professionals involved	Pediatricians, General Practitioners (GPs), Psychologists, Social Workers.
Competencies	Non-governmental organisations play a complementary role in child protection by delivering frontline services, promoting prevention and awareness, and supporting vulnerable populations, while cooperating with public authorities and referral mechanisms.
Sector	Health
Legal framework	Law 4486/2017 (GG A 115/07.08.2017)
Link:	<p>MdM https://www.mdmgreece.gr/en/</p> <p>MSF https://msf.gr/en/</p> <p>BABEL Mental Health Unit for Immigrants: https://babeldc.gr/en/who-we-are/</p>



Situation in Greece

D. Municipal Social Services

- Social investigation of the family environment.
- Collaboration with local entities to support vulnerable families.

Keystakeholders	Child Protection Teams of Municipal Social Services
Professionals involved	Social Workers, Psychologists
Competencies	Municipal social services in Greece act as frontline child protection mechanisms, responsible for social assessment, family support, and coordination of interventions within the national child protection framework.
Sector	Welfare
Legal framework	Art 8. (Par. 3) of Law 3961/2011 (GG A 97/29.04.2011)
Link:	https://oikogeneia.gov.gr/?utm_source=chatgpt.com https://pepa.attica.gov.gr/koinonikes-ypiresies-dimon/



Part I: Prevention and Early Detection [map]

Situation in Slovenia

A. Central Coordination

- Coordination of prevention actions.
- Observatory for the development of protocols, conducting research, and submitting proposals to reduce juvenile victimization.

Keystakeholders	Ministry of Demography, Family, and Social Affairs (MDDSZ)
Professionals involved	The institution is a public authority (national ministry), involving policy experts, social policy specialists, legal experts
Competencies	Responsible for national policies on child protection, family welfare, and social services. Coordinates the national system of social work centres and develops prevention programmes and policies related to child abuse and neglect.
Sector	Welfare / Social Protection
Legal framework	Family Code (Družinski zakonik) Social Protection Act (Zakon o socialnem varstvu)
Link:	https://www.gov.si/drzavni-organi/ministrstva/ministrstvo-za-demografijo-druzino-in-socialne-zadeve/

Keystakeholders	Association of Social Work Centres and Social Work Centres (Skupnost centrov za socialno delo in centri za socialno delo - CSD)
Professionals involved	An association, representing social work centres and the social workers, psychologists, family counsellors, and lawyers employed there.
Competencies	Social work centres are primary public institutions responsible for child protection interventions, family support, social investigation, and coordination with police, courts, schools, and health services when child abuse or neglect is suspected.
Sector	Welfare / Social Protection
Legal framework	Family Code (Družinski zakonik) Social Protection Act (Zakon o socialnem varstvu) Domestic Violence Prevention Act (Zakon o preprečevanju nasilja v družini)
Link:	https://www.scsd.si/



B. Education System

- Identification of changes in behavior or academic performance and referral to competent authorities.
- Awareness-raising and prevention activities for students and parents.

Keystakeholders	Ministry of Education, Science, and Youth (Ministrstvo za izobraževanje znanost in mladino - MIZM)
Professionals involved	Legal experts, administrative staff, education policy specialists
Competencies	Funds, designs, and implements education policies and prevention programmes. Oversees school support services and ensures schools fulfill their legal obligation to identify and refer suspected child abuse cases to competent authorities.
Sector	Administration / Education
Legal framework	Organisation and Financing of Education Act (ZOFVI) Elementary School Act (ZOsn)
Link:	https://www.gov.si/drzavni-organi/ministrstva/ministrstvo-za-izobrazevanje-znanost-in-mladino/



Situation in Slovenia

Keystakeholders	Schools (primary and secondary) with school counselling services
Professionals involved	Teachers, school counsellors (school psychologists, social pedagogues, social workers, special educators), school directors, coaches, parents
Competencies	Schools serve as frontline institutions in child protection by observing behavioural, academic, and physical changes that may indicate abuse or neglect. School counselling services coordinate referrals to Centres for Social Work or the police, promote child safety, and provide psychosocial support. Schools are legally obligated to report any suspicion of child abuse.
Sector	Education
Legal framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary School Act (ZOsn) • Organisation and Financing of Education Act (ZOFVI) • Family Code (Art. 7) – general obligation of state authorities, providers of public services, holders of public authority, bodies of local communities, and other persons to - in all activities and procedures concerning a child - act in the best interests of the child • Domestic Violence Prevention Act (Art. 6) - duty to notify the social work centre, the police, or the state prosecutor when they suspect that the victim of violence is a child or a person who, due to personal circumstances, is unable to take care of themselves
Link:	<p>https://paka3.mss.edus.si/registriweb/Seznam1.aspx?Seznam=2010 (list of primary schools)</p> <p>https://paka3.mss.edus.si/registriweb/Seznam2.aspx?Seznam=3010 (list of secondary schools)</p>

Keystakeholders	National Education Institute of Slovenia (Zavod RS za šolstvo – ZRSŠ)
Professionals involved	Education consultants, specialists, adult trainers
Competencies	Provides professional development, training, and advisory support to teachers and schools on child protection, early identification of risk factors, and implementation of prevention and awareness programmes for students and parents.
Sector	Education
Legal framework	Organisation and Financing of Education Act (ZOFVI)
Link:	https://www.zrss.si/



C. Health Services

- Training in recognizing physical signs of abuse.
- Trauma-informed medical history taking.

Keystakeholders	Primary Health Centres (Zdravstveni domovi) and hospitals
Professionals involved	Paediatricians, general practitioners, nurses, emergency physicians, community nurses
Competencies	Primary health centres and hospitals serve as a critical diagnostic filter in child protection. Healthcare professionals are trained to identify clinical signs of physical or psychological abuse, take trauma-informed medical histories, provide immediate medical care, document injuries, and report substantiated suspicion to the police, and judicial or social authorities.
Sector	Health
Legal framework	Health Care and Health Insurance Act (ZZVZZ) Patients' Rights Act (ZPacP) Family Code (Art. 7) – see description of duty above Domestic Violence Prevention Act (Art. 6) – see description of duty above
Link:	https://www.nijz.si/sites/www.nijz.si/files/uploaded/seznam_zvc.pdf

Keystakeholders	Centres for Mental Health of Children and Youth (Centri za duševno zdravje otrok in mladostnikov)
Professionals involved	Child and adolescent psychiatrists, psychologists, psychotherapists
Competencies	Provide specialised mental health assessment and treatment for children at risk or identified as victims of abuse. Deliver trauma-informed clinical care and coordinate with social services, schools, and judicial authorities throughout and after the intervention.
Sector	Health / Mental Health
Legal framework	Mental Health Act (ZDZdr) Health Care and Health Insurance Act (ZZVZZ)
Link:	https://www.zadusevnozdravje.si/kam-po-pomoc/centri-za-dusevno-zdravje/



Situation in Slovenia

Keystakeholders	National Institute of Public Health (Nacionalni inštitut za javno zdravje – NIJZ)
Professionals involved	Public health specialists, epidemiologists, researchers
Competencies	Monitors health risks and develops guidelines for healthcare professionals on the recognition and reporting of child abuse and neglect. Provides training and awareness-raising activities and supports intersectoral data collection on child victimisation.
Sector	Health / Administration
Legal framework	Health Care and Health Insurance Act (ZZVZZ) Contagious Diseases Act (ZNB)
Link:	https://nijz.si/ ; https://nijz.si/zivljenjski-slog/dusevno-zdravje/preprecevanje-e-spolnih-zlorab-otrok-in-mladostnikov-demoniziranje-interneta-ne-deluje/



Situation in Slovenia

D. Municipal Social Services

- Social investigation of the family environment.
- Collaboration with local entities to support vulnerable families.

Keystakeholders	Centres for Social Work (Centri za socialno delo – CSD)
Professionals involved	Social workers, psychologists, family counsellors, lawyers
Competencies	Primary local-level institutions for social investigation of family environments. Conduct assessments of living conditions and family dynamics, provide counselling and family support, and coordinate protection measures with police, courts, schools, and health services when abuse or neglect is suspected. Responsible for implementing emergency child protection measures and long-term case monitoring.
Sector	Welfare / Social Protection
Legal framework	Social Protection Act Family Code (Art. 7) – see description of duty above Domestic Violence Prevention Act (Art. 6) – see description of duty above
Link:	https://www.scsd.si/

Keystakeholders	Municipal social welfare programmes
Professionals involved	Social workers, community workers, NGOs, safe houses
Competencies	Provide community-level support services for vulnerable families and individuals, including counselling, material assistance, housing, and coordination with Centres for Social Work. Contribute to the early identification and prevention of child maltreatment within local communities.
Sector	Welfare / Social Protection
Legal framework	Social Protection Act (ZSV) Local Self-Government Act (ZLS)
Link:	National level https://www.gov.si teme/socialnovarstveni-programi/ Municipal level (example for the capital of Ljubljana) https://www.ljubljana.si/sl/ljubljana/zdrava/socialnovarstveni-programi-podpore-in-pomoci



Part I: Prevention and Early Detection [map]

Situation in Hungary

A. Central Coordination

- Coordination of prevention actions.
- Observatory for the development of protocols, conducting research, and submitting proposals to reduce juvenile victimization.

Keystakeholders	Child protection signalling system (multiagency network) operated by the child welfare services
Professionals involved	<p>All professionals listed in CPA, as it is a network, not a single institution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare Sector: Healthcare service providers (especially health visitors, general practitioners, pediatricians) • Social and Child Protection Services: Providers of personal social care services • Child rights representatives (16 professionals https://www.ijasz.hu/gyermekjogi-kepviselok-elerhetosegei-2.html) • Capital and county (regional) government offices acting in child protection and guardianship matters • Education Sector: Public education institutions and vocational training institutions • Justice and Law Enforcement: Police, Prosecution service, Courts, Probation service, Penitentiary institutions, Penitentiary probation officers, Juvenile correctional institutions • Victim Support and Specialized Services: Governmental bodies, organisations providing victim support and compensation • Civil Society and Religious Actors: NGOs, Church legal entities • Administrative and Regulatory Bodies • Labour inspection authority • Notary (clerk) of the local municipality

Situation in Hungary

Competencies	<p>Information sharing and reporting, early identification of risks, coordinated intervention</p> <p>The child protection signaling system ('gyermekvédelmi jelzőrendszer') is not a single stakeholder, but a legally recognized cooperative framework/network operated by child welfare services in collaboration with healthcare and educational institutions, bodies of justice system as well as various authorities (e.g. police, labour inspectorate).</p> <p>Its aim is to support children being raised within their families and to prevent and eliminate situations that endanger children.</p> <p>The operation of the child protection signaling system is a responsibility of both the state and local governments.</p> <p>Based on law (CPA), if any of the listed professionals detects that a child is at risk, they are obliged to inform the child welfare service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate action: In cases of serious and imminent danger (e.g. abuse), authorities (police, guardianship authority) must be notified immediately, simultaneously with the report. • Documentation: The observed signs, symptoms, and the fact of reporting must be accurately recorded in writing in the medical documentation. • Cooperation: Effective communication and information-sharing with other members of the signaling system (e.g. family support services, educators) is required in the best interests of the child.
Sector	Child protection (and all the involved professionals in various sectors (education, healthcare, justice))
Legal framework	<p>Act XXXI of 1997 on the protection of children and the administration of guardianship affairs (Child Protection Act, CPA) and related executive orders, decrees for the professionals involved</p> <p>Act III of 1993 on Social Administration and Social Benefits</p>
Link:	https://www.parlament.hu/documents/10181/1202209/Infojegyzet_2017_27_gyermekvedelmi+jelzorendszer.pdf/104dd04a-dca3-47bc-944e-bfb07067676f
Keystakeholders	Ministry of Social and Family Affairs
Professionals involved	Legal professionals, child protection professionals
Competencies	Victim support, family policy, employment policy, child and youth protection, the employment in Hungary of third-country nationals, public employment, social policy, and social inclusion.
Sector	Child-and youth protection and social policy. This makes it a central coordinating authority for multiple child-related sectors.
Legal framework	Government Decree No. 90/2026 (V. 13.) on the Duties and Powers of the Members of the Government
Link:	https://kormany.hu/kormanyzat/szocialis-es-csaladugyi-miniszterium

