

# Lost in Migration - unbegleitete Kinder und Jugendliche auf der Flucht"

5th April 2017



**Missing  
Children  
Europe**

# Missing Children Europe

Membership

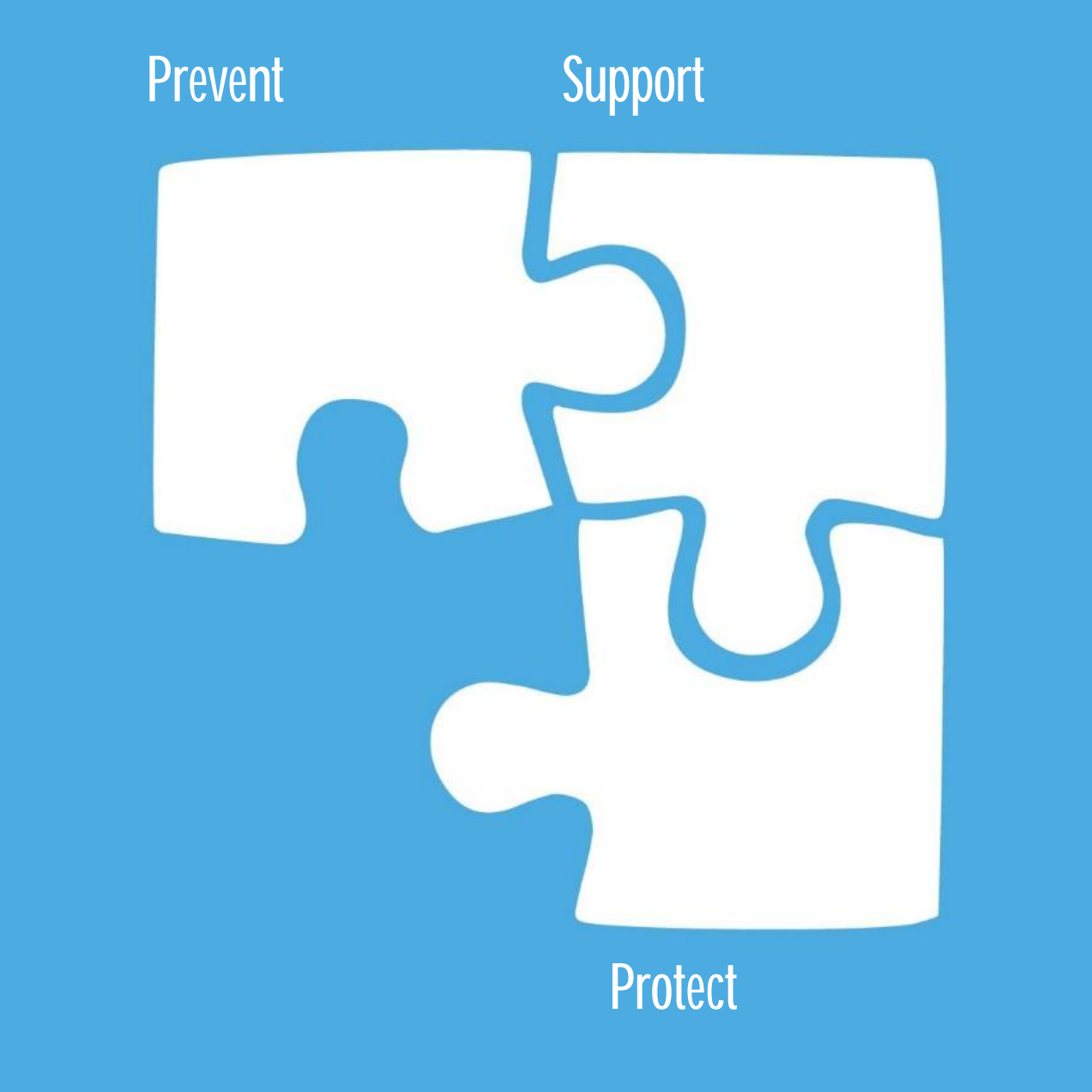


# Missing Children Europe

Mission




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# Missing Children Europe

Cross-border network



€ 116 000 



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# Missing Children Europe

Hotline for missing children:

