

Key actions by the European Commission and EU agencies on the implementation of the [Commission Communication of 12 April 2017 on the protection of children in migration](#)

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Section 1 - Addressing root causes and protecting children along migratory routes: further stepping up the EU's external action	
<p>1.1 <i>(The Commission and the Member States should):</i> Prioritise actions aimed at strengthening child protection systems along the migratory routes, including in the context of the implementing the Valletta Summit political declaration and Action Plan and the Partnership Framework, as well as in the framework of development cooperation</p>	
Key actions	<p>The Commission (COM):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organised dedicated discussions on protection of children in migration within the Expert Group Meeting on the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility [GAMM] (on 28 April and 16 October 2017) and the European Migration Network Return Expert Group [EMN Reg] (on 7 June and 12 September 2017). EMN Reg together with civil society focussed in particular on cooperation with countries of origin on family tracing and best interests of the child in reintegration in return cases, supporting child protection systems, helping to address the needs of unaccompanied children, adapting reception centres and access to educational systems. Supported (via development aid) numerous projects to strengthen the protection of children in migration, including to promote education, training, protection, social inclusion of young migrants and on eliminating child labour; to promote sub-regional migration governance and mainstreaming child protection in migration policies at local, national and international level in Ivory Coast, Mali, Burkina-Faso; to provide global technical assistance and capacity-building to prevent the detention of children and to protect children and other asylum seekers in detention in Indonesia, Iraq, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Malaysia, Mexico; to guarantee access to national child protection systems to children affected by migration in Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan; to improve regional migrant children protection mechanisms and develop sustainable reintegration models (especially for those in vulnerable situations) in west and north Africa; and to improve the protection of migrant children on the Abidjan to Lagos corridor of West Africa, thus reducing their vulnerability and improving their access to development opportunities [<i>→ see annexed table with details on relevant projects</i>]
<p>1.2. <i>(The Commission and the Member States should):</i> Support partner countries in developing strong national child protection systems and civil registration services as well as cross-border cooperation on child protection</p>	
Key actions	<p>COM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> funded (via humanitarian aid) different activities to support the protection of children in humanitarian crises (in line with the 2016 Protection guidelines), such as prevention of and response to violence (incl. sexual violence), case management, registration and restoration of lost civil documentation, family tracing and reunification, psychosocial support, provision of information, education and emergency shelters for unaccompanied children. In 2017, projects on the protection of unaccompanied children were undertaken for example in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Egypt, Chad, Sudan, Turkey, and Greece. Support to education in crises (education in emergencies) is continuously growing including through the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey, the Emergency Support Instrument and EU annual humanitarian budget. In 2017, 6% of EU humanitarian aid was earmarked for funding education in emergencies actions. See websites for updates: Gender and age-sensitive humanitarian aid: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/gender-sensitive-aid_en Protection: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/protection_en funded (via development aid) projects strengthening birth registration services and overall civil registration and vital statistics in partner countries Africa and Southeast, South, and Central Asia [<i>→ see annexed table with details on relevant projects</i>]
<p>1.3. <i>(The Commission and the Member States should):</i> Support projects targeting the protection of unaccompanied children in third countries along migratory routes, in particular to prevent child trafficking or smuggling</p>	
Key actions	<p>COM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 4 December 2017, Building on the EU Strategy towards the Eradication of THB 2012-2016, and the ongoing efforts to fully implement the Anti-trafficking Directive, adopted a new Communication addressing THB, further taking into account children's vulnerabilities committing to, inter alia: monitor and advise on

