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## Joint EU – Council of Europe Project

Strengthening child-friendly justice through effective cooperation and coordination between the different Barnahus-type services in the regions of Spain

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# COMMUNICATION GUIDE FOR BARNAHUS SPAIN

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## 1. Introduction

Welcome to the Communication Guide, elaborated in the framework of joint project of the European Union and the Council of Europe **‘Strengthening child-friendly justice through effective cooperation and coordination between different Barnahus services in the regions of Spain’** (hereafter **‘Barnahus Spain’**), implemented by the Council of Europe in close cooperation with the Ministry of Youth and Children during the period 06/07/2022-31/10/2024.

This document is a guide for the communication of the Barnahus model in Spain; the messages provided in it are for the development of awareness-raising materials, not for the intervention with child victims of sexual violence.

To contextualise the reality of sexual violence against children in Spain, we have taken into account the following data. In the first place, according to data from the Ministry of the Interior, collected in its report on crimes against sexual freedom in Spain in 2023, there were a total of 21,580 sexual violence cases, of which 9,185 were perpetrated against underage victims. In other words, 42,56% of the abuses were perpetrated against children and adolescents. These children and adolescents face a process of secondary victimisation when the response of the system causes them to relive the traumatic situation and to assume their role as victims once again, this time being not only victims of a crime, but also of the incomprehension of the system.

## 2. What the Guide contains

The Strategy starts explaining the Barnahus model, its name, function, and operation. This is followed by some insights into effective communication strategies, emphasizing the importance of tone, style, and corporate identity.

It further outlines key objectives, target audiences, and core messages related to Barnahus and its associated concepts, such as quality standards and legal frameworks like the Lanzarote Convention. Additionally, the document suggests different communication channels and highlights the importance of child participation in communication efforts.

The strategic section distributes the proposed actions into three main lines. The first line aims to facilitate communication among various institutions and stakeholders, addressing current challenges and outlining specific actions to be taken. The second line focuses on informing children, adolescents, and their families about the Barnahus model, with tailored messages for different age groups. Lastly, the third line aims to raise awareness among the general public about preventing sexual violence against children and adolescents, including strategies for engaging with media and journalists.

Finally, the document lists the sources consulted, including reports, interviews, and meetings, underscoring the research and collaborative efforts that inform the proposed communication plan.

## 3. General Communicative Objectives

The general objectives when communicating about the Barnahus model will be to:

- Support the implementation of the Barnahus model at national and regional levels through inter-institutional, inter-territorial, and inter-departmental communication.

- Establish strategies to improve communication between national and regional authorities regarding the Barnahus model.
- Raise awareness of the Barnahus model among various target audiences and society in general, conveying appropriate and tailored messages for each of them, paying special attention to access to information for children, and adolescents.
- Raise awareness and inform different audiences to recognize what child sexual violence is, how to prevent it, and how to act correctly in cases of suspicion of sexual violence.
- Communicate and make visible the monitoring and implementation of the Barnahus model in Spain.

## 4. Target audiences

Our dissemination actions will be directed and adapted to the following audiences:

- Children and adolescents in general, and victims of sexual violence aged:
  - 3 to 5 years
  - 6 to 8 years
  - 9 to 12 years
  - 13 to 17 years
- Families: parents, guardians, and caregivers, persons trusted by children and adolescents
- Professionals who answer the child helpline 116 111.
- Professionals working in Barnahus.
- Public administrations, authorities, institutions at the national and regional levels.
- Professionals working for and with children and adolescents: health professionals, education professionals, protection and social services professionals, police, civil guard, social organizations, etc.
- Media and journalists.