Same number in 30 European countries

Free 24/7 emotional, psychological, administrative & legal support

Close cooperation with LEA

☎ **116 000** 🧩

# Migrant children in Europe

2015



- More than 96 000 unaccompanied children applied for international protection

2016



- 1in4 asylum seekers in the EU are children.
- >50% less than 14 years old
- in Italy 91% of children were unaccompanied



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# Missing migrant children



- In 2015, at least 10.000 unaccompanied children went missing (Europol).
- In 2016
  - Italy: 28 children per day go missing
  - Sweden: 7-8 unaccompanied children missing each week
  - France: 1in3 children in Calais went missing
  - Germany: 8,991 children were missing in August 2016, 867 aged less than 13.



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# The SUMMIT Project

Identify good practices and key challenges in inter-agency cooperation in the prevention of, and response to, vulnerable unaccompanied children who go missing from reception centres and other types of care.



## Countries studied:

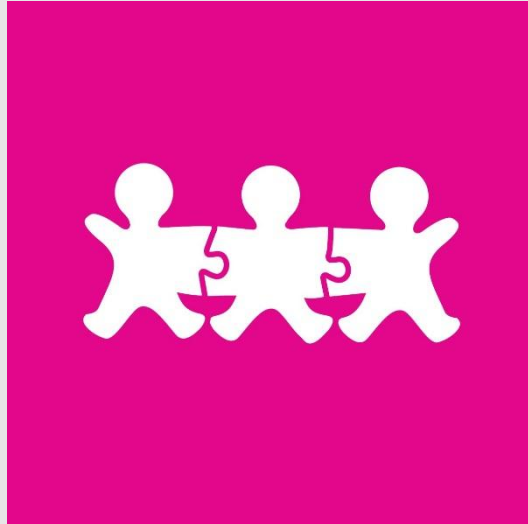
- Belgium
- Cyprus
- Greece
- Ireland
- Italy
- Spain
- the United Kingdom

## Frontline professionals participating:

- Reception centre operators
- Social Services
- Guardians
- Law Enforcement
- Hotlines for missing children



# The SUMMIT Project



## Building bridges between stakeholders :

- missing children experts: law enforcement authorities, hotlines for missing children
- carers responsible for the protection of unaccompanied children: guardians, legal representatives, social services, reception centre workers, ...



# Reasons for going missing

- Interest to apply for protection in **another country**
- **Length & complexity of procedures** for protection and/or family reunification
- **Lack of information** on procedures/protection available
- **No trust** in authorities
- Fear of being **sent back to another EU country**
- Fear of being **sent back to the country of origin**
- Victim of **trafficking** or other forms of exploitation

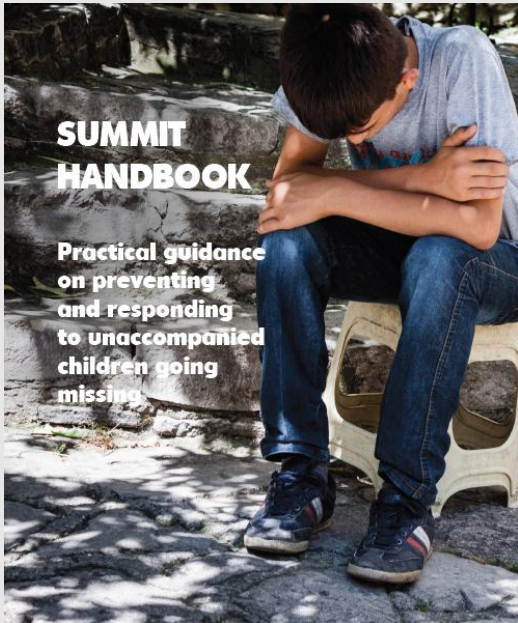


# Challenges in preventing and response to disappearances

- Lack of effective systems to **collect information** of the child and exchange of information between agencies
- **Reception conditions** are very poor in some countries
- **Guardianship** systems lagging behind
- **No reporting** of disappearances
- Missing migrant children are treated as a **lower priority** than other missing children
- Persistent **lack of training** of professionals on preventing and response to missing
- **Absence of systematic risk assessment** for children arriving
- **No** activation of systems to allow continuation of the **protection** across borders