	<p>implementing child-sensitive services at national level. Supporting anti-trafficking priorities in EU and non-EU countries is a cross-cutting action, including encouraging to address the situation of children as a high risk groups and providing support in these endeavours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported the 8-9 November 2017 Trilateral Meeting in Luxor between the representatives of the AU-Horn of Africa Initiative, the Khartoum Process, and the Rabat Process, focussed on smuggling, on unaccompanied children and child trafficking. • Made available €900 000 under the Mobility Partnership facility - ISF-Police strand for operational projects to be carried out in third countries to prevent/tackle the phenomena of trafficking and smuggling of children in migration. • Supported the GloAct joint EU-UNODC initiative aimed at preventing and addressing trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants (2015-2019), implemented in partnership with IOM and UNICEF (€10 million), involving 13 strategically selected countries across Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America • Allocated development aid to activities dedicated to protect unaccompanied and separated children and child victims of trafficking [→ see annexed table with details on relevant projects]
<p>1.4. (The Commission and the Member States should): Actively implement the EU Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child.</p>	
<p>Key actions</p>	<p>COM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implemented the guidelines through activities in third countries (see actions on child protection and education in emergencies under 1.1 and 1.2) as well as through funding different projects (see 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 and annexed table with details on relevant projects) and supported the work of relevant UN agencies and international organisations: UNICEF, UNHCR, IOM and worked closely with civil society organisations to better understand child rights gaps and to determine solutions. • organised (12-14 February 2018) a training course “Making sure EU development cooperation leaves no one behind” (for EU staff working in delegations and development cooperation headquarters staff) with a focus group on children presenting the Guidelines and the <i>EU-UNICEF child rights toolkit Integrating Child rights in development cooperation</i>. Another specific session focused on migration and vulnerabilities (including children) <p>European External Action Service (EEAS):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 21 November 2017, organised - for colleagues newly posted in Delegations as well as for internal EEAS, MS and COM staff - training on operationalising the rights of the child in EU external actions. • A Guidance Note on strengthening child protection system in EU external action should be adopted in second semester 2018, in line with the revised EU Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child (March 2017) and the system-strengthening approach promoted therein, the commitment in the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2015-2019) to strengthen child protection systems (action 15a) and target 16.2 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to end all forms of violence against children.

Section 2 - Swift and comprehensive identification and protection

2.1. (As of 2017, with the support of the Commission and the EU agencies, the Member States are encouraged to): collect and exchange comparable data to facilitate the cross-border tracing of missing children and the verification of family links

Key actions	The Commission has proposed to adapt the Schengen Information System (SIS) by adding subcategories including for missing unaccompanied children. The negotiations on the 2016 Commission's proposal for SIS II are currently ongoing.
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2.2. (As of 2017, with the support of the Commission and the EU agencies, the Member States are encouraged to): apply child-friendly and gender-sensitive approaches when collecting fingerprints and biometric data

Key actions	<p>COM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Practical Handbook for Border Guards has been revised and the special rules for border checks, which also applies to children, now reflects that all children should be treated in accordance with the principle of the 'best interests of the child' during border procedures. <p>The Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) is carrying out a study on child-friendly biometric activities for identification and age assessment. First results of the study are due in the first semester of 2018. The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) published an updated Practical guide on age assessment, on 6 March 2018.</p> <p>Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is carrying out research on fundamental rights implications of biometric data in EU-wide IT systems. A first report on interoperability was published in July 2017, the full report “European large-scale information systems and the use of biometrics: fundamental rights implications” is planned to be published in early 2018. has mapped national legislative provisions on age requirements in various aspects regarding children’s protection and participation in asylum and migration procedures, the full report “Minimum age requirements for children in asylum and migration procedures” with a specific focus on age assessment and fingerprinting is planned to be published on 25 April 2018 <p>The European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) is designing training on child protection for border guards, including on child-friendly and gender-sensitive approaches when collecting fingerprints and other biometric data. Training of border guards will start in the second half of 2018, see 6.1.</p>
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2.3. (As of 2017, with the support of the Commission and the EU agencies, the Member States are encouraged to): ensure that a person responsible for child protection is present at an early stage of the identification and registration phase and that child protection officers (CPOs) are appointed in each hotspot

