



# Draft Child Participation Policy of the Children's House of Slovenia<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In order to give ownership to the children, this draft Child Participation Policy can be finalised in consultation with the first Child Advisory Group of the Children's House in Slovenia.

*This document was produced with the financial support of the European Union and the Council of Europe. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the author(s). The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of either the European Union or the Council of Europe.*

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Objectives

The objective of the Child Participation Policy is to apply the children's right to participation horizontally, in all aspects of the Children's House of Slovenia. According to Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by the Republic of Slovenia, individual children and children as a group have the right to be heard in relation to all matters that affect them, including in judicial and administrative proceedings: they have the right to receive information, express their views and have them given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity. Children and their families as well as the staff and cooperating agencies need guidance to ensure that children are aware of their right to be heard and are able to exercise it in all possible scenarios unfolding at the Children's House.

Children's House is based on the Barnahus model (Icelandic for "a house for children") which is a coordinated child-friendly, interagency and multidisciplinary state response towards child sexual abuse and other forms of violence against children. The core purpose of Barnahus is to avoid repeated interviews with the child by many agencies in different locations by ensuring collaboration between relevant judicial, social and medical actors in one child-friendly premise. By offering a one-stop-shop approach in this child-friendly premise, the Barnahus hosts an interagency team of relevant authorities and agencies such as police, social services, child protection, physical and mental health services, prosecutor and, in some countries, a judge. The child visiting the Barnahus is considered a competent individual with the capacity to act on their<sup>2</sup> own behalf.<sup>3</sup>

The Children's House of Slovenia provides comprehensive treatment in pre-trial and criminal proceedings for children (aged 0-18 years), who are suspected victims and/or witnesses of criminal offences of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. If the best interests of the child so require, comprehensive treatment may also be provided to a child who is a victim of or witness to other criminal offences and juvenile offenders.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, the target group includes close

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<sup>2</sup> Both individual child and children as a group are referred as they/them in this document in order not to exclude any non-binary child. However, during translation it must be kept in mind that the Slovenian language also has two genders but the gender neutral approach is currently under consideration.

<sup>3</sup> The [European Barnahus Quality Standards](#) set out the *Right to be heard and to receive information: Children's rights to express their views and to receive information are respected and fulfilled* (Standard 1.2).

<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, this Policy still needs to be updated with references to the rights of juvenile offenders including the right to lawyer and legal aid.

non-offending family such as parents/caregivers and siblings. The uptake area for Children's House is the whole of the Republic of Slovenia.

If child participation is to be effective and meaningful, it needs to be understood as a process, not as a one-off event and to be mainstreamed at all levels of decision making at the Children's House. After setting the general principles of child participation, this Policy provides guidance on the right to be heard of the individual child receiving comprehensive treatment at the Children's House, then on opportunities for collective child participation. The implementation of the Policy needs to be monitored and regularly evaluated.

## **1.2. Legal framework**

The right to participation is one of the overarching principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 12 states that the child has the right to express their views freely and these views will be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity as well as that the child should be provided with the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting them. Article 12 should be read with Article 5 saying parents and guardians have the right and the duty to provide advice and guidance to the child on the exercise of their right in line with the child's evolving capacities. Furthermore, many decisions that affect children are made by adults, therefore support for parents to raise awareness of the children's rights and parental involvement is critical for realising the right to be heard of the child in the Children's House.

Article 9 (1) of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse requires state parties to „encourage the participation of children, according to their evolving capacity, in the development and the implementation of state policies, programmes or others initiatives concerning the fight against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children”. According to Article 14 (1), legislative and other measures taken to assist victims should take due account of the child's views, needs and concerns. The rights and interests of the victims and witnesses should be protected at all stages of investigations and criminal proceedings, in particular by informing them of their rights and the services at their disposal and the follow-up given to their complaint, the charges, the general progress of the investigation or proceedings, and their role therein as well as the outcome of their cases. This enables them, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of internal law, to be heard, to supply evidence and to choose the means of having their views, needs and concerns presented,

directly or through an intermediary, and considered; providing them with appropriate support services so that their rights and interests are duly presented and taken into account (Article 31). The information given to victims in conformity with the provisions of this article is to be provided in a manner adapted to their age and maturity and in a language that they can understand.