Situation in Hungary

Keystakeholders	Child Welfare and Family Support Centres
Professionals involved	Social workers, psychologists
Competencies	<p>Prevention, crisis intervention. It's part of the social basic services system, and its goal is to provide assistance to individuals and families in difficult situations. Among other, their tasks are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis intervention (immediate help in emergency situations, cooperation with other institutions (e.g., child protection services, police)) • Prevention (early detection of problems, organising programmes (e.g., trainings, group sessions)) • Cooperation with other organisations (collaboration with schools and kindergartens, operating a signaling system (e.g., when a child is at risk))
Sector	Social services, child protection
Legal framework	<p>Act III of 1993 on Social Administration and Social Benefits</p> <p>Act XXXI of 1997 on the protection of children and the administration of guardianship affairs (Child Protection Act, CPA)</p>
Link:	<p style="text-align: center;">https://www.parlament.hu/documents/10181/1202209/Infojegyzet_2017_27_gyermekvedelmi+jelzorendszer.pdf/104dd04a-dca3-47bc-944e-bfb07067676f</p>

Keystakeholders	Margit Schlachta National Institute of Social Policy
Professionals involved	Child protection- social care experts, researchers
Competencies	<p>The Institute was established on 1 January 2021 as a background institution of the Ministry of Human Capacities. Currently, as a background institution of the Ministry of the Interior, it performs professional development tasks in the fields of social services, child welfare, and child protection. The Institute's activities—taking into account the needs and proposals of state, church, civil, and municipal service providers—extend to carrying out support and service functions related to: professional development, training activities, decision-making preparation and implementation.</p> <p>The Institute also operates the Child Protection Hotline, which provides assistance to children and individuals at risk.</p>
Sector	Child protection, social care
Legal framework	Government Decree No. 610/2020 (XII. 18.) on the National Institute for Social Policy
Link:	<p style="text-align: center;">https://nszi.hu</p>



Situation in Hungary

Keystakeholders	The Social and Child Protection Directorate (Szociális és Gyermekvédelmi Főigazgatóság (SZGYF))
Professionals involved	Legal professionals
Competencies	<p>It is the central body responsible for the operation and professional management of state child protection services in Hungary. It</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operates children’s homes, foster care networks, and aftercare services • Ensures quality standards, staffing, and proper functioning of institutions • Develops professional guidelines and monitors service delivery • Handles institutional child abuse cases and extraordinary events • Collects data and supports policy implementation <p>It does not make legal decisions (e.g. placement), but implements and manages care based on decisions of authorities.</p>
Sector	Child protection, social care
Legal framework	<p>Government Decree No. 316/2012 (XI. 13.)</p> <p>Act XXXI of 1997 on the Protection of Children and Guardianship Administration</p> <p>Act III of 1993 on Social Administration and Social Benefits</p>
Link:	https://szgyf.gov.hu/en/



Situation in Hungary

B. Education System

- Identification of changes in behavior or academic performance and referral to competent authorities.
- Awareness-raising and prevention activities for students and parents.

Keystakeholders	Ministry of Education and Children's Affairs
Professionals involved	Legal professionals, educational experts
Competencies	a) Adult education and training, b) higher education, c) public education, d) child and youth policy – with the exceptions of listed competencies of the MInistry of Social and Family Affairs e) vocational education and training. Child-related services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring compulsory education provision • Supervising school infrastructure and administration • Supporting equal access and inclusion in education
Sector	Public education
Legal framework	Government Decree No. 90/2026 (V. 13.) on the Duties and Powers of the Members of the Government
Link:	https://kormany.hu/kormanyzat/oktatasi-es-gyermekugyi-miniszterium



Situation in Hungary

Keystakeholders	Hungarian Education Authority (Oktatási Hivatal)
Professionals involved	Legal professionals, educational experts
Competencies	<p>It is a central administrative body under the Ministry of Interior responsible for the implementation and administration of public education policy in Hungary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implements government education policies and regulations • Maintains official education registers and databases • Organizes and supervises: (1) National competence assessments (2) Secondary school leaving examinations (Matura / “érettségi”) • Develops testing standards and ensures uniform evaluation • Teacher administration and professional oversight <p>Acts as an education authority in specific cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensing and registration of educational institutions (in certain categories) • Conducting official procedures and inspections • Ensures compliance with education laws and standards
Sector	Education
Legal framework	Government Decree No. 121/2013 (IV. 26.) on the Education Authority
Link:	https://www.oktatas.hu/



Situation in Hungary

Keystakeholders	Educational system
Professionals involved	Teachers, kindergarten caretakers, nurses, school nurses, school psychologists, and social workers
Competencies	As a member of the child protection signalling system, in education (from early childhood education to secondary/high school education, and in vocational education), one of the key tasks is to detect the risk situations and recognize signs of abuse, neglect, or endangerment (physical, emotional, sexual). All the professionals involved have a reporting obligation, namely to notify the child protection signaling system (e.g. child welfare services) when risk is suspected.
Sector	Education, health care
Legal framework	<p>Act CXC of 2011 on National Public Education</p> <p>Government Decree No. 12/2020 (II. 7.) on the Implementation of the Act on Vocational Education and Training</p> <p>Act XXXI of 1997 on the protection of children and the administration of guardianship affairs (Child Protection Act, CPA)</p> <p>Act LXV of 1990 on Local Governments</p> <p>Act CLIV of 1997 on Health Care (HCA)</p> <p>Decree No. 49/2004 (V. 21.) of the Ministry of Health, Social and Family Affairs on Territorial Health Visitor (Health Visiting Nurse) Services</p> <p>Act III of 1993 on Social Administration and Social Benefits</p>
Link:	<p>Office of Education (Oktatási Hivatal)</p> <p>https://www.oktatas.hu/cimke_lista?keyword=köznevelés</p>



Situation in Hungary

C. Health Services

- Training in recognizing physical signs of abuse.
- Trauma-informed medical history taking.

Keystakeholders	Ministry of Health
Professionals involved	Legal professionals, healthcare professionals
Competencies	Public health care, prevention of substance abuse
Sector	Health care
Legal framework	Government Decree No. 90/2026 (V. 13.) on the Duties and Powers of the Members of the Government
Link:	https://kormany.hu/kormanyzat/egeszsegugyi-miniszterium

Keystakeholders	Primary Health Service Providers
Professionals involved	Pediatricians, visiting nurses, school nurses, emergency doctors, school doctors
Competencies	Healthcare professionals (doctors, health visitors, and other healthcare staff) play a key role in the child protection signaling system, as they are often the first to encounter signs of abuse, neglect, or endangerment. Their obligations to inform and to report is laid down in the relevant Acts (CPA, HCA).
Sector	Health care
Legal framework	Act XXXI of 1997 on the protection of children and the administration of guardianship affairs (Child Protection Act, CPA) Act CLIV of 1997 on Health Care (HCA) Decree No. 49/2004 (V. 21.) of the Ministry of Health, Social and Family Affairs on Territorial Health Visitor (Health Visiting Nurse) Services
Link:	https://www.gyermekalapellatas.hu

Situation in Hungary

D. Municipal Social Services

- Social investigation of the family environment.
- Collaboration with local entities to support vulnerable families.

Keystakeholders	Child Welfare Services - Family Support Centres
Professionals involved	Child welfare services, family support centres
Competencies	<p>Early detection of risks, endangerment, family support</p> <p>According to the definition of the CPA: “Child welfare service is a specific personal social service that protects the interests of the child, and which—through the use of methods and tools of social work—serves to promote the child’s physical and mental well-being, supports upbringing within the family, prevents situations endangering the child, eliminates existing endangerment, and facilitates the return of a child removed from their family.”</p> <p>According to Act III of 1993 on Social Administration and Social Benefits, “family support is a general social basic service accessible to everyone, not dependent on age, income, or expert assessment, and can be used voluntarily and free of charge.”</p> <p>A Child Welfare and Family Support Centre provides complex, comprehensive assistance—not only financial, but also emotional, social, and practical support—helping families become capable of resolving their problems independently. (Main related tasks are: (1) Social and mental support (lifestyle and life-management counseling, handling crisis situations (e.g., family conflict, divorce, grief), emotional support and counseling conversations), (2) Financial and administrative assistance (providing information about social benefits (e.g., allowances, subsidies), helping with official procedures and paperwork, assisting in submitting applications, (3) Supporting families (parenting advice, managing family conflicts, helping with contact/visitation issues).</p>
Sector	Child welfare, social services
Legal framework	<p>Act XXXI of 1997 on the protection of children and the administration of guardianship affairs (Child Protection Act, CPA)</p> <p>Act LXV of 1990 on Local Governments</p> <p>Act III of 1993 on Social Administration and Social Benefits</p>
Link:	<p>https://www.parlament.hu/documents/10181/1202209/Infojegyzet_2017_27_gyermekvedelmi+jelzorendszer.pdf/104dd04a-dca3-47bc-944e-bfb07067676f</p>



Part I: Prevention and Early Detection [map]

Situation in Bulgaria

A. Central Coordination

- Coordination of prevention actions.
- Observatory for the development of protocols, conducting research, and submitting proposals to reduce juvenile victimization.

Keystakeholders	State Agency for Child Protection
Professionals involved	Social workers, researchers, civil servants
Competencies	<p>Develops and coordinates a unified national child protection policy to prevent risks to children.</p> <p>Designs and monitors national and regional programmes aimed at safeguarding children’s rights.</p> <p>Conducts inspections across schools, childcare facilities, healthcare institutions, and social services to ensure children’s rights are respected, issuing binding instructions when violations are found.</p> <p>Contributes to drafting secondary legislation to strengthen the child protection framework.</p> <p>Builds and maintains data systems to monitor risks, analyze problems, and improve preventive policies and services.</p> <p>Provides methodological guidance to local child protection departments to ensure consistent preventive practices.</p> <p>Carries out research and educational activities to raise awareness and prevent harm to children.</p> <p>Supports NGOs working in child protection to expand preventive services. Promotes alignment with EU policies and standards in child protection.</p>
Sector	Child Protection
Legal framework	Закон за закрила надетето; постановление № 226/10.10.2000 г. на Министерския съвет
Link:	https://sacp.government.bg

Situation in Bulgaria

B. Education System

- Identification of changes in behavior or academic performance and referral to competent authorities.
- Awareness-raising and prevention activities for students and parents.

Keystakeholders	Ministry of Education and Science
Professionals involved	
Competencies	Adopts educational programmes, including violence prevention, organises prevention programmes
Sector	Education
Legal framework	Pre-education and Education Act
Link:	https://web.mon.bg/mon/

Keystakeholders	Schools, kindergartens
Professionals involved	Teachers, school psychologists, and social workers
Competencies	Teachers and day-care personnel are the frontline workers of child protection in educational facilities. They promote safe environments, identify and refer children at-risk, and carry out preventive activities as per the national educational programme and local initiatives.
Sector	Education
Legal framework	Child Protection Act (Art.6a, Art.7) Pre-education and Education Act (art.185, para 2)
Link:	N/A

Keystakeholders	Local commissions countering anti-social behaviour of minors
Professionals involved	Local authorities administration
Competencies	Anti-social behavior of children
Sector	Local authorities
Legal framework	Combating Anti-Social Behavior by Minors Act
Link:	http://www.ckbppmn.government.bg



Situation in Bulgaria

C. Health Services

- Training in recognizing physical signs of abuse.
- Trauma-informed medical history taking.