# Toolkit: Practical Guidance



## Aim

Stimulate and disseminate practices on successful cooperation in protecting children

## What will you find in the handbook

- European Commission's principles on integrated child protection system
- Definitions
- Guiding Principles for preventing and responding to disappearances of unaccompanied children
- Information on unaccompanied children as a specific target group
- Practices and tools for
  - Prevention
  - Response
  - Aftercare
- Summary template on ownership



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# Toolkit: Practical Guidance

## How to use the toolkit

- A reference of good practices and guidance to inspire your every day work
- Material for training in preventing and response to disappearance of unaccompanied migrant children

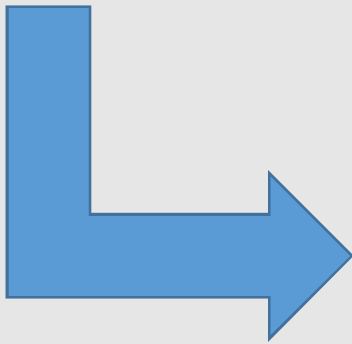
→ templates, checklist and guidance for direct use and/or training in French, Italian, Spanish, Greek and **German**



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# Findings and recommendations - prevention

- Lack of effective systems to **collect information** of the child and exchange of information between agencies

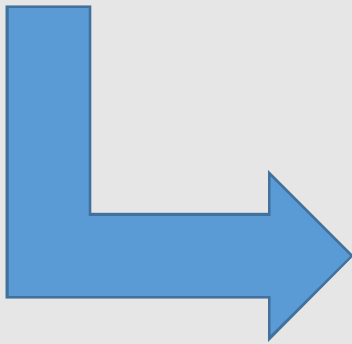


- Take time constraints into account
- Personal file (digital)
- Centralised systems
- Standard forms



# Findings and recommendations - prevention

- Lack of effective systems to **collect information** of the child and exchange of information between agencies



## Template for collection of information on an unaccompanied child

The following form needs to be filled in with attention and precision by all authorities or institution in charge and should be sent to child protection authorities (e.g. the service responsible to appoint a guardian).

### 1. Identification of the unaccompanied child

Surname:

Name:

Age declared:

Date and place of birth declared:

Nationality:

Gender:

Language(s) spoken:

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

Does the child own any ID papers?

Yes (Number: .....)

No

Description of the ID paper:

Does the child own any passports?

Yes (Number: .....)

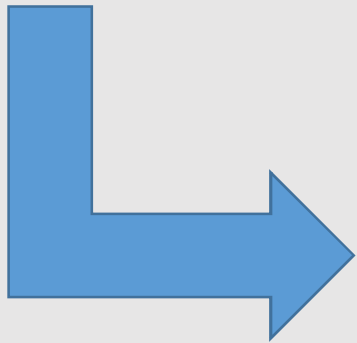
No

Description of the passport(s):



# Findings and recommendations - prevention

- Persistent **lack of training** of professionals
- **Unclear division of responsibilities**



- Investing on training of all actors in response of cases of missing migrant children
- Formalisation of the cooperation between key stakeholders (also for response)





# Findings and recommendations - prevention

## P R E V E N T I O N

### Reception centre:

- Build trust with the child and respond to immediate needs, including the provision of adequate housing