Participation is one of the fundamental principles of the Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on child-friendly justice: „the right of all children to be informed about their rights, to be given appropriate ways to access justice and to be consulted and heard in proceedings involving or affecting them should be respected”.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the Guidelines emphasises that children are full bearers of rights and they should be treated accordingly and be able to exercise all their rights in a manner that takes into account their capacity to form their own views and the circumstances of the case. In any case, the right to be heard is a right not a duty for the child.

According to the Article 56 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, children enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms consistent with their age and maturity and are guaranteed special protection from economic, social, physical, mental, or other exploitation and abuse in accordance with law. In deciding on the protection, education and maintenance of the child, contacts, the implementation of parental care and the granting of parental care, the court also takes into account the child's opinion expressed by them or the person whom they trust and choose, if they are capable of understanding the significance and consequences of their opinion (Article 143, paragraph 2 of the Family Code).

Criminal Procedure Act (CPA) contains special provisions for minors as regards their participation in criminal procedure as victims, witnesses or initiators of the procedure. A special section of the CPA regulates the procedure against minors ensuring their participation in accordance with their age. The Child Protection in Criminal Proceedings And Comprehensive Treatment Of Children In The Children's House Act (ZZOKPOHO) stipulates that state authorities and other participants involved in providing comprehensive treatment should ensure that the dignity of the child is respected and the child's best interests are protected while ensuring the equal protection of rights and respecting the guarantee of fair trial and the right to defence. This means particularly that the child receives the necessary information and

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<sup>5</sup> [Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on child friendly justice](#) (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 17 November 2010 at the 1098th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)

explanations and is allowed to be heard taken into account their age, maturity, ability to understand the relevance and consequences of their actions and other personal traits, as well as the nature and circumstances of the criminal offence.

## **2. Principles of child participation in the Children's House**

Effective and meaningful child participation, both on individual and collective level, should incorporate the following nine principles set by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.<sup>6</sup>

### **TRANSPARENT AND INFORMATIVE**

Prerequisite of meaningful participation is that children are provided with all information necessary to understand the proceedings and form a view with regards to matters affecting them at the Children's House in an accessible and child-friendly format. This includes information about the comprehensive treatment (including the forensic interview, the physical examination, the crisis and psychosocial support), the role of adults involved in the procedures as well as the different scenarios when children are given the opportunity to be heard and make an informed decision, if applicable. Children need to understand the limitation and potential impact of their participation, where their views are going, how they are considered and if they are not considered fully, why.

### **VOLUNTARY**

Participation is a right not an obligation. Children should be able to decide whether they would like to participate in the comprehensive treatment or any specific stage of that and should be informed and able to withdraw from these activities at any time. Children should not be coerced into participating or expressing their views.

Age should not be a barrier on the right of the child to express their views freely and have their views being given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity. Legislation might set a minimum age of consent for participation in certain services and activities, but this should be interpreted in accordance with the right to be actively involved at any stage of decision making, initiatives, projects or services of the Children's House.

Children have the right to request and receive guidance from their parents on the exercise of their rights in a way that reflects their growing maturity and their progress towards adulthood

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<sup>6</sup> See the General Comment of UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the right to be heard (No. 12).

in a manner consistent with their evolving capacities. Therefore, partnership with parents and parental involvement in the delivery of the comprehensive treatment for children should be ensured without diminishing the child's right to be heard and taken seriously.

### **RESPECTFUL**

While exercising their right to participation at the Children's House, all children should be treated with respect, care and fairness with special attention dedicated for their personal situation, well-being and specific needs, and with full respect for their physical and psychological integrity. The dignity of the child should be respected and the child's best interests should be protected. Staff furthermore should respect and gain an understanding of the family, school and cultural context of children's lives.

### **RELEVANT**

All decision making, initiatives, projects or services at the Children's House brings relevance for the lives of children up to a certain extent. The child should be heard in relation to all matters affecting them. Children as a group should be provided with space to highlight and address the issues they themselves identify as relevant and important.