Keystakeholders	Healthcare centres (hospital and outpatient)
Professionals involved	Pediatricians, General Practitioners (GPs), different medical specialists, emergency units
Competencies	Any medical specialist should recognise and report violence only in line with the general provision of the Child Protection Act that anyone who becomes aware that a child needs protection must immediately notify the Social Assistance Directorate, the State Agency for Child Protection, or the Ministry of Interior. This obligation applies to anyone who learns this through their work or profession, even if they are bound by professional confidentiality.
Sector	Health care
Legal framework	Child Protection Act art.7
Link:	N/A



Situation in Bulgaria

D. Municipal Social Services

- Social investigation of the family environment.
- Collaboration with local entities to support vulnerable families.

Keystakeholders	Child Protection Units of Local Social Assistance Directorates
Professionals involved	Social workers, psychologists, lawyers
Competencies	Child protection units investigate personal situations and refer to social support services.
Sector	Social assistance
Legal framework	Social Services Act Protection of Domestic Violence Act
Link:	https://asp.government.bg

Keystakeholders	NGOs
Professionals involved	Social workers, psychologists, lawyers
Competencies	They provide social assistance to child victims locally, thematically or on a project-based principle.
Sector	NGO
Legal framework	N/A
Link:	N/A



Part II: Intervention and Judicial Proceedings [map]

Situation in Greece

A. Reporting Mechanisms & Helplines

- Immediate mobilization through helplines and reporting mechanisms.

Keystakeholders	Prosecuting Authorities (Juvenile Department of the Prosecutor's Office of the Court of First Instance of Athens, Thessaloniki, Piraeus or other competent department) [Written report]
Professionals involved	Prosecutors
Competencies	The core competencies of the Prosecuting Authorities include the oversight and initiation of necessary proceedings in cases of child abuse and neglect. Indicatively, these include issuing prosecutorial orders for preliminary investigations to gather and secure evidence, issuing emergency protective orders for the safety of minors, and coordinating with law enforcement and social services, guided by the best interests of the child throughout the process.
Sector	Justice
Legal framework	Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 4 of Law 4837/2021(GG A 178/1.10.2021) Law 3500/2006 (GG A 232/24.10.2006), as amended by Law 5172/2025 (GG A 10/29.01.2025)
Contact Information	Juvenile Department of the Prosecutor's Office of the Court of First Instance [Athens: +30 2108827993 Thessaloniki: +30 2310507166 Piraeus: +30 2132157151]
Link	https://www.eispa.gr/tmimata/anilikon



Situation in Greece

Keystakeholders	Hellenic Police (Sub-Directorate for the Protection of Minors of Attica General Police Directorate, Juvenile Department, Sub-Directorate for the Prosecution of Crimes Against Life of Thessaloniki Security Division, Local police authorities or Emergency Response Police) [Written report]
Professionals involved	Police Officers
Competencies	The Hellenic Police, particularly through its specialized Juvenile Protection Sub-Directorates, serves as the primary executive body for the immediate physical protection of minors and the prevention of further harm. Their responsibilities focus on the swift investigation of reports, the safe collection of evidence through child-friendly procedures, and the apprehension of perpetrators. They intervene immediately, inform the Prosecutor's Office regarding the execution of orders, and provide a safe environment for the victims.
Sector	Citizen Protection
Legal framework	Law 5187/2025 (GG A 48/21.03.2025) Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure Law 3500/2006 (GG A 232/24.10.2006), as amended by Law 5172/2025 (GG A 10/29.01.2025)
Contact Information	Sub-Directorate for the Protection of Minors of the Attica General Police Directorate (+30 2106476573), Juvenile Department of the Sub-Directorate for the Prosecution of Crimes Against Life of the Thessaloniki Security Division (+30 2310388456), local police authorities, or Emergency Response Police (100).
Link	https://www.astynomia.gr/i-elliniki-astynomia-symmetechei-sti-89j-diethni-ekthesi-thessalonikis/tmima-prostasias-anilikotitas/ https://www.astynomia.gr/odigos-tou-politi/chrisimes-symvoules/endooikogeneiaki-via/an-gnorizo-oti-kapoio-eniliko-i-aniliko-atomo-kakopoieitai-systimatika-pos-boro-na-voithiso/



Situation in Greece

Keystakeholders	Cyber Crime Unit
Professionals involved	Police Officers, mental health professionals, legal experts, social scientists
Competencies	The Cyber Crime Unit acts as the specialized technological shield for minors in the digital landscape, focusing on the detection and neutralization of on-line threats such as cyber-grooming, child pornography, and digital harassment. Their mandate involves the sophisticated tracking of digital footprints, the forensic analysis of electronic evidence, and the immediate removal of harmful content from the internet. By operating high-tech monitoring systems and a 24/7 emergency line, they ensure a rapid response to cyber-attacks against children, while collaborating internationally to dismantle digital networks of exploitation.
Sector	Citizen Protection
Legal framework	Art. 51 of Law 5187/2025 (GG A 48/21.03.2025) Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure
Contact Information	ccu@cybercrimeunit.gov.gr 11012@hellenicpolice.gr
Link	https://cyberalert.gr/

Situation in Greece

Keystakeholders	Consultation/Information/Guidance on report of child abuse and other Helplines for verbal reports [Verbal report]
Professionals involved	Mental health professionals, legal experts, social scientists
Competencies	<p>Specialized helplines and social assistance networks function as the primary point of contact, providing expert guidance and psychological first aid to individuals considering a report of child abuse. Their role focuses on clarifying legal procedures, assessing risks through professional clinical tools, and empowering whistleblowers or victims to take the necessary steps. By offering a safe, often anonymous space for oral testimony, these services bridge the gap between the initial suspicion and the formal reporting process, ensuring that every concern is addressed with professional sensitivity and informed direction.</p> <p>POLICE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10201- Hellenic Police Helpline for the protection of children <p>STATE AGENCIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 197 - 24/7 National Social Assistance Helpline, of the National Center for Social Solidarity (EKKA) (toll free) • Municipal Social Services Department of each District • The Ombudsman – The Children's Ombudsman 2131306744, 2131306710, 2131306703 (Monday to Friday 09.00-16.00 and 8001132000 Helpline for Children (toll free) Monday to Friday 09.00-16.00 • 15107 National Emergency Response Mechanism (NERM) Hotline for unaccompanied children in precarious living conditions • Department of Mental Health and Social Welfare of The Institute of Child Health, 2107715791 (Monday to Friday 9.00-17.00) <p>NGOs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11525 - Helpline “Together for Children” of the “Together for Children” Association (Monday to Friday 9.00-21.00) • 1065 - 24/7 National Helpline for Children of “The Smile of the Child” (toll free) • 116111 - European Helpline for Children and Adolescents (The Smile of the Child) • 8001180015 -”SUPPORT” Helpline • 10454 - ELIZA Helpline for cases of children being neglected and/ or emotionally, physically or sexually abused (supported by Eliza Foundation)
Sector	Welfare, Mental Health
Legal framework	-
Link	<p style="text-align: center;">The Smile of the Child https://www.hamogelo.gr/gr/el/paidia-thimata-vias:sos-1056/</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Together for Children https://maziगतopaidi.gr/se-nees-egkatakastaseis-i-grammi-11525-kai-to-symvoyleytiko-kentroy-toy-mazi-gia-to-paidi/</p>



Situation in Greece

B. Case Investigation and Preliminary Examination

- Investigation of the case and collection of evidence by specialized police services.
- Order for preliminary examination and coordination of investigations.
- Appointment of a guardian for the independent representation of the child in case of a conflict of interest.

Keystakeholders	Police (Juvenile Protection Sub-directorate), Prosecuting Authorities & Court
Professionals involved	Juvenile Prosecutors, judges, police officers, juvenile probation officers, legal experts
Competencies	<p>(I) (I) Case file opened / Criminal investigation of the report</p> <p>If a report is filed with the Juvenile Department of the Prosecutor's Office of the Court of First Instance: The Prosecutor orders an urgent preliminary investigation by the Juvenile Protection Sub-Directorate in cases of suspected sexual abuse, or by the local Police Station in cases of suspected physical abuse.</p> <p>Police officers, acting as General Preliminary Investigation Officers, carry out preliminary investigation acts for the reported crime and the identification of the perpetrator.</p> <p>If the report is received directly by the Police: Police officers are required to notify the Prosecutor immediately in every case where they receive a complaint regarding child abuse or domestic violence, as well as in cases of offenses caught in the act.</p> <p>This immediate notification is usually done by phone and is followed by the submission of the case file to the Prosecutor's Office, receiving prosecutorial orders for further preliminary investigation actions, and the issuance of orders for the protection and safety of the child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testimony from eyewitnesses and earwitnesses (family members, doctors, teachers, public servants). • In cases of domestic violence, family members are examined as unsworn witnesses. • Collection of material evidence (genetic material, fingerprints, video footage, etc.).



Situation in Greece

Competencies	<p>(II) Another file opened at the Juvenile Department of the Prosecutor's Office</p> <p>In cases of improper exercise of parental responsibility, an additional file is opened to investigate the child's living conditions and determine the necessity of removing the child from their family and placing them in a child welfare establishment.</p> <p>The child is immediately removed from the abusive environment and hospitalized in a pediatric unit for safety reasons. A full medical examination and a psychiatric evaluation of the child are ordered by the juvenile prosecutor to be conducted by the hospital's medical staff, while a social assessment of the home and family environment is assigned to the local Social Services. Once all evidence is collected, the juvenile prosecutor decides whether the child can return to their family and under what terms (e.g., supervision by social services, counseling, and psychological support), or if an alternative solution should be sought (members of the extended family, foster care, or a child welfare establishment).</p>
Sector	Citizen Protection, Justice
Legal framework	<p>Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure</p> <p>Law 3500/2006 (GG A 232/24.10.2006) as amended by Law 5172/2025 (GG A 10/29.01.2025)</p> <p>Arts. 1532 et seq. of the Civil Code</p> <p>P.D. 254/2004 (GG A 238/03.12.2004) Code of Conduct for Police Officers</p>
Link	<p style="text-align: center;">https://www.eispa.gr/tmimata/anilikon</p> <p style="text-align: center;">https://www.astynomia.gr/epikoinonia/g-a-d-attikis/geniki-astynomiki-diefthynsi-attikis/</p>



Situation in Greece

Keystakeholders	<p align="center">Children's Hospitals Pediatric Clinics in General Hospitals Child Safety Care Units (ΜοΦΑΠ in Greek)</p>
Professionals involved	Pediatricians, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists, Psychologists, Social Workers, Nursing Staff
Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protective Custody & Emergency Hospitalization: Execution of urgent prosecutorial court orders for the protective custody and immediate admission of minors removed from abusive domestic environments to a pediatric ward. • Clinical Evaluation & Emergency Care: Provision of full medical examinations, clinical-laboratory control, and immediate medical assistance in the Emergency Department.
Sector	Health, Mental Health
Legal framework	<p>Law 3772/2009 as amended by Law 5172/2025</p> <p>Law 3500/2006 as amended by Law 5172/2025</p>
Link	<p align="center">Ministry of Health https://www.moh.gov.gr/</p> <p align="center">"Agia Sofia" Children's Hospital, Athens http://www.paidon-agiasofia.gr/</p> <p align="center">"Panagioti & Aglaia Kyriakou" Children's Hospital, Athens http://www.032.syzefxis.gov.gr/</p> <p align="center">Children's Hospital of Penteli, Athens http://www.paidon-pentelis.gr/</p> <p align="center">G. Papanikolaou" General Hospital of Thessaloniki https://www.papanikolaou-hospital.gr/</p> <p align="center">Child Safety Care Units (ΜοΦΑΠ in Greek) https://eliza.org.gr/oi-draseis-mas/nosokomeiakes-monades/</p>



Situation in Greece

Keystakeholders	Legal aid
Professionals involved	Legal experts
Competencies	Providing legal aid to low-income individuals. This service is available through every Bar Association.
Sector	Citizen Protection, Justice
Legal framework	Law 3226/2004 (GG A 24/04.02.2004)
Link	https://www.dsa.gr/



Situation in Greece

C. Forensic Interview & Forensic Medical Examination

- Conducting a single forensic interview in a child-friendly environment (Child Psychiatrists, specialized Psychologists).
- Audiovisual recording of the testimony to avoid the child's presence in court and the repetition of the process.
- Specialized medical examination to document abuse while respecting the child's dignity.