## 5. General key messages

This section contains the key messages included in the strategy in all areas, sections and activities. These key messages are:

1. What Barnahus is: Barnahus is an intervention model that brings together in the same space all the resources that act in a case of violence against children and adolescents. This model groups and reduces the number of assessments and interviews, thanks to the coordination of multidisciplinary and inter-institutional teams. All Barnahus have to attend at least to cases of child sexual abuse and exploitation according to the Lanzarote Convention. However, each Autonomous Community will be able to decide what type of violence and cases it deals with, and therefore expand the services of the Barnahus in its territory.  
All this, in a friendly environment for children and adolescents, who are cared for by professionals with qualified training to provide them with specialised and quality care, following evidence-based intervention protocols.
2. Barnahus means 'Children's House', but when we mention the word 'house' when talking to children and adolescents about Barnahus, we will explain to them that it is not a place where they will stay to live, as it can generate confusion and fear, as they may imagine that it is a

space that serves as a home. Quality standards for being Barnahus: The Barnahus quality standards are set by the PROMISE network and consist of ten standards that facilitate child-centred interventions and promote effective collaboration across the different Barnahus. These standards include principles, activities and institutional arrangements, and promote evidence-based practices such as forensic interview protocols. They are important because the Barnahus model can be adapted in different ways in different contexts, which can lead to variations between territories.

3. The Lanzarote Convention: It is the most ambitious and comprehensive international legal instrument dedicated to protecting children from sexual exploitation and abuse. It serves as a model for any country developing regulations and policies to prevent child sexual exploitation and abuse, protect victims, prosecute offenders and promote national and international cooperation. It also provides a legal basis for States parties to cooperate.
4. The 4Ps (prevention, protection, prosecution and promotion): The Lanzarote Convention provides a holistic response to sexual violence against children.

## 6. Communication channels

The communication of the Barnahus model will be carried out through different channels and formats in order to reach each target audience with adapted messages, in all of which the 116 111 helpline will be used. The following communication channels are proposed:

- **Webpage:** the Barnahus model in Spain will have a website with its own domain, taking into account the corporate identity guidelines.
- **Social networks:** a specific social network strategy will be developed with its own objectives and editorial calendar for each of them.
- **Digital newsletter:** this channel will aim to provide the most up-to-date information on the Barnahus model to interested subscribers.
- **Media:** this channel will be fundamental to reach families and other target audiences, and to this end relations will be established with general and specialised media at national and regional level.
- **Publications:** different publications (reports, studies, position papers, brochures, etc.) will be produced in online format for publication on the website and in print. These publications will be aimed primarily at professionals and families.
- **Materials adapted for children and adolescents:** materials will be developed in different formats aimed at victims and non-victims (videos, stories, publications, etc.) adapted to the different age groups of 6-8 years, 9-12 years, 13-17 years.
- **Events:** these will be face-to-face and online meetings aimed at professionals, entities, administrations, etc., working with children and adolescents and specifically applying the Barnahus model, with the aim of generating spaces for learning and exchanging information, as well as promoting interaction between all the agents involved in the process.

## 7. Children's participation

For this participatory consultation process, it is planned to involve children from different groups and at different points in the process of drafting and implementing the Communication Guide. It is proposed to invite existing participation groups such as the State Council for the Participation of Children and Adolescents (CEPIA), the autonomous participation councils - in the Autonomous Communities where they exist - or child participation groups that are referents of children's organisations. The CEPIA has already participated in the drafting process of this document and its recommendations have been incorporated in the text of the document.

As far as possible, an attempt will be made to involve children who are beneficiaries of the resource in the consultation and participation processes, offering them the chance to be part of it in a positive and constructive way. All of this, in coordination and supervision with the Barnahus intervention teams.