Key actions	<p>COM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closely monitors the follow up of this action by national authorities especially in Italy and Greece, due to the large influx of migrants by sea in these two countries. Child protection officer teams were appointed in all the hotspots in Greece. COM supported Italian authorities in integrating Standard Operating Procedures for hotspots in light of the most recent national law on unaccompanied children. The AMIF funded PUERI project (July 2017-February 2018), supports national authorities in providing psycho-social assistance to unaccompanied children and referral of vulnerabilities in selected Italian hotspots and first line facilities, complementing the work done by national authorities, international organisations and NGOs in the identification, provision of information and referral of children in migration to child protection. Organised, on 17 January 2018, an expert workshop on Directive 2011/93/EU (child sexual abuse and exploitation) and children in migration. The workshop brought together experts from law enforcement and child protection authorities from Member States, EU agencies (FRA and Frontex), international organisations (UNICEF, UNHCR, IOM) and external experts in order to identify specific risk factors for children in migration and also identify good practice.
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	<p>European Asylum Support Office (EASO):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the EU-Turkey Statement, regularly deploys to Greece vulnerability experts and experts with specific expertise on children to identify and assess the special needs of applicants who were not identified at an earlier stage of the procedure and to conduct best interest assessments for separated children. Greece, 2017: 523 persons trained within operational training which included a 3-hour session on vulnerability assessment <p>EASO and FRA: Between 20 December 2017 and end February 2018: capacity-building activities for 39 Reception and Identification (RIS) staff in Greek hotspots (Kos, Lesvos, Samos, Chios and Fylakio), as well as Athens. Capacity-building focused on vulnerable persons, child protection, prevention of sexual and gender based violence and communication with communities. The training enabled also discussions with other actors working on child protection, including Keelpno, members of Metadrasi's guardianship network, Praksis, IOM and UNHCR. In some islands UNHCR presented the referral pathways on sexual and gender based violence.</p> <p>FRA and Frontex: Since 2017, a video on child protection for border guards jointly produced by Frontex and FRA is used during operational briefings for border guards, and for guest officers, including at hotspots. The video highlights key protection messages for the prompt identification, registration and referral of children.</p> <p>Frontex:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is currently developing a version of the VEGA Children Handbook focused on land and sea operations. The manual will be tested during 2018, including in the hotspots. VEGA Handbook: Children at airports (covering trafficking in human beings, smuggling of people and foreign terrorist fighters) was translated into 23 EU languages and distributed to 14 Member States/Schengen Associated Countries (SACs) airports. The handbook was also translated into Eastern Partnership (EaP) languages (ARM, AZE, BLR, MDA, UKR, GEO) and will be distributed to the airports in Eastern Partnership countries. During 2017, the draft VEGA Handbook on Land Borders has been tested in operations and further discussed in a workshop in June 2017 with the participation of Consultative Forum Members and Focal Points Local Coordinators. The Handbook is now finalised and is to be published by Q2 2018.
	<p>2.4. (As of 2017, with the support of the Commission and the EU agencies, the Member States are encouraged to): put in place the necessary procedures and protocols to systematically report and respond to all instances of unaccompanied children going missing</p>
Key actions	<p>COM: See 2.1 on the new provisions envisaged in SIS II, currently under negotiation.</p> <p>FRA: see 2.2 on research on fundamental rights implications of biometric data, which also focuses on the gaps and tools to address the instances of children going missing.</p>

Section 3 - Providing adequate reception in the European Union

	<p>3.1. (As of 2017, with the support of the Commission and the EU agencies, the Member States are encouraged to): ensure that individual gender- and age-sensitive vulnerability and needs assessments of children are carried out upon arrival and taken into account in all subsequent procedures</p>
Key actions	<p>COM supported frontline Member States (IT, EL) to revise/update standard operating procedures ('SOPs') for hotspots to help ensure that vulnerable persons and their needs be quickly identified and referred to the competent authorities (ongoing).</p> <p>Frontex: Revise/update guidelines on Operational Plans. Frontex refers children to the national protection mechanism <i>via</i> police counterparts in host Member States. The collection of information on the number of referrals needs to be systematised and a questionnaire has been sent to Member States by Frontex on protection procedures, in order to integrate this in the Operational Plans. As at 13.2.2018, 13 Member States had replied to the questionnaire.</p> <p>EASO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See 2.3 on activities part of the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement. EASO also provides specific training on the identification of vulnerable applicants,

