



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL JUSTICE and CONSUMERS

Directorate C: Fundamental rights and Union citizenship  
Unit C.1 : Fundamental rights and rights of the child

28 April 2016  
JUST.C1

## **Interservice group on the rights of the child**

*Ad hoc* meeting of 20 April 2016

LX46, A. Vitorino Meeting Room

10h00-13h00

**Summary record**

### **1. PARTICIPANTS**

**Present:** DG DEVCO DG EAC, DG ECHO, DG EEAS DG EMPL, FRA, DG HOME  
DG JUST DG RTD, DG SANTE

### **2. SUMMARY**

The meeting was the third edition of the ad hoc inter-service group on children in migration. The 10 February 2016 [Communication on migration](#) announced that the Commission will employ a comprehensive approach on children in migration. DG JUST has been asked to coordinate and prepare a concrete list of actions on children, to be finalised in summer 2016. The aim of the meeting was to discuss the results of the bilateral meetings that were held since the second meeting of the ad hoc inter-service group with DGs, EU agencies, NGOs and IOs.

The Chair emphasised that whilst the identified actions in the state of play represent a useful first mapping, further actions need to be developed to ensure a comprehensive approach to children in migration, as the approach is still too fragmented.

To this end, the group was invited to consider any adaptations needed, as well as to highlight gaps and challenges that they are aware of. The group was invited to **be ambitious and forward-looking in developing new actions. All those present were asked that services make clear what actions are planned/in the pipelines as well as what actions they consider necessary to overcome existing gaps. In proposing new actions to bridge gaps, services are also asked to assess and indicate what sort of budget might be needed.**

Continuation of the mapping work means that it's necessary to keep track of all funding earmarked or allocated to children in migration. As this changes weekly, regular updates

and information should be circulated and shared with DG JUST which will record all EU funding and aim to make funding relevant to children more transparent.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

1. The content of the state of play document is a good first mapping, and has been well-received at political level. Nevertheless, to achieve a comprehensive approach more needs to be done, particularly on the external dimension, as well to ensure that some of the persistent gaps within Europe are addressed. More ambitious actions need to be developed. The most urgent gaps identified, that need to be addressed with actions:
  - **Child protection and child safeguarding:**
    - Lack of child protection and child
  - **Guardianship:**
    - Lack of guardians, disparate systems and standards including high numbers of children per guardian, could possibly affect relocation procedures also.
  - **Children going missing:**
    - Children frequently go missing. Risks of trafficking. Fear of detention. Absconding as the result of too lengthy procedures (children can get somewhere else more quickly on their own).
  - **Relocation:**
    - MS do not pledge specifically for unaccompanied children, as at 18 April 12 unaccompanied children were relocated to Finland.
    - Length and accountability of registration process of migrants in Greek mainland
    - Lack of coordination of actions among actors and difficulties in ascribing responsibilities.
  - **Reception and asylum processes:**
    - Lack of clarity on roles and mandates, varying hugely from one location to the next. In Lesbos there are many actors, on other islands this is not the case and it is imperative to have a clear lead actor or agency to coordinate all strands at a particular location.
    - Children staying together with adults who are not family members in reception facilities.
    - Children are frequently detained, particularly in Greece, sometimes simply due to a lack of reception facilities.
    - Lack of appropriate reception facilities/variable quality.
  - **Developing gaps:**
    - Attention needs to be paid also to Italy – as new routes develop to Italy
  - **External side:**
    - More attention needs to be paid to the prevention of unsafe migration in the context of this work.
    - Widespread child abuses in refugee camps (and outside them), e.g. early/forced marriage, sexual violence, lack of child protection, and lack of access to education and healthcare.
  - **Data:**
    - Data collection is still fragmented.
2. A number of DGs reported that new actions in the meantime have been identified, and further additions will be made to the state of play.
  - A number of DGs stressed that within developing actions, due consideration needs to be taken of evolving situations, such as the EU-Turkey agreement.

- Within developing actions, relevant DGs and EU agencies need to coordinate and cooperate more in order to address the needs of children in a coherent way and avoid duplication of actions (e.g. remember to involve the policy line DG when planning actions in that area).
3. There is a need to map and coordinate funding better and to share information on funding plans and grants awarded to IOs, etc., with a view to achieving coherence. Child safeguarding should be a prerequisite for any beneficiaries working directly with children.