## 8. Summary of strategic lines

The objective of this strategic line is to give impetus to a shared and coordinated model of the different Barnahus in Spain through communication. To ensure that all administrations and professionals working with children and adolescents who have suffered sexual violence are aware of and have access to all available information on the Barnahus model. Design and organise interdepartmental and multidisciplinary collaboration between the public administrations of the State and each Autonomous Community, as well as between all the Barnahus, the professional teams involved and the participation of children and adolescents from CEPIA to develop a comprehensive and specialised model of response to sexual violence against children and adolescents, following the quality standards of the Barnahus model.

| Actions promoted by the General State Administration   |                             |                                    |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Strategic Line 1. Facilitate inter-institutional, inter-territorial and interdepartmental communication.   | Timeframe                   | Outcome indicators <sup>1</sup>    |
| 1.1. Promoting the communication of a shared and coordinated model   |                             |                                    |
| Disseminate materials with minimum application criteria and practical recommendations for the implementation of the Barnahus model in the Autonomous Communities and Cities. | 1st year                    | Disseminated at least one material |
| Hold joint technical sessions between the different Barnahus to share information, identify, collect and disseminate good practices.   | 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year | Held at least one session per year |
| Develop a website on the Barnahus model.   | 1st year                    | Webpage developed                  |

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<sup>1</sup> The performance indicators are indicative. Implementation and concrete indicators will be subject to change based on the available budget.

|   |                             |  |
|---|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>1.2. Promote the participation and information of all the professional teams involved in the care of children and adolescents.</b>                                   |                             |  |
| Develop and disseminate information pills to raise awareness among the different groups of professionals, as a prior step to any training they may receive.             | 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year      | Developed and disseminated an informative pill for each professional group |
| Disseminate guides on the prevention and detection of cases of sexual violence against children and adolescents and how to act in the Barnahus model for professionals. | 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year | No. of guides disseminated   |
| To produce and disseminate, on a regular basis, a digital newsletter aimed at professionals.  | 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year | No. of newsletters produced and disseminated                               |

### **Recommendations for Autonomous Community actions in relation to line 1.2**

Without prejudice to the actions to be promoted by the General State Administration, it is suggested that the Autonomous Communities and Cities:

- Hold information days for all the professional teams of the Autonomous Communities and Cities and municipalities, which, within the framework of their competences, are involved in the care of children and adolescents (police, social services, protection systems, health, education, local authorities, social organisations...) when they begin to implement the Barnahus model in their territory.

***\* These recommendations are aligned with state actions without prejudice to the fact that the Autonomous Communities and Cities can carry out other actions they deem appropriate.***

| <b>Strategic Line 2. Provide information on the Barnahus model to child victims of sexual violence and to their non-offending family members and people they trust.</b>   | <b>Timeframe</b>          | <b>Outcome indicators <sup>2</sup></b>   |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| Develop a proposal for materials (that can be adapted by the Autonomous Communities and Cities) for children and adolescents in friendly, accessible formats, adapted by age range to explain what Barnahus is. | 1st, 2 <sup>nd</sup> year | Develop four proposals for materials in two years (at least one for each age group). |

<sup>2</sup> The performance indicators are indicative. Implementation and concrete indicators will be subject to change based on the available budget.

|   |                            |   |
|---|----------------------------|---|
| Develop a proposal for materials (that can be adapted by the Autonomous Communities and Cities) for non-offending family members and people of trust of children and adolescents who are victims of sexual violence against children, so that they know the route they are going to take in the Barnahus. | 1st, 2 <sup>nd</sup> year  | Develop two proposals for materials in two years        |
| Disseminate the child helpline for children and adolescents and their non-offending relatives and people they trust.  | 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year | Developed a plan for the dissemination of the telephone |

### Recommendations for regional actions in relation to line 2

Without prejudice to the actions to be promoted by the General State Administration, it is suggested that the Autonomous Communities and Cities:

- Adapt the materials to the context of each Autonomous Community and Autonomous City and disseminate them to girls, boys, adolescent victims and their non-offending family members and people they trust.
- Disseminate the child helpline to children, adolescents and their non-offending family members and people they trust.

