



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL JUSTICE and CONSUMERS
Directorate C: Fundamental rights, rule of law and democracy
Unit C.2: Fundamental rights policy

Seventh meeting of the EU Network for Children's Rights
Tuesday 25 November 2025, 9:00 – 16:00
Venue: Albert Borschette,
Rue Froissart 36, 1040 Brussels
and online

MINUTES OF MEETING

SUMMARY

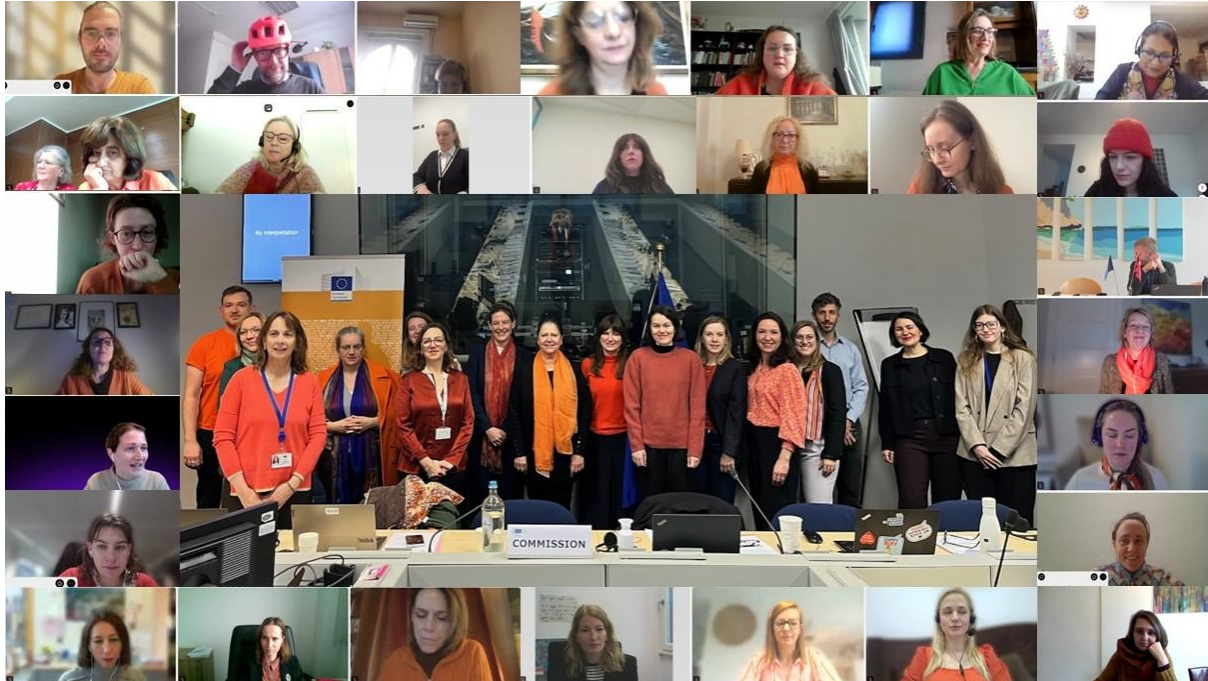
The EU Network on the Rights of the Child held its seventh meeting in hybrid format on 25 November 2025. 90 participants from Member States, international organisations, and civil society marked [World Children's Day](#) and the [International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls](#) by wearing orange in solidarity against all forms of violence. The meeting was opened by DG JUST Deputy Director-General **Irena Moozova**, who reaffirmed the EU's commitment to children's rights and to implementing the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child in line with the Commission's 2026 priorities. The Danish and upcoming Cypriot Presidencies outlined their priorities, while the Commission and partners, including Member States, civil society, international organisations and several Commission departments, shared operational updates. Discussions focused on strengthening the European Child Guarantee, advancing online safety and tackling cyberbullying, and promoting climate action and intergenerational dialogue, including contributions from Ireland's Children and Young People's Assembly on Biodiversity Loss. Participants also reviewed policy developments on child protection, notably through the Directive on violence against women and domestic violence, EU priority to tackle child-sexual abuse, as well as children's mental health and safeguarding in sport and cultural activities, with examples of EU-funded projects. Finally, updates were provided on child-friendly justice, including progress on the revision of the Victims' Rights Directive, of the Procedural safeguards Directive, of the EU Justice scoreboard and EU–Council of Europe child-friendly justice project.