	<p>including children, to officials in IT and EL.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Italy, 2017: 276 persons trained in reception of unaccompanied children • Greece, 2017: 523 persons trained within operational trainings which included a 3-hour session on vulnerability assessment.
	<p>3.2. (As of 2017, with the support of the Commission and the EU agencies, the Member States are encouraged to): ensure that all children have timely access to healthcare (including preventive care) and psychosocial support, as well as to inclusive formal education, regardless of the status of the child and/or of his/her parents.</p>
Key actions	<p>COM: promoted the funding of Member States programmes destined to support access to basic services (healthcare, education, accommodation) for children – see also Sections 6.3 and 6.7 below. Selected examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples for activities from the Emergency Support Instrument (ESI) in Greece: between April 2017 and March 2018, the ESI has supported the creation of 10 safe zones for unaccompanied children in camps in Greece, providing accommodation and a range of accompanying care services. The ESI has also financed transportation of children between camps and local schools to access education. These activities continue. • AMIF-funded PUERI project (July 2017-February 2018), on psychosocial support to migrant children in hotspots and first line reception centres in IT. • REC (Rights, Equality Citizenship Programme) 2017 funding priority 1.3 to expand services for victims of violence to refugees/migrants including children: 26 proposals under evaluation as at end February 2018 • See point 3.3 on the Toolkit on the use of EU funds for the integration of people with a migrant background • The partnership on the Inclusion of migrants and refugees under the framework of the Urban Agenda for the EU has developed guidance for addressing educational segregation in Sustainable Urban Development Strategies. Furthermore, the partnership is developing recommendations to better protect unaccompanied children in urban areas. • Peer learning programme on integration of migrant children through education within ‘Education and Training 2020’ and via the European policy network in education of children and young people with a migrant background (‘Sirius 2.0’). • Under the Health Programme, see (on maternal health, including support after birth) ORAMMA (Operation Refugee and Migrant Maternal Approach). • Report on the implementation of the right to health care under the UNCRC <p>FRA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly overviews on migration covering also child protection and access to services in 14 MS. See also February 2018 report highlighting key trends and persistent concerns between October 2016 and December 2017 (focusing on access to territory: reception conditions, asylum procedures, unaccompanied children and immigration detention). <p>Frontex: Deployed units work closely with national police counterparts to refer children in need of medical assistance to the appropriate authorities. Specific procedures shall be adequately reflected in Operational Plans (ongoing).</p>
	<p>3.3. (As of 2017, with the support of the Commission and the EU agencies, the Member States are encouraged to): ensure that a range of alternative care options for unaccompanied children, including foster/family-based care are provided</p>
Key actions	<p>COM: Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (REC) 2016 call for proposals on foster care for unaccompanied children: Four grants awarded in 2017, to build capacity in foster care. 24.1.2018: Toolkit on the use of EU funds for the integration of people with a migrant background published.</p> <p>EASO: “Guidance on reception conditions for (unaccompanied) children: operational standards and indicators”, to be published in 2018</p> <p>FRA: FRA 2017 Fundamental Rights Report maps the availability of foster care in EU 28.</p>
	<p>3.4. (As of 2017, with the support of the Commission and the EU agencies, the Member States are encouraged to) integrate child protection policies in all reception facilities hosting</p>

children, including by appointing a person responsible for child protection.	
Key actions	<p>See Section 2.3 above on child protection officers (CPOs) at hotspots.</p> <p>COM: Organises and coordinates regular meetings between Greek relevant authorities and the EU agencies to coordinate the emergency response in Greece, including a focus on child protection.</p> <p>Frontex: As indicated in 3.1 operational plans will be revised, once all Member States reply to the questionnaire. As at 13.2.2018, Frontex has received answers from 13 Member States.</p> <p>EASO: “Guidance on reception conditions for (unaccompanied) children: operational standards and indicators”, to be published in 2018</p> <p>FRA: Capacity-building activities for staff in EL and IT hotspots, focusing on the protection of vulnerable persons.</p>
3.5. (As of 2017, with the support of the Commission and the EU agencies, the Member States are encouraged to ensure and monitor the availability and accessibility of a viable range of alternatives to the administrative detention of children in migration.	
Key actions	<p>COM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised Return Handbook, adopted on 27 September 2017, provides for additional guidance on effective alternatives to detention. • 11th European Forum on the rights of the child on deprivation of liberty and alternatives to detention, and side event on vulnerabilities of children affected by deprivation of liberty (6-8 November 2017). • Under the Schengen Evaluation and Monitoring Mechanism, the protection of children, ensuring that their rights are respected during border procedures as well as return procedures, is addressed <p>FRA: June 2017 Study on immigration detention of children</p>
3.6. (As of 2017, with the support of the Commission and the EU agencies, the Member States are encouraged to ensure that an appropriate and effective monitoring system is in place with regard to reception of children in migration	
Key actions	<p>COM: See section 2.3</p> <p>EASO: “Guidance on reception conditions for (unaccompanied) children: operational standards and indicators”, to be published in 2018</p> <p>FRA: September 2017 monthly migration overview focus section on review mechanisms for reception facilities, including mechanisms ensuring oversight of standards for children.</p>
3.7. (As of 2017, with the support of the Commission and the EU agencies, the Member States are encouraged to) make full use of the forthcoming EASO guidance on operational standards and indicators on material reception conditions for unaccompanied children	
Key actions	EASO: “Guidance on reception conditions for (unaccompanied) children: operational standards and indicators”, to be published in 2018.