***\* These recommendations are aligned with state actions, without prejudice to the fact that the Autonomous Communities and Cities can carry out other actions they consider appropriate.***

| Actions promoted by the General State Administration  |                            |   |
|---|----------------------------|---|
| Strategic Line 3. Raise awareness of the Barnahus model and the prevention of sexual violence against children and adolescents in society in general.   | Timeframe                  | Outcome indicators <sup>3</sup>                                   |
| <b>3.1 Raise awareness in society about the Barnahus model and the prevention of sexual violence against children.</b>  |                            |   |
| Carry out actions with the media to keep the implementation of the Barnahus model in Spain on the public agenda.  | 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year | Publication of at least 8 news items each year in national media. |
| Carry out an awareness-raising campaign aimed at society to publicise the Barnahus model and raise awareness about the prevention of sexual violence against children and adolescents with materials that can be adaptable for the Autonomous Communities and Cities. | 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year | Campaign developed and disseminated                               |

<sup>3</sup> Los indicadores de resultados son orientativos. La implementación y los indicadores concretos, estarán sujetos a cambios en base al presupuesto del que se disponga.



|   |                  |                                      |
|---|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Produce and disseminate reports on the implementation of the model with data collected by the different Barnahus. | 3rd and 4th year | One report produced and disseminated |
|---|------------------|--------------------------------------|

### Recommendations for Autonomous Community actions in relation to line 3.1

Irrespective to the actions to be promoted by the General State Administration, the following are suggested to the Autonomous Communities:

- Actions with regional media to publicise the implementation of the Barnahus model in the territory.
- Adapt and disseminate the awareness-raising campaign aimed at society to publicise the Barnahus model and raise awareness about the prevention of sexual violence against children and adolescents.
- Collect the necessary data for the elaboration of reports on the implementation of the Barnahus model.

***\*These recommendations are aligned with state actions without prejudice to the fact that the Autonomous Communities and Cities can carry out other actions they deem appropriate.***

| 3.2 Awareness-raising for children and adolescents  | Timeframe                  | Performance indicators                       |
|---|----------------------------|--|
| Introduce pedagogical resources and tools in the sexual education programmes of educational centres that help children and adolescents to detect sexual violence.                                     | 1st year                   | Introducido, al menos, un recurso pedagógico |
| Develop an awareness-raising campaign for children and adolescents to end sexual violence against children and publicise Barnahus with adaptable materials for the Autonomous Communities and Cities. | 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year | Elaborada y difundida una campaña            |
| Carry out an awareness-raising campaign aimed at adolescents to prevent sexual violence among peers with adaptable materials for the Autonomous Communities and Cities.                               | 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year | Elaborada y difundida una campaña            |

### Recommendations for regional actions in relation to line 3.2

- Introduce pedagogical resources and tools in the sex education programmes of educational centres that help children and adolescents develop skills to recognise, detect and know how to act in cases of sexual violence.
- Adapt and disseminate the awareness-raising campaign for children and adolescents to end sexual violence against children and raise awareness of Barnahus.
- Adapt and disseminate the awareness-raising materials and campaign for adolescents to prevent peer-to-peer sexual violence.

***\* These recommendations are aligned with state actions without prejudice to the fact that the Autonomous Communities and Cities can carry out other actions they deem appropriate.***

| 3.3 To prevent secondary victimisation of child and adolescent victims of sexual violence by the media.   | Timeframe         | Outcome indicators  |
|---|-------------------|---|
| Develop and disseminate a guide with recommendations for journalists and media professionals to avoid actions that encourage secondary victimisation of children. | 1st and 2nd years | <p>1 guide sent to national and regional media.</p> <p>Guide translated into all the official languages of Spain and published on the Barnahus website.</p> |

#### Recommendations for Autonomous Community actions in relation to line 3.3

Without prejudice to the actions to be promoted by the General State Administration, it is suggested that the Autonomous Communities and Cities:

- Disseminate the guide aimed at journalists and communication professionals to avoid actions that encourage the secondary victimisation of children and adolescents.

***\* These recommendations are aligned with state actions, without prejudice to the fact that the Autonomous Communities and Cities can carry out other actions they consider appropriate.***