MINUTES

I. Welcoming Words by Irena Moozova, Deputy Director-General, International Dimension of Justice Policies, Rule of Law and Equality, DG JUST

Irena Moozova opened the meeting, setting the strategic line on the EU's continued commitment to children's rights, to the full implementation of the [EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child](#), in alignment with the new 2026 Commission's priorities, including strengthening the European Child Guarantee, making the online world safer (e.g. Action Plan against cyberbullying, Digital Service Act enforcement, impact of social media on mental health, Digital Fairness Act in 2026), synergies with

equality policies (e.g. on antiracism, rights of persons with disabilities), Education package, Intergenerational Fairness Strategy, as well as children in armed conflicts. She emphasised progress in implementing the Recommendation on integrated child protection, and welcomed the EU Network pivotal role in advancing children's rights across Europe. A group photo of member wearing orange was taken to mark [International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls](#).



II. Rights of the Child Priorities Under Current and Future Council Presidencies

The Danish and forthcoming Cypriot Presidencies presented their priorities for the rights of the child.

Denmark (July-December 2025):

Under its Presidency, Denmark placed strong emphasis on preventing and combating violence against children. Discussions were held in the Council Working Party on Fundamental Rights (FREMP) at both the political and operational levels, with discussions focusing on Member States' work to develop national action plans in this area. International children's helplines were invited to present their work. The topic was addressed at political level during the Informal Meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Council in July.

Another key priority of the Danish Presidency was the European Child Guarantee. A dedicated meeting on the initiative took place in October, with civil society actively involved. The discussion highlighted several challenges for Member States, including securing sufficient foster families, supporting young people transitioning out of care, determining when placement is appropriate, and improving coordination between national and regional authorities and across ministries.

Cyprus (January-June 2026):

The Presidency is guided by the conviction that "*no child will be left behind*", with a strong emphasis on ensuring that children's voices are included in decision-making. A priority will be advancing the European Child Guarantee, supported by two upcoming events: a meeting of National Child Guarantee Coordinators on 19 May 2026, focusing on child well-being and tackling child poverty, and a high-level conference dedicated to child-centred policies,

including efforts to reduce child poverty and strengthen child well-being across the EU, embedding a child-rights approach.

III. EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child: progress and next steps

Marie-Cécile Rouillon, Commission Coordinator for the Rights of the Child, DG JUST, updated on the state-of-play of the Strategy and outlined priorities ahead. She notably emphasised the progress under the EU Children's Participation Platform, including the [Children's call for action](#) presented during the [15th EU Forum on the rights of the child](#) in June 2025. 6,300 children responded to the consultation under the Platform [on Cyberbullying](#), which will feed the Action Plan against cyberbullying early 2026. She invited to share the [online survey](#) on poverty and inclusion [*update: 41,500 children responded*], which will contribute to strengthening the European Child Guarantee.

Concerning funding under the [CERV 2026-2027 work programme](#), a DAPHNE call for proposal DAPHNE will be published in 2026¹, while the next CHILD Call will concern 2027.

Key updates from Member States and participants:

Ireland:

- **Participation:** Ireland launched a free online e-learning course on involving children and young people in decision-making, aimed at professionals working with or for children. This will be complemented by a new e-learning course on children's rights.
- **Presidency Conference:** Ireland is considering hosting a Presidency Conference on participation in the second half of 2026.
- **Mental health:** Work is underway on a new suicide prevention strategy, expected to be launched in early 2026.
- **Alternative care:** Initial steps have been taken toward developing a national policy framework for alternative care.
- **Disability and inclusion:** An upcoming national strategy on disability, inclusion and accessibility will aim to improve access for persons with disabilities, including in education and transport, and introduce a new national policy on specialised assistance.