### **CHILD-FRIENDLY**

Child-friendly approaches should be used in all aspects of the Children's House to ensure that children receive the necessary information and enable them to form and express their views and have them given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity. Since children need different levels of support, participation approaches and methods should be designed or adapted based on children's ages and evolving capacities. Provision of a safe and child-friendly physical environment is the first requirement of meaningful child participation. In order to ensure that every child receives information in a child-friendly format at the Children's House, children need to be actively involved in the development and revise of awareness-raising and information materials targeting children.

### **INCLUSIVE**

All children have the right to participate in the Children's House on individual or collective level without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's age, and the child's or their parents' or legal guardians' race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth, or other status. Particular efforts



(e.g. interpretation, age appropriate information materials) should be made to ensure that vulnerable children and children with special needs receive the same amount of information, guidance and opportunities to express their views and have them given due weight as any child at the Children's House. Younger children should be empowered to participate by adapting the procedures to their age, needs and development. Staff should be sensitive to the personal circumstances and culture of all children participating.

### **SUPPORTED BY TRAINING**

Staff must have the knowledge and capacity to facilitate meaningful child participation both on individual and collective level at the Children's House. This involves regular and ongoing training on how to share information with children adapted to their age, needs and development, how to communicate effectively with children, how to listen to them and empower them to influence matters affecting their lives. Children themselves can be involved as peer trainers and facilitators on how to promote and practice effective participation. With regard to all child participation in the Children's House, the staff is guided by the current Policy and supported by the Child Participation Officer.

### **SAFE AND SENSITIVE TO RISK**

At the Children's House, the protection and personal safety of the child are primary considerations in order to prevent exposure to secondary victimisation and revictimization, intimidation and revenge. All staff and cooperating agencies have a duty of care and should take every precaution to minimise the risks of any harm to children or any other negative consequences of participation. This means that children are provided with a safe space to receive information, as well as to form and express their views in relation to matters affecting them. Consideration needs to be given to protect the privacy of children participating both on individual and on collective level. Children should be aware of their right to be protected from harm and know where to turn for help if needed. The Child Safeguarding Policy of the Children's House applies to all type of child participation as well.

### **ACCOUNTABLE**

Every person (all staff and cooperating agency) involved at the Children's House has the responsibility to listen to children, take their opinion into consideration and to provide them with feedback and/or follow up regarding how their views have been interpreted and influenced

the outcomes. Where appropriate and possible, children should be informed about the opportunity to be involved in evaluation and follow-up processes and activities.

### **3. Individual child participation in the Children's House<sup>7</sup>**

The overall purpose of Children's House is to facilitate the parallel criminal and child protection investigations and to avoid children having to repeat their story multiple times to different persons in different locations. All the collaborating agencies and the child come to the Children's House, which offers a child- friendly and safe environment. Since the Children's House places children and their rights at the centre of all activities, the child victim or witness should be informed, consulted and heard from the first contact and throughout all the different procedural steps. Furthermore, listening to the views and needs of the child facilitate the determination of their best interest and individual assessment of their special circumstances while it also empowers the child to gain back control over the situation. During the comprehensive treatment, the child's right to be heard is exercised on the level of the individual child with support and guidance from their parents/caregivers.

The child victim or witness should receive information covering the services available at their disposal, the procedure of the way they are delivered, the rights they may exercise in different procedural steps, the persons that may accompany or support them (including parents/caregivers, person of trust and the counsellor of the child) and updates about their case. This requires relevant information to be presented in ways appropriate to the level of development and capacity of the child and in a language they understand. Information to children can also be provided via their parents but this does not exclude the responsibility of the staff to ensure that the child is informed appropriately.

The level of participation depends on the age, maturity and individual circumstances of the child which never should constitute a barrier to participation but rather an indication how to adjust the communication and interaction with the child to empower them to exercise the right

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<sup>7</sup> *General issues to consider for this chapter (in each steps)*

- *age of consent and participation of children under the age of consent (the right to participation is not limited by age and maturity),*
- *the right to information: what, when, who (children should be provided with information that enable them to form a view), adapted to the needs of children (translation, children with disabilities),*
- *who are the supporting adults involved and their roles,*
- *choosing the way of communication,*
- *views given weight for preferences of timing, location and type of support.*

to participation. Special efforts need to be made to ensure that children with special needs or disabilities have the same opportunities to receive information and to be heard. Furthermore, many decisions that affect children are made by adults, therefore support for parents to raise awareness of the children's rights and parental involvement is critical for realising the right to be heard of the child in the Children's House.

