



18 NOVEMBER

European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse

2022 Edition

**Getting it right: ensuring
child-friendly justice through
Barnahus structures in Europe**

Barnahus (Children's House) is the leading European child-friendly multidisciplinary and interagency (MDIA) response model for child sexual abuse. Its unique approach brings together all relevant services under one roof, to avoid re-victimisation of the child during investigation and court proceedings and provide every child with a coordinated and effective response. The core purpose of Barnahus is to co-ordinate parallel criminal and child welfare investigations and help produce valid evidence for judicial proceedings by eliciting the child's disclosure. The child victims and witnesses of violence also receive support and assistance, including medical evaluation and treatment, in a safe environment for children.

— The 2022 edition of the European Day focuses on promoting the Barnahus model to respond to child sexual abuse and propagating it across Europe.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

■ The Council of Europe is promoting the Barnahus model for a number of years now. In its 2015 implementation report dedicated to the protection of children against sexual abuse in the circle of trust, the Committee of the Parties to the Convention on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (Lanzarote Convention) identified the Icelandic Barnahus model as a promising practice example for a child-friendly multidisciplinary and interagency (MDIA) response. Different types of MDIA and Barnahus services exist in Europe, depending on individual country's legal system, social structures, cultural traditions and professional practices.

■ The Council of Europe's mission is to encourage all member states to move progressively towards committing to have at least one Barnahus-type structure in every country.

■ The Council of Europe has developed a leaflet on "Child-friendly, multidisciplinary and interagency response inspired by the Barnahus model" to explain in detail what a Barnahus is, what the key common criteria of Barnahus are, and which enabling factors for establishing and operating Barnahus or similar multidisciplinary interagency services are needed. It also presents the standards to provide a framework for setting quality goals for core operational practices for Barnahus/MDIA services.

■ Over the past years, the Council of Europe has also developed several technical co-operation projects to assist member states in setting up such structures, in particular in Slovenia where the first Barnahus was inaugurated in May 2022. Other projects are in the doing in Finland, Ireland and Spain, with others still in the pipeline.

■ To mark the European Day, the Council of Europe encourages activities and initiatives to raise awareness of both children and adults on the risks and on the steps that they can take to prevent sexual abuse and to protect its victims. Exchanges and debates on this issue, involving especially the Barnahus-type structures in Europe, state actors, parliamentarians, educators, child protection professionals, parents and children are encouraged.

Contact:

EndChildSexAbuseDay@coe.int

Websites:

www.coe.int/EndChildSexAbuseDay

www.coe.int/children

Twitter:

[@coe_children](https://twitter.com/coe_children) / [#EndChildSexAbuseDay/](https://twitter.com/EndChildSexAbuseDay)
[#Barnahus](https://twitter.com/Barnahus)

Facebook:

[Council of Europe Children Rights](https://www.facebook.com/CouncilofEuropeChildrenRights)

Instagram: [@councilofeurope](https://www.instagram.com/councilofeurope)