Section 4 - Swift and effective access to status determination procedures and implementation of procedural safeguards

4.1. In 2017, establish a European guardianship network, to develop and exchange good practices and guidance on guardianship in cooperation with the European Network of Guardianship Institutions

Key actions	<p>COM: Under the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Annual Work Programme for 2018, a direct grant will be awarded to NIDOS of €300 000 for a two-year period (2018-2019) to coordinate the European network on guardianship. Two meetings, bringing together experts from the Member States, COM, EASO and FRA, as well as international organisations and NGOs, to prepare the set-up of the network, took place on 16 June 2017 and 6 October 2017. Under REC 2016, four grants were awarded to build guardianship capacity. Under the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (REC), direct grant awarded to UNHCR in mid-November 2017 to protect children in migration in Western European countries (guardianship, best interests, reception, child's right to be heard). As at end February 2018, the negotiations on the proposals to strengthen guardianship for unaccompanied children in the context of the CEAS reform are ongoing.</p>
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4.2. In 2017, EASO updated its guidance on age assessment

Key actions	<p>EASO: updated guidance on age assessment to be published in early 2018.</p>
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4.3. *(With the support of the Commission and the EU agencies, the Member States are encouraged to):* strengthen the guardianship authority/institution to ensure that guardians for all unaccompanied children are swiftly in place

Key actions	<p>COM: see Section 4.1 above on the ongoing CEAS reform negotiations and the setting up of the EU guardianship network.</p> <p>EASO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in July 2017, agreed with the Italian Ombudsperson for children and adolescents on a joint cooperation on the protection of unaccompanied children by supporting future legal guardians on asylum matters and access to international protection. The cooperation protocol also foreseen the involvement of EASO in the training of voluntary guardians who are currently recruited in the framework of Law 47/2017 on unaccompanied children. • published an updated Practical guide on age assessment, on 6 March 2018. <p>FRA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular updates in the Monthly overviews on migration and other publications, such as the 2017 Fundamental Rights Report. • Support to the Council of Europe in the drafting of standards on guardianship for unaccompanied children (to be adopted in 2018).
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4.4. *(With the support of the Commission and the EU agencies, the Member States are encouraged to):* implement reliable, multi-disciplinary and non-invasive age assessment procedures

Key actions	<p>JRC: workshop on age assessment 22-23 June in Ispra (Italy); JRC will present a proposal for harmonised age assessment in the first half of 2018</p> <p>EASO: see Section 4.2 above.</p>
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4.5. *(With the support of the Commission and the EU agencies, the Member States are encouraged to):* ensure swift and effective family tracing, within or outside the EU, by making full use of existing cross-border cooperation channels.

Key actions	<p>COM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourages MS to engage in dialogue on how to enhance cross-border cooperation to facilitate and speed up family-tracing (incl. via the EMN) and family reunification under Dublin III Regulation. • supports via a Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme direct grant to UNHCR activities by Safe Passage to facilitate family tracing for children for intra-EU
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	transfers.
4.6. (With the support of the Commission and the EU agencies, the Member States are encouraged to): give priority to processing cases (e.g.: asylum applications) concerning children in line with the urgency principle of the Council of Europe guidelines on child-friendly justice	
Key actions	<p>COM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned 1st semester 2018 meeting on EU-funded projects to distil lessons learned on child-friendly justice practices, including results of recently-funded Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (REC) projects on child-friendly justice/administrative justice – see project compilation sections on child-friendly justice and children in migration. Continued in 2017 to support and promote the relocation, as well as family reunification under Dublin rules, of unaccompanied children from Greece and Italy as a matter of priority. Relocation of those whose procedure was initiated before the expiry of the Relocation Decisions in September 2017 will continue until their finalisation. The total number of relocated unaccompanied children from Greece and Italy is 638, and a further +/-200 are still waiting to be relocated mainly from Italy (as of end January 2018). <p>FRA: Fundamental rights advice provided in the EL and IT hotspots.</p> <p>EASO: facilitated the relocation of children by supporting both Greece and Italy in the implementation of best interests assessments prior to relocation and by making available child friendly information packs.</p> <p>FRA: See Section 4.6.</p>

Section 5 - Ensuring durable solutions	
5.1. In 2017, the Commission will: promote the integration of children through available funding and exchange of good practices addressing non-discriminatory access to public services and targeted programmes	
Key actions	<p>COM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotes integration and access to services through funding and exchange of good practices. See points 3.2 and 3.3 on the Toolkit on the use of EU funds for the integration of people with a migrant background, the Methodological guidance to cities in addressing educational segregation and the action under the Urban Agenda Partnership on the Inclusion of migrants and refugees. Under the Health Programme, the World Health Organisation was awarded grants to draft guidance documents and organise webinars on migrant children's health (MIHKMA). A call for proposals is open under Horizon 2020 Programme on "Mapping and overcoming integration challenges for migrant children" (Horizon 2020, Societal Challenge 6) Under the WP2018-2020 of Societal Challenge 6 of Horizon2020 a specific call for proposals is open on integration of migrant and refugee children "Mapping and overcoming integration challenges for migrant children" The Commission promotes the integration of children through education through its peer learning programme within 'Education and Training 2020' and via the European policy network in education of children and young people with a migrant background ('Sirius 2.0'). The Erasmus+ 'social inclusion' call promotes the integration of children with a migrant background in inclusive education [+/- 3.5 m€, eight projects awarded in 2017, half of all projects under the call] A Status Report for the European Union on Implementation of the right to health care under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was published in July 2017. Two other health projects were initiated in 2017: Mig-HealthCare project, which targets migrants and refugees including children (unaccompanied and with their