Keystakeholders	Children's Houses Domestic Violence Response Offices Forensic medical services
Professionals involved	Specialized mental health and welfare professionals, Health and justice professionals (Forensic Pathologists)
Competencies	<p>The interview of the child victim is mandatorily conducted at the Independent Offices for the Protection of Child Victims "Children's Houses", or, in case they do not exist or are not operative, in other especially designed and adapted spaces within the Domestic Violence Response Offices of the Police Stations, without delay and with the minimum possible number of interviews.</p> <p>A child and adolescent psychologist or psychiatrist is appointed as an expert to evaluate the victim's capacity to testify, contribute to fostering a climate of trust between the victim and the investigating officer, help formulate/adapt the questions, be present throughout the interview of the preliminary investigation, and draw up a report.</p> <p>If not taken according to article 227 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the minor's testimony cannot be admitted as evidence in court.</p> <p>The minor's testimony is drawn up in writing (both questions and answers verbatim) and, when possible, recorded audio-visually, to avoid the victim's presence in court and the repetition of the process (avoidance of secondary victimization).</p> <p>Forensic medical examination, ordered by the Prosecutor, to investigate the alleged incident by issuing an order that includes specific questions to be answered regarding the presence of injuries, type, means, and time of their infliction.</p> <p>If not possible immediately due to weekends or public holidays, the victim is referred to a Public Hospital for the immediate register of the injuries, clinical-laboratory control, and medical assistance if required.</p>
Sector	Justice



Situation in Greece

<p>Legal framework</p>	<p>Arts. 226, 227 of the Code of Criminal Procedure</p> <p>Art. 68 pars. 2, 3 of Law 4478/2017(GG A 91/23.06.2017)</p> <p>Articles 74-76 of Law 4478/2017 (GG A 91/23.06.2017) on the Establishment of "Children's Houses" (Barnahus-type services)</p> <p>M.D. 7320/2019 (GG B 2238/10.06.2019)</p> <p>Law 3772/2009 (GG A 112/2009) as amended by Law 5172/2025 (GG A 10/29.01.2025)</p>
<p>Link</p>	<p>https://ministryofjustice.gr/</p> <p>https://ministryofjustice.gr/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Iatrodikastikes-Ypiresies_27092022.pdf</p> <p>https://www.astynomia.gr/file/2024/07/Grafeia-Domestic-Violence-thlephona.pdf</p>



Part II: Intervention and Judicial Proceedings [map]

Situation in Slovenia

A. Reporting Mechanisms & Helplines

- Immediate mobilization through helplines and reporting mechanisms.

Keystakeholders	Slovenian Police (Policija) – Emergency number 113
Professionals involved	Police officers, specialized officers for juvenile crime and domestic violence
Competencies	Act as first responders to reports of child abuse, ensuring the immediate physical safety of the child. Accept verbal and written reports, initiate preliminary investigations in coordination with the Prosecutor's Office, and provide a secure environment for victims from the moment of disclosure.
Sector	Citizen Protection
Legal framework	Police Tasks and Powers Act (ZNPPol) Criminal Procedure Act (ZKP) Criminal Code (KZ-1)
Link	https://www.policija.si/

Keystakeholders	Centres for Social Work (CSD) – reporting mechanism
Professionals involved	Social workers, psychologists
Competencies	Receive reports from professionals and members of the public regarding suspected child abuse or neglect. Conduct initial assessments and coordinate with police, the judiciary, and health services for further protective action.
Sector	Welfare / Social Protection
Legal framework	Family Code (DZ) Social Protection Act (ZSV) Domestic Violence Prevention Act (ZPND)
Link	https://www.scsd.si/



Situation in Slovenia

Keystakeholders	TOM Telefon – Child Helpline (116 111)
Professionals involved	Trained counsellors, psychologists
Competencies	Provides a confidential helpline for children and young people experiencing abuse, violence, or other distress. Offers emotional support, information, guidance on reporting, and referral to appropriate services.
Sector	Welfare / Mental Health
Legal framework	Family Code (Art. 7) – see description of duty above
Link	https://www.tomtelefon.si/

Keystakeholders	SOS Helpline for Victims of Violence (080 11 55)
Professionals involved	Trained counsellors, social workers
Competencies	24/7 helpline providing support and guidance to victims of domestic violence and abuse, including children and families. Facilitates referrals to shelters, legal assistance, and social services.
Sector	Welfare / Mental Health
Legal framework	Domestic Violence Prevention Act (Art. 6) – see description of duty above
Link	https://drustvo-sos.si/sl_si/



B. Case Investigation and Preliminary Examination

- Investigation of the case and collection of evidence by specialized police services.
- Order for preliminary examination and coordination of investigations.
- Appointment of a juvenile probation officer or guardian for the independent representation of the child.

Keystakeholders	Slovenian Police – Specialised Units for Juvenile Crime and Domestic Violence
Professionals involved	Specialised police investigators, criminal investigators
Competencies	Investigate suspected criminal offences against children, gather evidence, interview witnesses (using child-sensitive procedures), and cooperate with prosecutors, courts, and social services throughout the investigation. Ensure documentation of observed signs of abuse and prompt notification of competent authorities.
Sector	Citizen Protection / Justice
Legal framework	Criminal Procedure Act (ZKP) Criminal Code (KZ-1) Police Tasks and Powers Act (ZNPPol)
Link	https://www.policija.si/

Keystakeholders	Prosecutor's Offices (Državna tožilstva)
Professionals involved	Prosecutors, legal experts
Competencies	Receive police reports and initiate criminal proceedings. Coordinate the preliminary investigation, issue protective orders, and ensure that children's rights are safeguarded throughout judicial proceedings. Where parents are suspects, appoint or request the appointment of a legal guardian or representative for the child victim.
Sector	Justice
Legal framework	Criminal Procedure Act (ZKP) Criminal Code (KZ-1)
Link	https://www.dt-rs.si/



Situation in Slovenia

Keystakeholders	District Courts (Okrožna sodišča)
Professionals involved	Judges (including specialised juvenile judges), court experts
Competencies	Handle criminal proceedings against perpetrators of abuse and issue protective measures for child victims. Ensure child-friendly judicial proceedings to minimise secondary victimisation. Examine recorded forensic interviews in lieu of in-court testimony.
Sector	Justice
Legal framework	Criminal Procedure Act (ZKP) Family Code (DZ)
Link	https://www.sodisce.si/

Keystakeholders	Centres for Social Work (CSD) – guardianship role
Professionals involved	Social workers, legal experts
Competencies	Act as guardians or appoint guardians for child victims in judicial proceedings where parents or primary caregivers are the suspects. Ensure that the child’s best interests are independently represented at every stage of the process.
Sector	Welfare / Social Protection / Justice
Legal framework	Family Code (DZ) Social Protection Act (ZSV)
Link	https://www.scsd.si/



C. Forensic Interview & Forensic Medical Examination

- Conducting a single forensic interview in a child-friendly environment (Child Psychiatrists, specialized Psychologists).
- Audiovisual recording of the testimony to avoid the child's presence in court and the repetition of the process.
- Specialized medical examination to document abuse while respecting the child's dignity.

Keystakeholders	Children's House – Barnahus Slovenia (Hiša za otroke)
Professionals involved	Child psychologists, psychiatrists, forensic experts, social workers, specialised police officers, prosecutors, victim's legal representatives
Competencies	Provides a child-friendly multidisciplinary environment where forensic interviews are conducted once by trained professionals to avoid repeated questioning and secondary victimisation. Interviews are audio-visually recorded and used as evidence in court. Forensic medical examinations are also carried out within this framework. All relevant services (forensic, legal, social, therapeutic) are coordinated under one roof in line with the Barnahus model.
Sector	Justice / Health / Welfare
Legal framework	Act on the Protection of Children in Criminal Proceedings and Their Comprehensive Treatment in a Child-Friendly House (ZZOKPOHO) Criminal Procedure Act (ZKP)
Link	https://www.hisazaotroke.si/



Part II: Intervention and Judicial Proceedings [map]

Situation in Hungary

A. Reporting Mechanisms & Helplines

- Immediate mobilization through helplines and reporting mechanisms.

Keystakeholders	The Prosecution Service of Hungary
Professionals involved	Prosecutors
Competencies	The Hungarian Prosecution Service is an independent constitutional body responsible for ensuring the legality of criminal justice and protecting the public interest.
Sector	Justice
Legal framework	Act CLXIII of 2011 on the Public Prosecution Service of Hungary Act XC of 2017 on Criminal Procedure No. 21/2013 (31 October) of the Chief Prosecutor on the performance of prosecutorial professional tasks related to criminal offences committed by children and juveniles
Link	https://ugyeszseg.hu/en/

Keystakeholders	National Police
Professionals involved	Police officers in general, and in particular officers of juvenile units
Competencies	Investigation
Sector	Law enforcement, justice
Legal framework	Act XXXIV of 1994 on the Police
Link	https://www.police.hu/en

Situation in Hungary

Keystakeholders	Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights (Ombudsman)
Professionals involved	Legal officers
Competencies	The Commissioner for Fundamental Rights is responsible for protecting and promoting fundamental rights in Hungary, with special attention to the rights of children as a particularly vulnerable group. Within this mandate, the Ombudsman does not operate as a separate children's ombudsman but integrates children's rights into its general human rights activities. He can initiate ex officio investigations and handle individual complaints as well.
Sector	Child protection, justice
Legal framework	Act CXI of 2011 on the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights Fundamental Law of Hungary
Link	https://www.ajbh.hu/web/ajbh-en/

Keystakeholders	Helplines
	<p>General emergency line 112 (Police, Ambulance)</p> <p>06 80 21 20 21 ('Childprotection' hotline) https://szgyf.gov.hu/gyermekvedo-hivoszam/</p> <p>Blue Line Child Crisis Foundation's 24/7 hotline: 116-111 https://kek-vonal.hu</p> <p>National Media and Infocommunications Authority Internet Hotline www.internethotline.hu</p> <p>Women For Women Together Against Violence Association (NANE) weekdays hotline 06 80 505 101 https://nane.hu/en</p>

Situation in Hungary

B. Case Investigation and Preliminary Examination

- Investigation of the case and collection of evidence by specialized police services.
- Order for preliminary examination and coordination of investigations.
- Appointment of a juvenile probation officer or guardian for the independent representation of the child.