### **3.1. Participation in comprehensive treatment**

First step of the comprehensive treatment when the child is orally informed of summons to a forensic interview by the staff of the Children's House, their statutory representative or other person appointed by the court. At this moment, explicit, informed consent of the child is sought to take part in the comprehensive treatment procedure considering the child's age, maturity, ability to understand the relevance and consequences of their actions and other personal traits. The child has the right to be supported in this decision by their parents/caregivers. The provision of assistance and support cannot be subject to child's willingness to cooperate with the Children's House or in the criminal procedure.

The role of the counsellor of the child is particularly significant from the perspective of the exercise of the right to participation.<sup>8</sup> The counsellor is the designated professional who supports and accompanies the child throughout the whole process, provide continuous information and ensures that the child is heard and taken seriously. The counsellor is appointed by the director of the Children's House upon receiving the court order to interview the child. They deliver the summons or receive the child immediately before an interview or physical examination. At the first contact with the child, the counsellor informs the child and explain the procedures including the interview, the physical examination or any further treatment. The counsellor regularly assesses the capacity of the child to understand, consider and use the information given to them in order to ensure the implementation of right to information in child-friendly language. In case of a scenario involving a decision, the ability of the child to appreciate the foreseeable consequences of a decisions or lack of a decision and to make an informed decision is also assessed. Irrespective of their age or capacity, the child has the right to seek guidance and support from their parents to make any decision. In case the child

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<sup>8</sup> The children who participated in the consultations about the draft Children's House Act emphasized the role of the child counsellor as representing the supporting adult throughout the whole procedure. Other adults involved might give information or ask about voluntary participation as well, but it is important that there is one designated person of whom the child can turn to with trust.

expresses preferences of any circumstances of the comprehensive treatment, their views should be given due weight. The counsellor works together with other authorities and non-governmental organisations in order to provide accurate crisis and psychosocial support to the child.

The child victim may be accompanied by their legal representative or, where appropriate, by an adult of their choice, unless a reasoned decision has been made to the contrary in respect of that person. The child victim has the right to be assisted by an attorney or a legal aid lawyer.

### **3.2. Participation in a forensic interview<sup>9</sup>**

The capacity to make an informed decision and voluntary participation of the child are assessed by the counsellor before the interview, and by the interviewer during the interview. The child attends the interview only if they agree to do so, and they should be made aware that it can be stopped at anytime. The parents do not follow the interview, but the child has the right to request their presence anytime. This applies to any person of trust and the lawyer of the victim.

The interviewer explains the process of the interview to the child, who are present in the Children's House during the interview and their right to ask questions and express views. The forensic interview is carried out in a manner that ensures the child to exercise the right to be heard in judicial proceedings and is adapted to the child (age, development, personal circumstances, language, special needs). Such adaptation is possible if the child is informed and consulted and their views are given due weight.

### **3.3. Participation in physical examination**

Children need to receive adequate information about the physical examination, the importance and nature of medical procedures relevant to the analysis and establishment of the facts important for the criminal proceedings in a format adapted to child's age, maturity, ability to understand the relevance and consequences of their actions and other personal traits. The counsellor of the child gives this information before the physical examination. The forensic medical doctor should never engage in interviewing the child or posing questions about the abuse, regardless of when the forensic physical examination takes place but they should ensure the voluntary participation of the child.

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<sup>9</sup> To be updated to be in line with the protocols of the forensic interview.

In case the court orders the physical examination of child to gain an expert examination of physical injuries, the child decides whether they agree to that. Their opinion must be considered if they are able to express it and to understand its significance and consequences. The child who is 15 years old is considered to be capable of consent, unless the doctor considers that they are not capable of being able to do so.<sup>10</sup> The child under 15 is not considered to be capable of consent, unless the physician assesses that they are capable of being able to do so. In case the child rejects to participate or stop the examination, the expert examination of physical injuries has to be carried out based on the already available medical documents of the child and other information.