	<p>families) who need to access the health and social services of a European country, and the My Health project, which targets also unaccompanied children newly arrived (within the last five years) in Europe.</p> <p>FRA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> published a report Together in the EU: Promoting the participation of migrants and their descendants, it publishes Monthly overviews on migration covering also child protection and access to services in 14 Member States and conducts a research on fundamental rights concerns in response to the 2015 asylum and migration management crisis, covering child protection and access to services (to be published in 2019). focus report of February 2018 assesses how the presence of large numbers of persons in need of international protection affects local communities in terms of housing, education, the local economy and social responses
	<p>5.2. (The Member States are encouraged to): ensure, within a short time span after arrival, equal access to inclusive, formal education, including early childhood education and care, and develop and implement targeted programmes to support it</p>
Key actions	<p>See sections 3, points 3.2 and 3.3 and 5.1</p> <p>The partnership on the Inclusion of migrants and refugees under the framework of the Urban Agenda for the EU has developed guidance for addressing educational segregation in Sustainable Urban Development Strategies. Furthermore, the partnership is developing recommendations to better protect unaccompanied children in urban areas.</p>
	<p>5.3. (The Member States are encouraged to): ensure timely access to healthcare as well as to other essential public services to all children</p>
Key actions	<p>See sections 3, 3.2 and 3.3 and 5.1</p>
	<p>5.4. (The Member States are encouraged to): provide support to enable children in the transition to adulthood (or leaving care) to access necessary education and training</p>
Key actions	<p>COM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> proposed 12 projects for funding under the 2017 Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme, call on capacity-building for preparations for leaving care/ageing-out of children, many of which included children in migration. The call is repeated under the 2018 REC Annual Work Programme. <p>See also sections 3, 3.2 and 5.1</p>
	<p>5.5. (The Member States are encouraged to): foster social inclusion in all integration-related policies, such as prioritising mixed, non-segregated housing and inclusive education</p>
Key actions	<p>See section 3, points 3.2 and point 5.1, 5.2 and 5.4</p>
	<p>5.6. (The Member States are encouraged to): increase resettlement to Europe for children in need of international protection</p>
Key actions	<p>COM: promotes and supports financially the scaling up of legal and safe pathways to protection, in particular resettlement of the most vulnerable persons in need of international protection from third countries, including children. By the end of 2017 around 26,000 people have been resettled under the EU resettlement schemes since their launch. Collective EU resettlement efforts were given a further boost in September with the Commission's call/Recommendation to Member States to resettle at least 50,000 people over the next two years. So far 19 Member states submitted pledges for 39,839 new resettlement places. In parallel, in the context of a comprehensive reform of the Common European Asylum System, negotiations with the co-legislators towards establishing a Union resettlement framework are in trilogue stage</p>
	<p>5.7. (The Member States are encouraged to): ensure that appropriate family tracing and reintegration measures are put in place to meet the needs of children who will be returned to their country of origin</p>
Key	<p>COM: In June 2017, initiated discussions within the European Migration Network Return Expert on cooperation with countries of origin on family tracing, supporting child protection systems, helping to address unaccompanied children's needs, adapting reception centres and access to educational systems. The EMN return Expert Group followed</p>

actions	<p>up with a discussion on family tracing and best interests of the child in reintegration in return cases in September 2017.</p> <p>(EASO has published a Practical guide on family tracing (2016) providing guidance and recommendations on family tracing of unaccompanied children who may be in need of international protection. Special considerations on children presumed or identified as victims of trafficking in human beings are included.)</p> <p>See also section 4, point 4.5</p>
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Section 6 - Cross-cutting actions: respect and guarantees for the best interests of the child; more effective use of data, research, training and funding