- Collect information on the child > see template for collection of information on an unaccompanied child page xxx
- Assess risk of missing > see checklist page xxx
- Provide information on procedures in age and gender appropriate and culturally sensitive ways > see checklist: information to unaccompanied children as means to prevent disappearance page xxx
- Support the child in maintaining family links
- Discuss alternatives to unsafe migration, including the proposal to discuss risks for unsafe migration with the child's family
- Highlight that other children have gone through similar experiences and establish the contact

### Guardian:

- Safeguard the child's best interest
- Promote the child's safety and well being as well as his / her participation
- Act as link between the child and others

- Assist in identifying a durable solution in the child's best interest
- Foresee provision of healthcare, education and training

### Hotline for missing persons

- Provide child friendly information on services available across the 116 000 network
- Inform guardians and carers of the role of hotlines and functioning of the European network
- Work with law enforcement to make sure general missing children responses are also provided in cases of missing unaccompanied children

### Law enforcement

- Inform partners of known risks / specific target groups related to trafficking / smuggling rights operating in the country

- Take action in case of identified risk > see template of actions in case of obvious concern page xxx

- Specific care in preparing the child to pass from childhood to adulthood

# Findings and recommendations - prevention

## RESPONSE

### Reception centre:

- Immediately alert law enforcement and provide information on the child > see template for reporting a disappearance, page xxx
- Request that the case is entered in SIS II and if applicable Interpol yellow notice if the child is suspected to have left the country
- Inform hotline for missing children 116000

### Guardian:

- Consider informing members of the ENGI network in countries concerned by the case of the child if child is assumed to have left the country

### Hotline for missing persons

- Provide legal and administrative support to reception centre operators and guardians
- Act as contact point between carers who reported the disappearance and agencies involved in the missing child's case, such as police, social services & prosecutors
- Provide actors expertise on procedures related to missing children's cases
- Activate the network of hotlines for missing children (if appropriate / relevant) > see Cross-border cooperation template, page xxx
- Collect data for further analysis

### Law enforcement

- Identify who is missing, what is the profile of the missing child, circumstances of the disappearance
- Assess the extent to which the disappearance should be considered as worrying
- Assess investigative procedures to be triggered, including the need for SIS II art 32 alerts, Interpol Yellow notices, ...
- Initiate search actions

- Collect testimonies (if appropriate / relevant)
- Manage public appeals (if appropriate / relevant)

- Support efforts in family tracing / matching for separated children, in cooperation with ICRC, see page xxx
- Provide emotional, psychological support to families in cases of separated children – where possible in coordination with SCEP member active in the country
- Monitor advancement of investigation and use of rules and procedures for missing children in specific case

- Periodically inform partners of development of the investigation

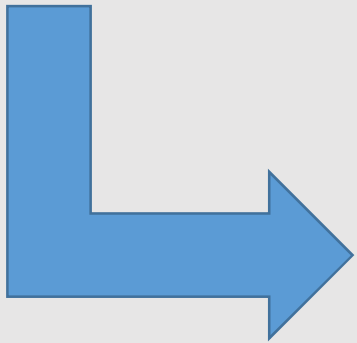
# Findings and recommendations - prevention

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F  
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Reception centre:	Guardian:	Hotline for missing persons	Law enforcement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Immediately identify who is responsible for the child's protection and care and inform hotline</li><li>· Identify who was responsible for the child previously and inform them of the situation</li><li>· Assess the child's physical / medical needs</li><li>· Assess the child's psychological needs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Contribute to providing appropriate follow-up, to prevent the child's repeat disappearance (back to beginning: prevention of disappearance)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· In case the child is found in another country; maintain open line / exchange of information on the child's case with hotlines from other country concerned</li><li>· See to it that a return interview is conducted within 72h, see xxx page xxx</li><li>· See to it that relevant information on the child is shared with those in charge of his / her care</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Share relevant information with guardians and carers in charge of the case, to make sure elements of risks receive due consideration in new care arrangements</li><li>· In necessary, undertake investigative action regarding trafficking / smuggling &gt; see xxx page xxx</li></ul>

# Findings and recommendations - prevention

- No systematic risk assessment



- Clarify which service is in charge
- Conduct it as soon as possible
- Consult with other services, including the police and the other authorities that may have been first in contact with the child
- Create a list of standardised indicators to assess the risk against & train the personnel on recognising indicators.