Portugal:

- **Strategy on the Rights of the Child:** Portugal is implementing a new 10-year Action Plan for its national strategy on children's rights, supported by a technical commission that will monitor progress, with its first meeting planned for the end of 2025.
- **Child protection:** Preparations are underway for new legislation on child sexual abuse and victims.

Poland:

- **Poland's Ministry of Justice** is implementing the second phase of its EU-Council of European Child Friendly Justice pilot project, which includes training sessions and an awareness-raising event with children.
- Updates were shared on protocols and procedures for the interdisciplinary process of removing children from parental care. Efforts are underway to address an ongoing shortage of foster families.

¹ See [CERV Indicative Planning 2026](#)

- An amendment to the Education Law, scheduled to take effect on 1 September 2026, will introduce voluntary, free hot meals at schools as part of a pilot project.

European Guardianship Network (EGN) is working on strengthening guardianship system and practices for children across Europe. EGN has been selected for a 2026 – 2028 framework partnership under the CERV programme to receive an annual operating grant which will support Member States in enhancing and reviewing their guardianship systems. As part of this effort, an advisory board for unaccompanied children will be established next year.

Eurochild published the Flagship report '[Unequal Childhoods: Rights on paper should be rights in practice](#)' on 20th November: the report is based on assessments by 84 Eurochild members and contributors in 36 countries and provides an overview of children's rights and child poverty in these countries.

Missing Children Europe (MCE) published a [European guidance on improving data collection on missing children](#) as part of the CERV-funded [DATA MISSING project](#) which examined the gaps in existing data and provided guidance for Member States on how to strengthen their practices. MCE also started a three-year project on online grooming and will soon publish a new three-year strategy focused on strengthening resilience in times of crisis.

Save the Children (SAVE) held a European child participation fair in Brussels on World Children's Day together with SOS children's village on [Strengthening children's voices in policymaking](#). SAVE published the report [Child Poverty: The Cost Europe Cannot Afford \(2025\)](#) which highlights that child poverty is not inevitable. Using data from 16 European countries, it shows that nearly one in four children face poverty or social exclusion and argues that the problem stems from a lack of prioritisation, not resources. The report outlines evidence-based policy solutions, warning that inaction risks long-term social and economic losses of 3.4% of GDP, and calls on the EU to invest in children and make ending child poverty a moral and economic priority.

Hope and Homes for Children reported that a global alliance of countries launched a new [Global Charter](#) on Children's Care Reform at the UN General Assembly in September, an initiative led by the Deputy Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. To date, more than 30 countries worldwide, including 10 EU Member States and 119 organisations have endorsed the Charter.

Child Helpline International (CHI) launched their new [data dashboard](#), featuring longitudinal child helpline data from the past 5 years, including demographic information, method of contact and reason for contact, with specific highlights on violence and mental health. CHI will publish a report on [Domestic Violence against children](#) on 9 December 2025.

Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE) continues to support cross-sectoral child protection for children affected by parental imprisonment through "One Roof" meetings in Estonia, Greece, and Portugal. The organisation fosters supportive communities of care both inside prisons and in schools, helping to reduce stigma and create supportive environments for children. At the Social Innovation+ Funding event in Malta, COPE highlighted that, despite being mentioned in the European Child Guarantee's Staff Working Document, children with imprisoned parents remain largely absent from most Member States' national action plans, with only a few exceptions like Greece and Croatia.

IV. Update on the European Child Guarantee

Olga Jablonowska, Social Policies, Child Guarantee, SPC unit, DG EMPL, gave an update on the European Child Guarantee. Recent figures show that significant progress is still needed to meet anti-poverty goals for children. The ECG continues to provide momentum for targeted actions against child poverty, including measures such as early childhood education and care, free school meals,

investment in special education, new mental health programs, and the provision of integrated health and social services.