Keystakeholders	Police & Prosecuting Authorities
Professionals involved	Police officers, prosecutors
Competencies	<p>1. The Police act as the primary investigative authority. Main tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct the investigation of the case • Collect and secure evidence, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • witness testimonies (including child-friendly hearings) • forensic evidence • expert opinions • Identify and question suspects • Take urgent protective measures if a child is at risk <p>In child-related cases (e.g. abuse, neglect):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specialized police units (juvenile or family protection units) are typically involved • procedures must follow child-sensitive rules (e.g. minimizing repeated questioning) <p>2. Prosecutors</p> <p>a. Order for preliminary examination:</p> <p>The prosecutor may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • order the initiation of a preliminary examination (pre-investigation phase) • decide whether there is sufficient suspicion to start a formal investigation <p>This phase aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarify whether a criminal offence has occurred • determine if full investigation is justified <p>b. Directs and coordinates investigations</p> <p>The prosecutor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supervises the legality of police actions • may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give instructions to the police • require specific investigative actions • extend, limit, or terminate investigations



Situation in Hungary

Sector	Justice
Legal framework	<p>Act XC of 2017 on Criminal Procedure</p> <p>Act XXXIV of 1994 on the Police</p> <p>Act CLXIII of 2011 on the Prosecution Service</p> <p>Instruction No. 21/2013 (31 October) of the Chief Prosecutor on the performance of prosecutorial professional tasks related to criminal offences committed by children and juveniles</p>
Link	https://www.police.hu/en

Situation in Hungary

C. Forensic Interview & Forensic Medical Examination

- Conducting a single forensic interview in a child-friendly environment (Child Psychiatrists, specialized Psychologists).
- Audiovisual recording of the testimony to avoid the child's presence in court and the repetition of the process.
- Specialized medical examination to document abuse while respecting the child's dignity.

Keystakeholders	Therapeutic and Interrogation Centres (incl. Barnahus House) run by the National Child protection Special Service
Professionals involved	Social workers, psychologists, child protection professionals
Competencies	Their main goal is to protect children from further harm during investigations while ensuring effective criminal proceedings and proper care. These centres combine investigation (interrogation), therapy, medical care, and child protection into a single, child-friendly system. Their key function is to ensure that children can participate in criminal proceedings safely while receiving comprehensive support and protection.
Sector	Justice, child protection
Legal framework	Act XXXI of 1997 on the protection of children and the administration of guardianship affairs (Child Protection Act, CPA) Act XC of 2017 on Criminal Procedure Decree No. 12/2018 (12 June) of the Ministry of Justice on the rules concerning certain procedural acts in criminal proceedings and the persons participating in criminal proceedings
Link	https://ogysz.hu/meghallgato-es-terapias-kozpontok Barnahus in Szombathely https://barnahus.hu



Part II: Intervention and Judicial Proceedings [map]

Situation in Bulgaria

A. Reporting Mechanisms & Helplines

- Immediate mobilization through helplines and reporting mechanisms.

Keystakeholders	<p>National Hotlines:</p> <p>112 – National emergency hotline</p> <p>116 111 – National Helpline for children, operated by the Stage Agency for Child Protection</p> <p>124 123 – Safer Internet Centre helpline for reporting cases of cyberviolence, etc.</p> <p>0800 1 86 76 – a national hotline for cases of domestic violence</p>
Professionals involved	Doctors/paramedics, social workers, psychologists
Competencies	First-response hotlines that accept signals 24/7. They serve as primary points of contact for guidance, psychological support or rapid response.
Sector	Law enforcement, healthcare, social support
Legal framework	<p>National Emergency Call System with the Single European Emergency Number 112 Act</p> <p>Child Protection Act</p> <p>Domestic Violence Protection Act</p>
Link	<p>https://www.mvr.bg/112/%D0%B4%D0%B5%D0%B9%D0%BD%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B8/%D0%B4%D0%B5%D0%B9%D0%BD%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B8-%D0%B8-%D1%84%D1%83%D0%BD%0%BA%D1%86%D0%B8%D0%B8/112_v_bg</p> <p>https://www.116111.bg</p> <p>https://safenet.bg/en/</p> <p>https://animusassociation.org/21-godini-goreshta-linia/</p>

Situation in Bulgaria

Keystakeholders	Ministry of the Interior (Police)
Professionals involved	Police officers
Competencies	<p>May be first responders in cases of violence against children. They provide police protection from immediate danger to children. For that purpose, the police run residential settlements where they can accommodate children at risk.</p> <p>Their responsibilities include individual assessment of the needs of vulnerable victims (children, among others), the prompt investigation of reports, the collection of evidence, and the identification and apprehension of perpetrators. As first responders, they work in close coordination with the Prosecutor's Office to carry out urgent interventions and ensure the safety and protection of child victims from the moment abuse is disclosed.</p>
Sector	Law enforcement
Legal framework	Ministry of the Interior Act Criminal Procedure Code
Link	https://www.mvr.bg

Keystakeholders	Prosecutor's Offices
Professionals involved	Public prosecutors
Competencies	Work in close cooperation with the police to prosecute perpetrators of crime
Sector	Justice
Legal framework	Judiciary Act Criminal Procedure Code
Link	https://prb.bg

Situation in Bulgaria

Keystakeholders	Coordination Mechanism for Collaboration in Cases Involving Children Who Are Victims of or at Risk of Violence and for Collaboration in Crisis Intervention
Professionals involved	Social workers, teachers, doctors, police officers, prosecutors, judges, local administration, etc.
Competencies	<p>Cross-sectoral coordination mechanism. In every Child Protection Department within the Social Assistance Directorate, the head of the department is on call. They must notify the State Agency for Child Protection within one hour (by phone or fax) to organise a crisis intervention team, which provides urgent support to children in crisis. The team involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • child protection unit officer, • representative(s) of the mayor of the municipality, district, or town hall; • a representative of the police <p>Depending on the specific case, members can be also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the regional healthcare centre; • the child’s general physician, • representative of the medical emergency unit or the head of the department at the medical facility that filed the report, etc.; • the Regional Inspectorate of Education under the Ministry of Education and Science; • the principal of a school, kindergarten, or support unit; • the child’s teacher or group instructor; • the school psychologist (educational counselor); • the Local Commission for Countering Antisocial Behavior by Minors; • the district judge; • the district prosecutor; • the managing body of a residential social service or others at the discretion of the Social Assistance Directorate/Child Protection Agency (if an order is issued to place the child in a residential service) • a specialist at a community-based social service provider; <p>The mechanism aims to provide a coordinated response in case of violence against children or children at-risk. They are formed locally when needed.</p>
Sector	Various
Legal framework	Child Protection Act
Link	https://www.unicef.org/bulgaria/sites/unicef.org.bulgaria/files/2018-11/Procedure%20for%20collaboration%20when%20there%20is%20a%20child%20at%20risk%20-%20bg.pdf

Situation in Bulgaria

B. Case Investigation and Preliminary Examination

- Investigation of the case and collection of evidence by specialized police services.
- Order for preliminary examination and coordination of investigations.
- Appointment of a juvenile probation officer or guardian for the independent representation of the child.

Keystakeholders	Ministry of the Interior (Police)
Professionals involved	Police officers, detectives
Competencies	Police investigate reports, collect evidence, and identify potential perpetrators. They work under the guidance of the Prosecutor’s Office to press charges.
Sector	Law enforcement
Legal framework	Ministry of the Interior Act Criminal Procedure Code
Link	https://www.mvr.bg

Keystakeholders	Prosecutor’s Offices
Professionals involved	Public prosecutors
Competencies	Work in close cooperation with the police to prosecute potential perpetrators of the crime.
Sector	Justice
Legal framework	Judiciary Act Criminal Procedure Code
Link	https://prb.bg

Situation in Bulgaria

Keystakeholders	Courts
Professionals involved	Judges, jurors, and other court officials
Competencies	113 district courts, 28 regional courts, 5 appellate courts, and the Supreme Court of Cassation hear criminal cases involving children. They oversee the legality of the proceedings, evaluate the evidence gathered, and issue the final judicial decision. With regard to child victims and witnesses, they determine how procedural actions should be organized to meet the requirements of child-sensitive justice—making decisions regarding the manner of questioning, the involvement of specialists, the use of specialized facilities, and the admissibility of evidence. There is no requirement for judges to have special training in children’s rights when a child is acting as a witness or victim. Such a requirement will apply after 2023, but only in cases where children are acting as defendants.
Sector	Justice
Legal framework	Judiciary Act Criminal Code Code of Criminal Procedure
Link	https://vss.justice.bg

Keystakeholders	Bar Associations
Professionals involved	Lawyers
Competencies	In cases of conflict of interest between children and bearers of parental responsibility, the court appoints a lawyer as children’s “special representatives” (особен представител). There are no legal requirements for the specialisation of these lawyers.
Sector	Justice
Legal framework	Civil Procedure Code Legal Aid Act
Link	https://www.vas.bg/bg

Situation in Bulgaria

C. Forensic Interview & Forensic Medical Examination

- Conducting a single forensic interview in a child-friendly environment (Child Psychiatrists, specialized Psychologists).
- Audiovisual recording of the testimony to avoid the child's presence in court and the repetition of the process.
- Specialized medical examination to document abuse while respecting the child's dignity.

Keystakeholders	Zona ZaKmila (Children's houses)
Professionals involved	-
Competencies	<p>"Zona ZaKmila" is a UNICEF-funded model based on the Barnahus principles for comprehensive protection, which is provided in one place by a specialised and well-trained team and facilitates the efforts of all institutions to ensure the best interests of the child. The model is piloted in 3 regions of Bulgaria in partnership with the government, the Municipalities of Sofia, Shumen, Montana and Vidin, the Institute for Social Activities and Practices (SAPI) and the Animus Association Foundation. The support provided to children and parents encompasses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual assessment of the needs of the affected children; • Social, psychological and therapeutic support aimed at overcoming the trauma and consequences of violence; • Assistance in medical certification and access to the necessary health care; • Legal aid; • Child-friendly hearings in "Blue Rooms" in order to avoid additional trauma to the child in the process of investigation and administration of justice, protecting his/her rights and best interests and at the same time ensuring the collection of complete and accurate information on a case; • Crisis intervention in case of urgent response.
Sector	Social assistance, justice
Legal framework	N/A
Link	https://www.unicef.org/bulgaria/%D0%B7%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%BB%D0%B0

Situation in Bulgaria

Keystakeholders	Expert witnesses and specialists
Professionals involved	Medical doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists, economists, engineers, chemists, computer specialists, and representatives from other fields
Competencies	When special knowledge in the fields of science, art, or technology is required to clarify certain circumstances of a case, the court or the pretrial investigation authority shall order an expert examination. An expert examination is mandatory when there is doubt regarding the cause of death; the nature of a bodily injury; or a witness’s ability, in light of their physical and mental condition, to correctly perceive the facts relevant to the case and to provide reliable testimony regarding them; An expert examination may also be ordered to determine specific witness protection needs in connection with the witness’s participation in criminal proceedings or to provide crisis intervention in cases of urgent need. The court or the pretrial investigation authority appoints the appropriate expert from the Unified Register of Experts maintained by the Ministry of Justice. There is no information regarding these experts’ specialization in working with children.
Sector	Different sectors
Legal framework	Code of Criminal Procedure Regulation No. 2 of October 26, 2011, on the Conditions and Procedures for Conducting Forensic Medical, Forensic Psychiatric, and Forensic Psychological Examinations, Including the Reimbursement of Expenses to Medical Institutions
Link	https://experts.mjs.bg



Part III: Rehabilitation [map]

Situation in Greece

A. Mental Health Services

- Long-term therapeutic support for the child and the family (where feasible) to address trauma.
- Psychosocial interventions to support school and social integration.