6.1. In as/of 2017, the Commission and the EU agencies will provide additional training, guidance and tools on best interests of the child assessments	
Key actions	<p>EASO: EASO Practical guide on best interests currently being developed for publication in 2018.</p> <p>FRA: On-going assessment of best interests of the child practices in different procedures in EU28 (to be published in Fundamental Rights report June 2018)</p> <p>Frontex: Development of child protection at borders training, in consultation with other EU agencies, IOs and NGOS, initiated in July 2017. The training module will be available in the second half of 2018.</p>
6.2. In as/of 2017, the Commission and the EU agencies will launch consultations on possible improvements to current EU-level data collection relating to children in migration including based on the Migration Statistics Regulation and the 2011 Guidelines, and the Commission’s Knowledge Centre on Migration and Demography will compile a data repository on children in migration	
Key actions	<p>COM: On 27-28 November 2017 the Eurostat Working Group discussed the way forward on improving visibility and collection of data on migrant children. Specific measures to improve the availability of data were adopted including collection of additional monthly, quarterly and annual asylum data on unaccompanied children. A separate folder on children in migration has been added to improve the visibility of children in data already collected. (See cross-cutting topics, indicators on migrants and migrant integration.)</p> <p>JRC: In July 2017 the European Commission's Knowledge Centre on Migration and Demography (KCMD) expanded the datasets within its Dynamic Data Hub to include children in migration https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/science-update/migration-datasets-focus-children-available-through-dynamic-data-hub</p> <p>FRA: monthly data collection on fundamental rights challenges in MS most affected by migration helps in identifying data gaps</p>
6.3. In as/of 2017, the Commission and the EU agencies will require that organisations in direct contact with children have in place internal child protection policies in order to be granted EU funding	
Key actions	<p>COM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme: already embedded in all calls relating to children. A 2018 call for proposals to roll out child safeguarding policies in certain areas (e.g. sports, leisure, church-led activities) opened on 8 March 2018 and closes in November 2018 • Embedded in AMIF Annual Work Programme 2017 (see page 3) • Emergency Support Instrument: beneficiaries in Greece adhere to the same child protection standards (IASC, global clusters, etc) as when working outside the EU. Through the Emergency Support Instrument, significant funding has been provided to UN, Red Cross and NGO specialised child protection organisations to provide emergency support in reception facilities throughout mainland Greece, delivering child focused services in protection and education to refugee and migrant children, in close liaison with the Greek authorities. <p>EASO: EASO does not currently have the possibility to grant funding to external organisations (other than UNHCR).</p> <p>FRA: FRA contractors have to comply with procedural safeguards established in case of direct contact with children.</p>

6.4. In as/of 2017, the Commission and the EU agencies will collect and disseminate good practices on the protection of children in migration via an online database	
Key actions	<p>COM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online tool to collect and disseminate good practice piloted during February 2018, being fine-tuned and rolled out in April • See also section 2.3
6.5. <i>(The Member States are encouraged to):</i> ensure that all children are provided with relevant information on their rights and on procedures, in a child-friendly and age- and context-appropriate manner	
Key actions	<p>COM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2017 and 2018, implementation of some child-friendly information activities, e.g. by IOM, in the context of Rights, Equality and Citizenship direct grants to boost the protection of children in migration • Ongoing reform of CEAS package includes proposals of provisions on giving child applicants information in a child-friendly manner. Revision of the Schengen Handbook will provide that all children receive child-sensitive treatment and should be treated in accordance with the principle of the 'best interests of the child' during border procedures <p>Frontex: according to Frontex operational plans, fingerprinting and registration officers must provide information about the procedure, including procedures in case of refusal "...taking account of gender, age and cultural considerations". Frontex also encourages host Member States to display informative posters in the registration areas. With regard to the complaints mechanism, Frontex will develop a child-friendly complaint form and information during 2018 as to facilitate children's access to the mechanism. The materials for operational briefings will therefore need to be adapted so as to enable deployed officers to fulfil their obligation to provide information about the mechanism, including to children.</p>
6.6. <i>(The Member States are encouraged to):</i> ensure that those working with children in migration – from arrival at EU borders to their integration or return – are appropriately trained and child protection professionals are involved where relevant	
Key actions	<p>COM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Annual Work Programme for 2018, a direct grant will be awarded to NIDOS of €300 000 for a two-year period (2018-2019) to coordinate the European network on guardianship. Two meetings, bringing together experts from the Member States, COM, EASO and FRA, as well as international organisations and NGOs, to prepare the set-up of the network, took place on 16 June 2017 and 6 October 2017. Under REC 2016, four grants were awarded to build guardianship capacity. Under the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (REC), direct grant awarded to UNHCR in mid-November 2017 to better protect children in migration in Western European countries (building capacity in guardianship, best interests, reception, child's right to be heard). REC 2016 call for proposals on foster care for unaccompanied children: Four grants awarded in 2017, to build capacity in foster care. <p>EASO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in July 2017, agreed with the Italian Ombudsperson for children and adolescents on a joint cooperation on the protection of unaccompanied children by supporting future legal guardians on asylum matters and access to international protection. The cooperation protocol also foreseen the involvement of EASO in the training of voluntary guardians who are currently recruited in the framework of Law 47/2017 on unaccompanied children • 233 asylum officials were trained in the EASO training module on Interviewing Children in 2017. Ad hoc training is also being provided to reception officials in Greece and Italy. <p>FRA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 9 February 2018, contributed to the training for candidate guardians for unaccompanied children in the Abruzzo Region, organised by the Italian Ombudsperson for children with the support of EASO, as well as on 24 November 2017 in Cagliari and 1 December 2017 in Pescara