Next steps include the second round of biennial progress reports, due in March 2026, a Progress Report reviewing ECG implementation by mid-2026, and a qualitative assessment of ECG implementation on a topic-by-topic basis. A new Anti-Poverty Strategy, building on the [child consultation](#) under the EU Children's Participation Platform, will further aim to protect children from poverty.

V. Responding to the [Children's call for action](#) – Online safety & cyberbullying: Digital Service Act, Cyberbullying Action Plan, including feedback from the Child consultation

Dillan Fangoo, Accessibility, Multilingualism and Safer Internet unit DG CNECT, gave an update on the [European Strategy for a Better Internet for Kids \(BIK+\)](#) and on the [upcoming Action Plan on Cyberbullying](#).

To prepare the Action Plan, [Multi-stakeholder consultations](#) took place including a children's consultation. A [report on children's voices on cyberbullying](#) (6,343 children responded) is available on the EU Children's Participation Platform, and a child-friendly version will be published soon. A feedback meeting with children is planned for 2026 to discuss the survey outcomes and the actions taken by the Commission.

He also emphasised priority actions as regards the enforcement of the Digital Service Act, with notably [DSA guidelines on the protection of minors online](#) published in July 2025, and EU-harmonised approach to age verification (AV) with an AV blueprint for testing by Member States, platforms and users launched in summer 2025. A [video on a prototype of an age verification app](#) was shown which raised questions about the use of the app by people without an ID and risks of data collection. The Commission replied that it is working with Member States to determine whether ID verification is always required. Concerning data collection via the app, no personal data will be collected; only age verification (≥ 18 years) is conducted.

The Commission will set up a panel of expert to advise the President on the best approach for the EU approach on potential social media restrictions for children and will launch an inquiry on the broader impacts of social media and excessive screen time on mental health and wellbeing.

Marie-Cécile Rouillon informed about the Commission's plans to propose a [Digital Fairness Act](#) (DFA) in 2026 following in-depth impact assessment and consultation process. The DFA will look at children's protection as consumers.

Slovakia provided an update on its national campaign "[Break the Silence – Safety at School](#)" which aims to visit all schools in the country over the next two years through workshops. The campaign offers both theoretical and practical training for school staff on bullying, cyberbullying, violence, and their prevention. Each school is assigned a police contact person and receives on-site training on handling attacks, following the national RUN-HIDE-FIGHT protocol (known in Slovak as U-S-B). The campaign is implemented jointly by the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Education. Information on related activities can be found through the [Safer Internet Centre Slovakia](#).

The Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) will map national legislative and policy frameworks (EU-27 plus Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia) concerning combating bullying, cyberbullying and disinformation against LGBTIQ persons in education, in the course of 2026.

VI. Responding to the [Children's call to action](#) – Intergenerational fairness and climate/environmental action

Marta Kuljon (Rights of the Child Team) gave an insight in the children's [call for action](#) that included recommendations on intergenerational fairness and climate/environmental action.

The [Children and Young People's Assembly on Biodiversity Loss](#), held in 2023 in Ireland, was designed by and for young people. Thirty-five children aged 7 to 17, randomly selected, participated in the Assembly. Jesse (16), David (15), and Sarah (19) shared their experiences (moderation by Katie Reid, CRIN), highlighting a strong call for meaningful involvement of children in assemblies, policy and decision-making, and emphasising the importance of intergenerational collaboration to protect biodiversity. See also the [video](#) and [information](#) on children's participation in citizens' assemblies.

VII. Protecting children from violence and ensuring their well-being

Antonio Labrador Jimenez, Team Leader - Fight against Child Sexual abuse, Security in the Digital Age unit, DG HOME provided an update on **preventing and combating child sexual abuse and exploitation**. To do so, 3 main tools are available to the Commission: legislation, funding and coordination. An [EU Strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse](#) leverages all three tools. Legislative initiatives include Interim Regulation, "long-term" Regulation ([proposal for a Regulation to prevent and combat child sexual abuse](#)) and recast of 2011 criminal law Directive on child-sexual abuse. Non-legislative initiatives include Prevention Network, EU Internet Forum, and funding.