Keystakeholders	Mental Health Services (Community Mental Health Centres for minors, Day Centres, e.g., Society of Social Psychiatry P. Sakellaropoulos, EPAPSY - Association for Regional Development and Mental Health, "Ploes" Psychosocial Intervention Programme for Adolescents and Young Adults)
Professionals involved	Child Psychiatrists, Psychologists, Occupational Therapists
Competencies	Long-term therapeutic support to address trauma and PTSD. Implementation of psychosocial interventions for school and social reintegration.
Sector	Mental Health (Health)
Legal framework	Law 2716/1999 (GG A 96/17.05.1999) Law 5129/2024 (GG A 124/01.08.2024)
Link	<p>https://www.moh.gov.gr/articles/health/domes-kai-draseis-gia-thn-ygeia/c312-psyikh-ygeia/monades-psyikhs-ygeias/5520-ekthesh-sxediasmos-anapykshs-monadwn-psyxargws</p> <p>Federation of Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Mental Health Organisations/ NGOs of Greece, "ARGO" https://argo.org.gr/</p> <p>Society of Social Psychiatry P. Sakellaropoulos https://ekpse.gr/</p> <p>EPAPSY - Association for Regional Development and Mental Health https://www.epapsy.gr/</p> <p>"Ploes" Psychosocial Intervention Programme for Adolescents and Young Adults https://ploes.org.gr/programma-psychokoinokikis-paremvasis-efivon-kai-neon/</p>



Situation in Greece

B. Welfare Support

- If deemed necessary: removal from the dangerous environment, securing accommodation in juvenile welfare structures, or placement in foster care.

Keystakeholders	Residential Child Care Structures (Public & Private Units - e.g., "The Smile of the Child", "Sos Children's Villages")
Professionals involved	Social Workers, Social Caregivers, Educators, Psychologists
Competencies	Provision of safe accommodation and holistic care for children removed from dangerous environments. Securing a stable living environment while preparing the child for future reintegration or fostering.
Sector	Welfare
Legal framework	Law 4837/2021 (GG A 178/01.10.2021)
Link	<p>The Smile of the Child: https://www.hamogelo.gr/</p> <p>SOS Children's Villages: https://sos-villages.gr/</p>

Keystakeholders	Foster Care & Adoption Services (Regional Social Welfare Directorates / EKKA)
Professionals involved	Social Workers, Legal Experts
Competencies	Evaluation and selection of foster parents. Continuous monitoring of placement to ensure the child's well-being and legal safeguarding of the child's status.
Sector	Welfare
Legal framework	Legal framework: Law 4538/2018 (GG A 85/16.05.2018)
Link	https://www.anynet.gr/



Situation in Greece

Keystakeholders	Juvenile Probation Services (Ministry of Justice)
Professionals involved	Juvenile Probation Officers, Social Workers, Sociologists
Competencies	Monitoring children involved in judicial proceedings. Acting as a bridge between the court and social services to support the child’s social rehabilitation.
Sector	Justice
Legal framework	Art. 37 of P.D. 30/2025 (GG A 52/09.04.2025) Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure
Link	http://www.epimelitesanilikon.gr/



Situation in Greece

C. Specialized Support

- For cases requiring support for specific populations, such as refugees, LGBTQ+ children, etc.

Keystakeholders	Specialized Support for Vulnerable Groups (e.g., Syneirmos Vavel, ELIZA Foundation, Orlando LGBT+, Network for Children's Rights, Terre des Hommes Greece)
Professionals involved	Interpreters, Cultural Mediators, Specialized Clinicians, Legal Advisors
Competencies	Targeted support for unaccompanied minors, refugees, or children with multiple vulnerabilities. Provision of guardianship services and specialized trauma-informed therapy. * Rehabilitation services and long-term specialized support inherently function as secondary and tertiary prevention mechanisms. By addressing trauma, empowering child victims, and securing stable environments, these interventions actively prevent re-victimization (secondary victimization) and break the cycle of abuse.
Sector	Immigration, Mental Health, Welfare, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)
Legal framework	M.D. 7586/2018 (GG B 4794/26.10.2018) Law 4538/2018 (GG A 85/16.05.2018) (Child protection and alternative care frameworks). UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).
Link	Babel - Mental Health Unit for Immigrants https://babeldc.gr/ Eliza https://eliza.org.gr/ Orlando LGBT+ https://orlandolgbt.gr/ Network for Children's Rights https://ddp.gr/en/ Terre des Hommes Greece https://www.tdh.org/en/our-interventions/greece



Situation in Greece

D. Follow-up

- Re-assessment of the child's needs by competent social and mental health services throughout and after the conclusion of proceedings.

Keystakeholders	Municipal Social Services (Child Protection Units)
Professionals involved	Social Workers, Psychologists
Competencies	<p>Re-assessment of the child's needs after the conclusion of proceedings. Home visits, monitoring of family stability, and coordination with schools to prevent relapse of victimization.</p> <p>* Follow-up care is undertaken by the Child Protection Teams of the Municipal Social Services. However, in cases where this is not feasible, these responsibilities are also assumed by Child Protection Units operated by Private Non-Profit Organizations.</p>
Sector	Welfare
Legal framework	<p>Arts. 1, 2 of Law 2345/1995 (GG A 213/12.10.1995), in conj. with Art. 67 of Law 4921/2022 (GG A 75/18.04.2022)</p> <p>Art 8 of Law 3961/2011 (GG A' 97/29.04.2011)</p>
Link:	https://minscfa.gov.gr/dimografiki-politiki/enotita-2i-paidiki-prostasia/2-6-monades-paidikis-prostasias-mopp/



Part III: Rehabilitation [map]

Situation in Slovenia

A. Mental Health Services

- Long-term therapeutic support for the child and the family (where feasible) to address trauma.
- Psychosocial interventions to support school and social integration.

Keystakeholders	Centres for Mental Health of Children and Youth
Professionals involved	Child and adolescent psychiatrists, psychologists, psychotherapists, social workers
Competencies	Provide long-term therapeutic support for child victims to address trauma and PTSD. Implement psychosocial interventions to support school and social reintegration. Coordinate with social services and the judicial system on ongoing support needs.
Sector	Mental Health / Health
Legal framework	Mental Health Act (ZDZdr) Health Care and Health Insurance Act (ZZVZZ) Act on the Protection of Children in Criminal Proceedings and Their Comprehensive Treatment in a Child-Friendly House (ZZOKPOHO)
Link	https://www.scoms-lj.si/si/about-us.html



Situation in Slovenia

Keystakeholders	Children’s House – Barnahus Slovenia (therapeutic services)
Professionals involved	Child psychiatrists, psychologists, psychotherapists
Competencies	In addition to its role in the intervention phase, the Children’s House provides therapeutic support to child victims after the conclusion of criminal proceedings, addressing trauma and supporting psychological recovery.
Sector	Mental Health / Justice
Legal framework	Act on the Protection of Children in Criminal Proceedings and Their Comprehensive Treatment in a Child-Friendly House (ZZOKPOHO)
Link	https://www.hisazaotroke.si

Keystakeholders	NGOs providing mental health and counselling support (e.g. counselling centres, OZARA, Altra)
Professionals involved	Psychologists, psychotherapists, social workers, counsellors
Competencies	Provide complementary therapeutic support, crisis counselling, and community-based mental health services for child victims and their families. Coordinate with public services to ensure continuity of care.
Sector	Mental Health / Welfare
Legal framework	Social Protection Act (ZSV)
Link	<p>Ozara http://www.ozara.org/</p> <p>Altra https://altra.si/</p>



Situation in Slovenia

B. Welfare Support

- If deemed necessary: removal from the dangerous environment, securing accommodation in juvenile welfare structures, or placement in foster care.

Keystakeholders	Centres for Social Work (CSD) placement and foster care coordination
Professionals involved	Social workers, psychologists, legal experts
Competencies	When removal from the family is necessary, CSD arranges emergency placement, coordinates foster care, or facilitates the placement of the child in residential care. Continuously monitors the child's well-being and prepares the child for safe reintegration or long-term alternative care solutions.
Sector	Welfare / Social Protection
Legal framework	Family Code (DZ) Social Protection Act (ZSV) Foster Care Act (ZIRD)
Link	https://www.scsd.si/

Keystakeholders	Foster care system and educational institutions
Professionals involved	Foster parents, social caregivers, educators, psychologists
Competencies	Provide accommodation and care for children removed from dangerous environments. Residential youth homes and foster families ensure a stable living environment, emotional support, and educational continuity while the child's long-term situation is assessed.
Sector	Welfare / Social Protection
Legal framework	Family Code (DZ) Foster Care Act (ZIRD)
Link	Foster care system https://www.gov.si/teme/rejnistvo/ Educational institutions https://www.gov.si/teme/strokovni-centri-za-otroke-in-mladostnike-s- posebnimi-potrebami/



Situation in Slovenia

Keystakeholders	Counselling centres (Svetovalnice)
Professionals involved	Social workers, psychologists, legal experts, counsellors of different profiles
Competencies	Provide interdisciplinary support for child victims and their family members, including legal counselling, psychosocial support, and assistance with accessing social rights and services. A network of counselling centres with different profiles of experts ensures comprehensive, tailored support.
Sector	Welfare / Social Protection
Legal framework	Social Protection Act (ZSV)
Link	List of counselling centres and organisations https://www.gov.si teme/pomoc-v-primeru-nasilja/



Situation in Slovenia

C. Specialized Support

- For cases requiring support for specific populations, such as refugees, LGBTQ+ children, etc.

Keystakeholders	NGOs and specialised programmes for vulnerable groups (e.g. Mozaik, Ključ, Legebitra, Amnesty International Slovenia, UNICEF Slovenia)
Professionals involved	Psychologists, social workers, cultural mediators, legal experts, NGO specialists, interpreters
Competencies	Provide targeted support for unaccompanied minors, refugees, LGBTQ+ youth, Roma children, and other vulnerable groups. Services include specialised trauma-informed therapy, cultural mediation, legal assistance, and guardianship support, complementing public services with community-based approaches tailored to specific vulnerabilities.
Sector	Welfare / Mental Health / Integration services
Legal framework	International Protection Act (ZMZ-1) Anti-discrimination legislation (ZVarD)
Link	<p>Government portal with general information https://www.gov.si teme/pomoc-v-primeru-nasilja/</p> <p>Mozaik (Roma children) https://drustvomozaik.si/projekti/z-roko-v-roki/</p> <p>Ključ (Human trafficking) https://drustvo-kljuc.si/sl/domov/</p> <p>Legebitra (LGBTQ+ children) https://legebitra.si/</p> <p>Amnesty International Slovenia https://www.amnesty.si/</p> <p>UNICEF Slovenia https://unicef.si/</p>



Situation in Slovenia

Keystakeholders	Office of the Government of Slovenia for the Care and Integration of Migrants (UOIM)
Professionals involved	Social workers, legal experts, cultural mediators, interpreters
Competencies	Responsible for the care, accommodation, and social integration of asylum seekers and migrants, including unaccompanied minors. Coordinates specialised child protection measures for children in migration contexts and ensures their access to appropriate services.
Sector	Immigration / Welfare
Legal framework	International Protection Act (ZMZ-1) Aliens Act (ZTuj-2)
Link	https://www.gov.si/drzavni-organi/vladne-sluzbe/urad-vlade-rs-za-oskrbo-in-integracijo-migrantov/



D. Follow-up

- Re-assessment of the child's needs by competent social and mental health services throughout and after the conclusion of proceedings.

