

## Call for good practices or promising practices on family reunification

The Council of Europe is committed to assisting its member states build strategies to respond to the problems affecting refugee and migrant children, with a special focus on those who are unaccompanied or have been separated from their families. The SRSG's [Thematic Report](#) on migrant and refugee children (22 March 2017) and the [Issue Paper](#) on family reunification by the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights (June 2017) have identified the restrictive trends affecting family reunification for refugees. The Council of Europe [Action Plan](#) on Protecting Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe (2017-2019) outlines concrete actions to be undertaken, grouped around three pillars. Assisting children and families in restoring family links is one of the actions under the second pillar aimed at providing refugee and migrant children with effective protection.

In this context, the Office of the Special Representative on Migration and Refugees will prepare and publish a handbook on standards and good practices to restore family links and reunify families. The handbook could serve as basis for co-operation between and training of relevant authorities in Council of Europe member states in order to better assist children in reunifying with their families when it is in their best interest. The Council of Europe is therefore **calling for examples of good or promising practices** to realise the right to respect for family life and to facilitate family reunification. The practices received will support the preparation of the handbook. Responding to this call will give states and other relevant stakeholders the opportunity to publicise their good practices, resulting in increased attention for and possible adoption of the practice in other Council of Europe member states.

For the handbook, the Council of Europe seeks to select good practices on family reunification focusing in particular on refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant children – both as sponsors and beneficiaries – whilst applying the definition of family (family life) provided in the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights. The practices could also refer to adults with protection needs (including dependent adults and siblings) and persons that do not have an international protection status but cannot be returned to the country of origin. The good practices may refer to legal provisions, policies, support measures and initiatives that promote and safeguard the right to family life, as well as procedures, services, methods and tools of institutions or organisations related to family reunification.

The Council of Europe seeks practices covering in particular the following aspects: scope of family reunification; requirements for the sponsors/beneficiaries; procedural safeguards and child specific provisions; support and integration before, during and after family reunification; cooperation (e.g. cross-sectorial or/and transnational); practical issues and challenges throughout the procedure; family reunification through other legal pathways. Contributions that address special challenges for unaccompanied and separated children arriving in Europe, such as lack of legal capacity and guardianship provisions, the best interest assessment and determination, family reunification when they turn 18 in the course of asylum and/or family reunification proceedings, family reunification for married children, stateless children are particularly welcome.

Respondents to the call are invited to demonstrate how their practice promotes the right to respect for family life and facilitates family reunification and why it can be considered as a good or promising practice that could be replicated by others.

Respondents to this call are kindly requested to fill in the template attached to this call **in English** and to email it to [SRSG.Migration.Office@coe.int](mailto:SRSG.Migration.Office@coe.int). It is important to provide as detailed and concrete information as possible on the practice(s), preferably accompanied by references to further documentation, such as websites, reports, videos, social media accounts, etc.

If possible, please provide translations into English or French of accompanying documentation (or a summary thereof). **The Council of Europe has discretion to assess and analyse the information received and determine which of the practices submitted will be included in the compilation. Submitted text may be subject to editing and adjusted to ensure a unified and integrated presentation of selected practices.**

The deadline for responding to this call is **30 October 2018**.

Please direct any questions concerning this call to [SRSG.Migration.Office@coe.int](mailto:SRSG.Migration.Office@coe.int).