Lisa Collste, Gender Equality unit, DG JUST, presented the **child dimension in the implementation of the [Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence](#)**. It was emphasised that under the Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence, the definition of "victim" also includes children who have witnessed violence. Sweden provides a good example, having adopted legislation that recognises this definition and introduced measures requiring consent in schools.

Examples of projects on safeguarding children in recreational activities were presented:

Catia Giannotta from the International Olympic Committee explained that the [Safe Sport Regional Hub Initiative](#) aims at developing safe sports hubs and new support tools to strengthen child safeguarding in sport against child sexual abuse. **Carlotta Giussani** presented the European Olympic Committee's [SAFE HARBOUR](#) project. It aims at boosting the capacity of Federations and European National Olympic Committees to respond to safeguarding concerns and violations and is expanding into a wider movement with strong Member State engagement.

Anna Karaer of the German Bundesvereinigung Kulturelle Kinder- und Jugendbildung e.V gave the example of the CERV funded (Daphne strand) project [Start2Act](#) which aims at strengthening child protection in cultural education by developing safeguarding procedures for children participating both in school-based and out-of-school cultural activities. In Germany, a new law introduces mandatory vetting mechanisms, further reinforcing legal protections for children.

The Commission also highlighted the [Culture Compass](#) and the [European sport model](#) initiatives.

VIII. Mental health & Well-being

Emilie Rosier, European Pillar of Social Rights, Hungary unit, SG REFORM, gave an Example of TSI project on mental health and multidisciplinary approaches: [Child & youth well-being and mental health first](#). It is a flagship multi-country/regional project (with specific interventions in Cyprus, Italy, Slovenia, and Andalusia) regarding child and youth well-being and mental health, under the [Technical Support Instrument \(TSI\)](#) of the European Commission, targeting young people aged

15-24, especially vulnerable groups, with a focus on improving mental health and psychosocial support through a cross-sectoral, integrated and multidisciplinary approach.

IX. Advancing child-friendly justice

Franziska Veh, Criminal Procedural Law unit, DG JUST, gave an update on the Victims' Rights Directive. The EU continues to advance child-friendly justice and victims' rights, stressing the need for strong procedural safeguards for children who are accused or suspected in criminal proceedings, including the right to an individual assessment tailored to their circumstances, needs and vulnerabilities. A [proposal to revise the 2012 Victims' Rights Directive](#), tabled in July 2023, seeks to strengthen victims' rights, especially for child victims, by improving access to integrated, multidisciplinary support and protection services. A new EU Strategy on Victims' Rights is expected in 2026, with dedicated actions for children, alongside the second phase of the [Eyes Open](#) campaign launching in May 2026.

Casper de Boer, Rule of Law unit, DG JUST, reported on advancing child-friendly justice through the [EU Justice Scoreboard](#) which presents an annual overview of indicators on the efficiency, quality and independence of justice systems. The 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard contains new figure about data on child-friendly justice (2 figures related to children). A [Call for Evidence](#) for 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard is open until 11 December 2025.

Agnes von Maravić, Head of children's rights division, Council of Europe gave an update on the progress of the joint [EU-CoE project on child-friendly justice](#) which has been implemented since beginning 2024 and runs till June 2026.

Child-Friendly Justice European Network (CFJ-EN) : In November 2025, the [Child Justice Caravan](#) met in Brussels, where the Young Justice Transformers shared their insights and discussed priorities for strengthening children's rights. The Child Justice Caravan enables young people to meet policymakers, present their ideas, and advocate for child-friendly justice, while receiving advocacy training, visiting EU institutions and engaging in mutual learning with peers and stakeholders. In October, CFJ-EN held its [2025 annual seminar](#) in Athens on "Bridging Child Protection and Child Justice – Enhancing collaborations for child-centred justice systems."

Finland has just launched an online training called "Child's Rights – Young Person in Court." The course is aimed especially at young people, their parents, and professionals who encounter young people in court as part of their work.