Keystakeholders	Centres for Social Work (CSD) – long-term monitoring
Professionals involved	Social workers, psychologists, family counsellors
Competencies	Conduct regular reassessment of the child's needs after the conclusion of proceedings. Perform home visits, monitor family stability, and coordinate with schools and health services to ensure the child's safety and recovery. Adjust support plans based on evolving needs to prevent relapse of victimisation.
Sector	Welfare / Social Protection
Legal framework	Family Code (DZ) Social Protection Act (ZSV)
Link:	https://www.scsd.si/



Situation in Slovenia

Keystakeholders	Mental health services, NGOs, and Children's House
Professionals involved	Child psychiatrists, psychologists, counsellors, social workers
Competencies	Provide continued therapeutic support and community-based follow-up to monitor the child's psychological recovery. Coordinate with CSD, Children's House, Counselling Centres, and educational institutions to ensure an integrated approach to the child's long-term well-being.
Sector	Mental Health / Welfare
Legal framework	Mental Health Act (ZDZdr) Health Care and Health Insurance Act (ZZVZZ) Social Protection Act (ZSV) Act on the Protection of Children in Criminal Proceedings and Their Comprehensive Treatment in a Child-Friendly House (ZZOKPOHO)
Link:	<p>Regional Mental Health Centres https://www.zadusevnozdravje.si/kam-po-pomoc/centri-za-dusevno-zdravje/otroci-in-mladostniki/ (example for the capital of Ljubljana)</p> <p>Regional Counselling Centres https://www.scoms-lj.si/ (example for the capital of Ljubljana)</p> <p>Children's House https://www.hisa-za-otroke.si/</p>



Part III: Rehabilitation [map]

Situation in Hungary

A. Mental Health Services

- Long-term therapeutic support for the child and the family (where feasible) to address trauma.
- Psychosocial interventions to support school and social integration.

Keystakeholders	Victim Support Centres
Professionals involved	Legal professionals, psychologists
Competencies	Victim Support Centres provide child-focused, comprehensive assistance to young victims of crime. Their main tasks include: ensuring immediate protection and safety in crisis situations, offering psychological support to help process trauma, supporting child-friendly procedures to avoid further harm, giving legal information and administrative help to children and their guardians, providing financial and practical assistance when needed, coordinating with authorities and child protection services.
Sector	Victim support, justice
Legal framework	Act CXXXV of 2005 on the Support of Victims of Crime and State Compensation
Link	https://igazsagugyiinformaciok.kormany.hu/aldozatsegito-szolgalat https://vansegitsej.im.gov.hu



Situation in Hungary

B. Welfare Support

- If deemed necessary: removal from the dangerous environment, securing accommodation in juvenile welfare structures, or placement in foster care.

Keystakeholders	Child Welfare and Family Support Centres
Professionals involved	Social workers, child protection professionals
Competencies	<p>Child welfare and family support centres (gyermekjóléti szolgálatok / család- és gyermekjóléti központok) play an important role in welfare support, but their powers are often preparatory, coordinative, and supportive rather than authoritative.</p> <p>Child welfare centres cannot independently order removal of a child. However, they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and assess risk (abuse, neglect, danger) • initiate protective measures • make formal proposals to authorities <p>Child welfare centres can organize and coordinate temporary care solutions, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • temporary children’s homes • crisis placements • assist in arranging accommodation through the child protection system
Sector	Child welfare, child protection
Legal framework	<p>Act XXXI of 1997 on the protection of children and the administration of guardianship affairs (Child Protection Act, CPA)</p> <p>Act III of 1993 on Social Administration and Social Benefits</p>
Link	-



Situation in Hungary

Keystakeholders	Guardianship Authorities
Professionals involved	Legal professionals
Competencies	Legal authority to impose measures affecting the child’s status, care, and placement - acts as a public administrative authority, makes binding decisions in child protection cases.
Sector	Child protection
Legal framework	Act XXXI of 1997 on the protection of children and the administration of guardianship affairs (Child Protection Act, CPA)
Link	https://kormanyhivatalok.hu/kormanyhivatalok/bacs-kiskun/megye/gyamugyi-osztaly-feladat-es-hataskor



Situation in Hungary

C. Specialized Support

- For cases requiring support for specific populations, such as refugees, LGBTQ+ children, etc.

Keystakeholders	NGOs
	Menedék Hungarian Association for Migrants (refugees) https://menedek.hu/en
	Háttér Society (LGBTQ+ community) https://en.hatter.hu
	Validity Foundation (children with disabilities) https://validity.ngo
	Polgár Foundation for Equal Opportunities (Romani community) https://polgaralapitvany.hu
	Hungarian Helsinki Committee (general), https://helsinki.hu/en/
	Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (general), https://tasz.hu/en/
	Hintalovon Child Rights Foundation (children's rights), https://hintalovon.hu/en/
	UNICEF Hungary (children's rights), https://unicef.hu/



Situation in Hungary

D. Follow-up

- Re-assessment of the child's needs by competent social and mental health services throughout and after the conclusion of proceedings.

Keystakeholders	Child Welfare- and Family Support Centres
Professionals involved	Social workers, child welfare professionals
Competencies	The centres have a continuous case management role, which includes the regular re-assessment of the child's needs both during and after official (administrative or judicial) proceedings. The child's situation must be regularly reassessed and services must adapt to changing needs and risks.
Sector	Child welfare, child protection
Legal framework	Act XXXI of 1997 on the Protection of Children and Guardianship Administration
Link:	-



Part III: Rehabilitation [map]

Situation in Bulgaria

A. Mental Health Services

- Long-term therapeutic support for the child and the family (where feasible) to address trauma.
- Psychosocial interventions to support school and social integration.

Keystakeholders	Social Service Providers
Professionals involved	Psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists
Competencies	Provide long-term support to children so that they handle the consequences of trauma and return to normal life.
Sector	Social assistance, healthcare
Legal framework	Social Services Act
Link	-



Situation in Bulgaria

B. Welfare Support

- If deemed necessary: removal from the dangerous environment, securing accommodation in juvenile welfare structures, or placement in foster care.

Keystakeholders	Social Services and Community
Professionals involved	Social workers, foster families
Competencies	In cases of children at risk, the court can order children to be accommodated outside their families. They can live with the families of relatives or close to the family people, with foster families or with residential social services.
Sector	Child protection
Legal framework	Child Protection Act Social Services Act
Link	N/A



Situation in Bulgaria

C. Specialized Support

- For cases requiring support for specific populations, such as refugees, LGBTQ+ children, etc.

Keystakeholders	NGOs
Professionals involved	Legal counselors, mediators, interpreters, social workers
Competencies	Provide on-demand or project-based support of children with special needs. These can be Roma children, refugees, children with disabilities.
Sector	NGO
Legal framework	N/A
Link	N/A



Situation in Bulgaria

D. Follow-up

- Re-assessment of the child's needs by competent social and mental health services throughout and after the conclusion of proceedings.

*No follow-up services are available in Bulgaria.

Case Study



Greece

A 14-year-old teenager enters a bakery, visibly agitated. He seems lost and scared, and when asked by a member of the staff, he claims that his father beats him and that he fled the house for protection. The employee calls **Emergency Police Number 100** and two police officers from the **local Police Station** arrive on the spot.

The teenager is escorted to the local Police Station, where the officer in charge, in his **capacity as a preliminary investigation officer**, urgently carries out all preliminary investigation actions to investigate the reported incident. Since the youth points out his father as the perpetrator, two police officers go to the family's home where they locate the father and arrest him within the framework of the caught-in-the-act (in flagrante) procedure, in order to bring him without delay to the Prosecutor's Office.

In the meantime, the teenager is escorted by two uniformed police officers in a police car, with the purpose of driving him to the nearest **Domestic Violence Response Office**, so that a **specially trained police officer, aided by a Child Psychologist**, can take a **statement according to article 227 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CCP)** and subsequently draw up the relevant report.

While waiting for the paperwork and before the car set off, the teenager becomes increasingly nervous, starts yelling, shouting incomprehensible phrases and tries to run away.

The police officers manage to stop him, calls Emergency Medical Number **166** for paramedics and an ambulance and contacts the **Juvenile Prosecutor**. She immediately issues a **court order for protective custody of the teen at the Children's Pediatric Hospital on duty**, orders a **Forensic Medical Examination** and an **urgent survey by the local Social Services**. After being examined by pediatricians in the ER, he is admitted to a **pediatric ward** with the diagnosis of panic attack and remains **guarded by two Police Officers**.

Immediately after admission, he is examined by a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist and a Psychologist. The teen seems to have little capacity to communicate his thoughts and feelings. He seems terrified by the Police, describes the hours of his stay at the Police Station as traumatic and is terrorized at the possibility of his father going to jail because of him. As he says, he denied studying for a very important classification test and his father barely touched him. The mother lives and works abroad, so no information was available **before the father was tried and released**.

The teenager clearly met the criteria for high functioning Autism, a diagnosis that both parents denied, although they had been told in more than one occasions, including an assessment for learning disabilities (**KEDASY of the Region**).

The mother was asked to come and help. **The court order questions were addressed by a team of experts: the Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, the Psychologist and a Social Worker of the hospital**. There, was explained the effect of the event on his individual way of understanding reality.

Counseling was provided to the parents and sessions with the teen and the whole family. **The Juvenile Prosecutor, after considering the report from the hospital, the negative Forensic Medical Exami-**

nation and the positive result of the Social Services Survey, issued an order for the youngster to be handed over to his parents. The family was referred to a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist close to their residence.

NOTE: Although the current policy direction is for all cases to be referred to the Children's Houses, this is not always feasible in practice. As a result, many cases are referred to the Domestic Violence Response Offices of the Hellenic Police, which are readily accessible and available in many regions across the country.

Case Study



Slovenia

Case example: School reporting suspected abuse

A teacher in a primary school notices that a 10-year-old child has frequent unexplained bruises and increasingly withdrawn behaviour.

1. The teacher reports the concern to the school counselling service, which contacts the **Centre for Social Work (CSD)**.
2. Social workers conduct an initial **family assessment** and determine that there is a risk of domestic violence.
3. The case is reported to the **police**, who begin an investigation.
4. Prosecutors initiate criminal proceedings against the suspected perpetrator. The child is referred to the **Children's House (Barnahus)** where a forensic interview is conducted by trained psychologists and recorded for court use.
5. The **Centre for Social Work** arranges temporary placement and provides counselling to the child.
6. The child receives **psychological support through specialised counselling and mental health services** and educational support through the school system.
7. After court proceedings, social services continue **long-term monitoring and support** to ensure the child's safety and recovery.

Case Study



Hungary

Situation

A teacher notices that a 9-year-old child has frequent bruises and becomes withdrawn. The child hints that “dad gets angry.”

How the system works in practice:

1. Detection

The teacher suspects physical abuse.

2. Immediate risk check

The child is not in immediate life-threatening danger → no emergency call.

3. Reporting

The teacher sends a formal report to the Family and Child Welfare Service (can also call first) based on the legal obligation of the child protection signalling system (Art 17 of CPA)

4. Registration

The Child Welfare Service logs the case and reviews urgency.

5. Contact (within 3 days)

A social worker contacts the family and arranges a meeting.