# Findings and recommendations - prevention

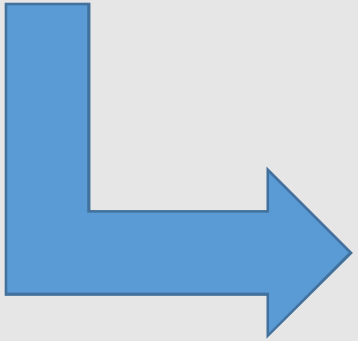
Some elements to be taken into account to evaluate the risk of disappearance

- Mention to family or acquaintances in other countries
- Arrived in the country with the help of smugglers
- Concerned about money
- Looks not interested or unsatisfied with the accommodation, the information given or the activities proposed (including going to school), has a phone and uses it nervously
- Police reports that the child went missing before/other of the same nationality
- Indicators of trafficking



# Findings and recommendations - prevention

- **Reaction** to a positive risk assessment

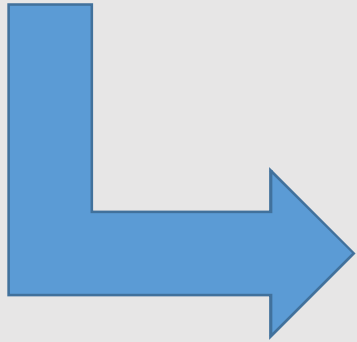


- Take a photo
- Keep the lines of communication open
- Make a copy of all the identification papers
- Offer to keep their documents
- Alert police and everyone in contact with the child
- Give them all important information (what is the offer, what are the risks..)
- Make plans



# Findings and recommendations - response

- Assumptions are dangerous!

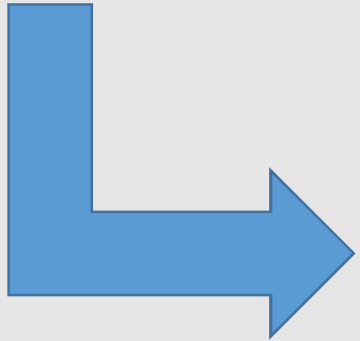


- A child is a child – every case deserves attention
- individual assessment of reasons why an unaccompanied child went missing



# Findings and recommendations - response

- Long and burdensome procedures for reporting a disappearance discourage quick reporting



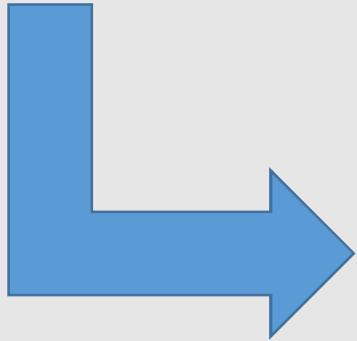
- Fast track reporting in cases of children already signalled as at risk of trafficking





# Findings and recommendations - response

- General lack of coordination between agencies
- Weak intelligence on link between missing and trafficking

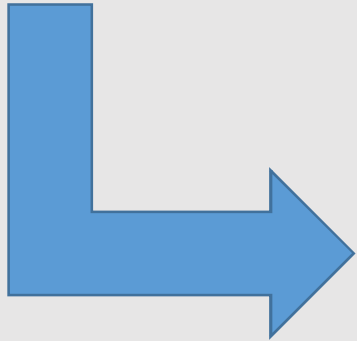


- Creation of multi-agency hubs including police, asylum authorities, child protection experts and anti-trafficking experts



# Findings and recommendations - response

- Challenging cross border cooperation when case is suspected to be transnational



- Enhanced use of existing and well-functioning tools, including the network of hotlines for missing children and SIS II
- Improved exchange of information and analysis at international level (more joint investigations)



# Thank you!

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