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In January 2018, published a summary of its comparative report and handbook on guardianship for unaccompanied migrant and asylum seeking children. The summary of these two already released publications is available in English and Italian. • Between 20 December 2017 and end February 2018: Capacity building activities for Reception and Identification (RIS) staff in Greek hotspots (Kos, Lesbos, Samos, Chios and Fylakio), as well as Athens. Capacity-building focused on vulnerable persons, child protection, prevention of sexual and gender based violence and communication with communities. Capacity building activities on child-friendly interviewing techniques through training activities with legal professionals and law enforcement officers via: two CEPOL webinars (80-90 participants), one training at the DE CRC Monitoring Centre and one at the EE Institute for Baltic Studies (40 participants each) and as a systematically embedded component of the online course on child-friendly justice of the Council of Europe HELP programme; in addition, translation and dissemination of checklist for professionals on child-friendly hearings for AT, DE, FR, HR, Russia, Ukraine. • Capacity building activities for IT hotspots consisted in revision of the SOPs and SOPs annex on Child Protection/unaccompanied children coordinated by the Italian Ministry of the Interior. <p>Frontex: Revision/update on guidance/ Training on child protection for trainers and officers will be available in 2018. VEGA Children Sea and Land Handbook will be available also in 2018.</p> <p>See section 6.1 with regards to training course and section 2.3 on operational briefings</p>
<p>6.7. (The Member States are encouraged to): prioritise children in migration under AMIF and ISF national programmes; make use of any other available complementary EU funding, ensure that organisations to be funded have child protection policies in place</p>	
Key actions	<p>COM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24.1.2018 Toolkit on the use of EU funds for the integration of people with a migrant background published • In order to raise awareness on the rights, needs and vulnerabilities of children in migration, AMIF, ISF, ERDF Member State Committee members were all invited to the 11th Forum on rights of the child on children deprived of their liberty and alternatives to detention and the side event on vulnerabilities of children affected by deprivation of liberty. • In the light of major policy developments, recommended in the mid-term review of AMIF and ISF that Member States prioritise children in migration under their national programmes; by allocating with priority the means for programmes and projects aimed to enhance protection and integration of migrant children. It was also recommended that Member States ensure that all organisations and entities to be funded have internal child protection policies in place. To facilitate achieving this policy objective, the Commission presented the Communication at the AMIF-ISF Expert Committee meeting on 21 September 2017. <p>Child safeguarding for EU funding under direct management by the Commission: see Section 6.3</p>
<p>6.8. (The Member States are encouraged to): enhance collection of more disaggregated data and statistics on children in migration</p>	
Key actions	<p>See also sections 2.1 and 6.2 above.</p> <p>Frontex: reflections on the enhancement of data collection are still ongoing on how to enhance data collection (including disaggregated data on children and gender). At the moment, Frontex only receives initial data on border incidents in some border areas, including on the number of children. When more updated data is necessary (as the initial data might change) Frontex asks directly for such data by liaising with Member States.</p>
<p>Section 7: Monitoring on implementation</p>	
<p>7.1. The Commission will closely <u>monitor</u> the follow-up of the actions set out in this Communication and will regularly <u>report</u> to the European Parliament and the Council. 8 June 2017 Council Conclusions on the protection of children in migration call on Commission to report regularly to EP and Council</p>	

Key actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Through regular exchanges with Member States, international organisations and non-governmental organisations.• Joint meeting Informal Member State asylum and migration experts with Informal Member State expert group on rights of the child 1 December 2017. See meeting record.• Survey results from Member States published here – see documents.
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