6. First interview

- Talks to the child (in a child-friendly method)
- Talks to parents
- Assesses risk level

7. Assessment outcome

- Signs of ongoing physical abuse confirmed
- Child is at risk but not in immediate danger

8. Measures initiated

- Case management starts
- Possible actions:
 - parenting support / supervision
 - involvement of child protection authority
 - if needed, temporary removal later

9. Follow-up

- Continuous monitoring
- Cooperation with school, possibly police if criminal offence suspected

CASE STUDY | Step-by-Step HUNGARY

[1] Suspicion or disclosure of abuse



[2] Immediate risk assessment



___ YES (life/serious danger)



[3A] Emergency action

→ Police / ambulance / authority

→ Child secured immediately

___ NO (no immediate danger)



[3B] Report sent

→ Family & Child Welfare Service

(within max. 3 working days)



[4] Case registration & documentation



[5] Service checks

→ urgency, completeness, competence



[6] Contact with child/family (≤ 3 days)



[7] Was contact successful?



___ YES



[8] First interview + assessment

→ risk evaluation

→ feedback to reporter

→ case follow-up

___ NO



[9] Further attempts

→ letter / home visit / cooperation

→ if still no contact:

initiate authority procedure



[10] Outcome

→ If abuse confirmed or risk persists:

official child protection measures

Case Study



Bulgaria

“Mila”, 13 years old

Mila is a 13-year-old girl living in Sofia with her mother and her mother’s partner. Over the course of several months, her class teacher notices significant changes in her behaviour. Mila, previously active and sociable, becomes withdrawn, anxious, and frequently absent from school. She appears constantly tired, her school performance declines, and she increasingly avoids contact with classmates and teachers. During a physical education class, the teacher notices bruises on Mila’s arms and back. When asked about them, Mila becomes visibly distressed and says she “fell down the stairs,” but refuses further discussion.

Step 1: Early detection at school

Concerned by Mila’s injuries and behavioural changes, the teacher informs the school psychologist and the school principal. After a private conversation with Mila, the psychologist suspects possible domestic violence and emotional abuse. In accordance with the Child Protection Act and the school’s obligations as a frontline child protection actor, the principal submits a signal to the local Child Protection Unit within the Social Assistance Directorate and contacts the police due to the possible immediate risk to the child.

Step 2: Reporting and activation of the Coordination Mechanism

The Child Protection Unit registers the signal immediately. Following the Coordination Mechanism for cases involving children victims of violence, the institution informs the police and the State Agency for Child Protection within one hour. Since Mila reports that she is afraid to return home, the case is treated as urgent and a rapid interinstitutional response is initiated.

Step 3: Initial social assessment

A designated social worker meets Mila at school on the same day. During the conversation, Mila discloses that her mother’s partner has repeatedly assaulted her and threatened her not to tell anyone. Mila also explains that her mother is aware of the violence but has repeatedly minimised the incidents and discouraged Mila from speaking about them. The social worker assesses that Mila faces an immediate risk of further violence and opens a formal child protection case.

Step 4: Multidisciplinary team meeting

Within 24 hours, a multidisciplinary team is convened, involving representatives of the Child Protection Unit, police, school, municipality, healthcare services, and the Prosecutor’s Office. The team develops a coordinated action plan focused on Mila’s immediate safety, medical assessment, psychological support, and legal protection. Specific tasks, responsibilities, and deadlines are assigned to each institution involved.

Step 5: Police investigation and prosecutorial action

Police officers begin an urgent investigation under the supervision of the Prosecutor’s Office. They collect

statements from school staff, neighbours, and family members, while also gathering medical and other evidence. The suspected perpetrator is questioned, and the prosecutor initiates pre-trial proceedings for domestic violence against a child. Due to the seriousness of the allegations and the risk of repeated violence, protective measures are requested.

Step 6: Appointment of a special representative for Mila

During the proceedings, it becomes clear that Mila's mother is unwilling to actively support the child's interests and continues to maintain contact with the alleged perpetrator. Because this creates a conflict of interest between Mila and her legal guardian, the court appoints a lawyer as Mila's special representative ("особен представител") under the applicable procedural rules. The lawyer's role is to independently represent Mila's rights and interests throughout the proceedings, including participation in hearings and communication with the institutions involved.

Step 7: Medical examination and documentation

Mila is referred for a forensic medical examination at a hospital. Doctors document multiple bruises and injuries consistent with repeated physical violence. The findings are formally recorded and added to the investigation file. Healthcare professionals also assess Mila's emotional state and recommend psychological support.

Step 8: Child-friendly hearing and specialised support

To avoid secondary victimisation, Mila is interviewed in a "blue room" with the support of a psychologist. The hearing takes place in a child-friendly environment and is audiovisually recorded so that Mila does not have to repeat her testimony multiple times during the proceedings. Mila is also referred to a specialised support service operating under the Barnahus-inspired "Zona ZaKmila" model, where she receives psychological counselling, social support, and legal assistance coordinated in one place.

Step 9: Protection measures and temporary placement

As Mila's mother is unable to guarantee her safety, the Child Protection Unit requests temporary placement outside the family environment. The court authorises Mila's placement with her maternal aunt while the criminal proceedings and risk assessment continue. Social workers maintain regular contact with Mila, her school, and the foster environment to ensure her wellbeing.

Step 10: Rehabilitation and reintegration

Over the following months, Mila participates in regular therapy sessions aimed at addressing the trauma caused by the violence. With support from psychologists, teachers, and social workers, she gradually regains confidence and returns to her normal school routine. Her mother also begins counselling and parenting support services to improve the family environment and her capacity to protect the child.

Step 11: Follow-up and long-term support

Six months later, the multidisciplinary team reassesses Mila's situation. Her emotional condition and academic performance have improved significantly, and she reports feeling safe in her new environment. Social services continue periodic monitoring and maintain coordination with the school, healthcare providers, and Mila's special representative to ensure her long-term protection, recovery, and social reintegration.

Existing Protocols



Greece

- 1) Ministerial Decision 7320/ GG B 2238/10.6.2019. Regulation on the Operation of Independent Offices for the Protection of Child Victims “Child’s House” – Structured Protocol for the Examination of Minor Victims as Witnesses
- 2) Protocols & Guidelines by the Institute of Child Health (Department of Mental Health and Social Welfare), used/consulted when necessary, unofficially in various Child and Adolescent psychiatric settings (Clinics, Community Centres)
 - Protocol for the Research, Diagnosis and Management of Child Abuse and Neglect Policy
 - Guide for the Protocol for the Research, Diagnosis and Management of Child Abuse and Neglect Policy
 - Child Abuse and Neglect Law Index in Greece
 - Leaflet with STEP BY STEP actions by professionals about CAN cases

Available at: <https://ich-mhsw.gr/?p=700> [Accessed 17 June 2026].

- 3) Protocols & Guidelines by ELIZA organisation
 - Protocol of Guidelines for the Management of Incidents of Minor Abuse for Police Officers
 - Protocol for the Identification & Management of Children Suspected of Physical Abuse for Health Professionals
 - Three-part case management guide for health professionals on suspected child sexual abuse (printable)
 - Three-part case management guide for healthcare professionals for suspected child sexual abuse (for digital use)

Information poster for health professionals available at: <https://eliza.org.gr/protokolla-odigoi/> [Accessed 17 June 2026].

Existing Protocols



Slovenia

- Common Protocols: Clear instructions on "who does what" at each stage: Currently, there are no protocols or guidelines in Slovenia.
- Information Exchange: Creation of digital files accessible by all competent authorities to avoid repetitive questioning of the child.
- In some cases, informal practice has been established that professionals from the centre of social work are present at the police interview with the child in order to avoid repetitive questioning by different services. The Children's House enables coordinated information gathering through recorded forensic interviews used across procedures, as audiovisual recordings of the child's hearing may be used in criminal and other judicial proceedings, as well as for providing crisis support and psychosocial assistance. In addition, data gathered in the Children's House related to crisis support and psychosocial assistance may be shared with healthcare providers or for the continuation of support with the consent of the child or their legal guardian.
- Multidisciplinary Teams: Regular meetings of professionals from different fields (legal, health, social workers) for each case to ensure interdisciplinary cooperation and continuity of care (Focused Psychosocial Support Groups).

A multidisciplinary team is established before a forensic interview with a child in the Children's House. The following professionals are typically members of the team: (investigative) judge, public prosecutor, attorney representing the child victim, social worker from the centre of social work, psychologist and educational expert from the Children's house.

Existing Protocols



Hungary

Professional regulatory documents of family and child welfare services:

<https://szocialisportal.hu/csalad-es-gyermekjoleti-szolgaltatasok-szakmai-szabalyzo-dokumentumai/>

EMMI Health Professional Guideline (Health Gazette 2020/14):

<https://jogkodex.hu/doc/7665440>

Methodology at institutional, maintainer, and sectoral level for the investigation and handling of abuse cases involving children and young adults receiving care in child protection specialised institutions, foster care networks, and correctional institutions:

<https://tamogatoweb.hu/gyermekbantalmazas-elleni-modszertan/>

Regulation No. 9/2022 (28 September) of the Social and Child Protection Directorate General on measures related to extraordinary events and cases of child abuse occurring in social and child protection institutions, and on the порядок (procedure) for reporting:

https://szgyf.gov.hu/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/9_2022_IX28_szabalyzat-a-szoc-es-gyv-int-bekovetkezo-rendkivuli-esemenyek-es-bantalmazasi-esetek.pdf

Existing Protocols



Bulgaria

The Coordination Mechanism for interaction in cases involving children who are victims of violence or at risk of violence establishes a rapid, multidisciplinary response system involving child protection authorities, police, healthcare providers, schools, prosecutors, courts, municipalities, and social service providers. Any institution receiving a report of violence must notify the other competent bodies within one hour.

A designated social worker from the local Child Protection Unit must assess the case within 24 hours and, where risk is identified, convene a multidisciplinary team to develop a coordinated action plan with clearly assigned responsibilities and deadlines. The mechanism emphasises cooperation, information-sharing, and child-centred intervention aimed at safeguarding the child's best interests and ensuring long-term protection and recovery.

The procedure also includes a specialised crisis intervention framework for emergencies such as severe violence, disasters, terrorist attacks, or accidents involving children. In such situations, crisis intervention teams composed of police officers, judges, prosecutors, doctors, social workers, educators, and crisis accommodation providers are mobilised to provide immediate psychological, social, and physical protection. The mechanism assigns specific obligations to each institution, including emergency medical examinations, police protection, psychological support, and coordinated case management. It further defines key concepts such as physical, psychological, and sexual violence, neglect, domestic violence, and "child at risk," providing a common legal and operational framework for institutional responses.

Source:

<https://www.unicef.org/bulgaria/sites/unicef.org.bulgaria/files/2018-11/Procedure%20for%20collaboration%20when%20there%20is%20a%20child%20at%20risk%20-%20bg.pdf>

State Agency for Child protection methodological guidelines:

- Guidelines for the Use and Operation of Specially Designated "Blue Rooms" for Interviewing Children and Conducting Interrogations: <https://sacp.government.bg/normativni-aktove-metodiki/metodika-za-polzvane-i-rabota-v-specialno-obosobeni-pomeshteniq-sini-stai-za-izslushvane-na-deca-i-provezhdane-na-razpiti-17588>
- Case Management Protocol for Children at Risk: <https://sacp.government.bg/normativni-aktove-metodiki/metodika-za-upravlenie-na-sluchaj-za-dete-v-risk-22746>
- Procedures for Managing Child Protection Cases Involving Children at Risk by the Child Protection Division: <https://sacp.government.bg/normativni-aktove-metodiki/metodika-za-upravlenie-na-sluchaj-za-zakrila-na-dete-v-risk-ot-otdel-zakrila-na-deteto-15331>
- Methodology for Monitoring Compliance with Children's Rights: <https://sacp.government.bg/normativni-aktove-metodiki/metodika-za-kontrol-po-spazvane-pravata-na-deteto-92630>



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