When a child, according to the law, is able to consent to an intervention, the intervention may only be carried out after the child has given their free and informed consent. When, according to the law, the child does not have the capacity to consent to an intervention, the opinion of the child shall be taken into account as an increasingly determining factor in proportion to their age and degree of maturity.

### **3.4. Participation in crisis and psychosocial support**

Children need to receive adequate information regarding crisis and psychosocial support available at the Children's House in a format adapted to child's age, maturity, ability to understand the relevance and consequences of their actions and other personal traits. The counsellor of the child gives this information as part of the general explanation of the comprehensive treatment procedure during the first contact or whenever the need for crisis or psychosocial support arises.

Participation in crises and psychosocial support is voluntary for the child, their family and their caregivers. If the child is older than 15 years, they consent to participate while if the child is younger than 15 years, the consent is given by their statutory representative. In case of the latter, special attention must be given to inviting and giving due weight to the child's views in cooperation with the caregivers. The child should be involved in the decision.

Immediately after the interview or physical examination of the child, the counsellor provides psychosocial support and prepare a treatment plan for the child and determining the intensity and frequency of contact and defining the content of the support which is supplemented or

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<sup>10</sup> Based on the Patients' Rights Act Article 20, 26, 35.

adjust during the treatment accordingly. With regard to the circumstances of crisis and psychosocial support, views of the child need to be given weight for preferences of timing, location and type of support.

### **3.5. Participation in the evaluation of the services**

The right to participation implies that children are given opportunities to provide feedback on their experience about the comprehensive treatment at the Children's House. All children, who visited the Children's House are invited to fill out an anonymous satisfaction survey (online/offline), developed and regularly evaluated in cooperation with the Child Advisory Board. The replies given to this survey are considered to make the services, the environment and the procedures more child-friendly and appropriate to the needs and expectations of the children. The children are also informed of availability of the annual evaluation reports.

### **3.6. Participation in child safeguarding**

If the child reports a child safeguarding incident or is involved in one, he or she should be given the opportunity to be heard within the child safeguarding procedure. Once the case is considered, the child should receive update about the outcomes of the procedure.

### **3.7. Participation in decisions related to data protection and privacy**

The Children's House processes personal and other data related to the comprehensive treatment in accordance with the regulations governing personal and other data protection. When the treatment of a child in the Children's House is concluded, the data relating to the preparation and conduct of an interview or physical examination as well as to the crisis and psychosocial support is archived and kept for a period of three years. Regarding personal data related to the crisis and psychosocial support, during this period access can be permitted to healthcare providers if the child older than 15 years of age or – if younger than that – their statutory representative gives consent. Irrespective of their age and capacity, the child has the right to participate in this decision and to request guidance from his or her parents. After 3 years, all data is blocked and allowed for the purpose of accessing own personal data and only to the child who was cared for at the Children's House and to whom the data refer. The blocked data is kept for 20 years after the child reaches maturity, after which they will be destroyed by the Children's House.

Children participating in the comprehensive treatment procedure, or any other activity of the Children's House have the right to decide about making, storing or using any audio-visual material of themselves. Children above the age of 15 years can give informed consent by themselves, in case of children under this age, the statutory representative can consent. Irrespective of their age and capacity, the child has the right to participate in this decision and to request guidance from his or her parents.

#### **4. Collective child participation in the Children's House**

All matters considered at the Children's House or in relation to that in a wider legal and policy context affect children. Collective child participation means that children's views are sought and listened to as a group – taken into consideration their age and maturity – in decision making at the Children's House in order to uphold children's rights and to improve the experiences for all children by influencing relevant policies and practices.

Participation of children as a group is not an ad-hoc event but a regular exchange between children and adults involved at the Children's House in the framework set by this Policy. Children are recognized as rights-holders who can initiate and lead activities including their own advocacy (child-led), can be actively involved at any stage of decision making, programmes and events (collaborative participation), or can inform and influence decision making by sharing their experience and perspective (consultative participation).

##### **4.1. Child Advisory Board<sup>11</sup>**

Children as a group participate in the Children's House principally through the Child Advisory Board which is a child-led consultative Board of the Children's House. It is composed of 4-15 children and young people aged between 13-18 who are selected by the Children's House in collaboration with the previous members through an open call for 2 years.<sup>12</sup> The Children's House ensures the diversity of the Child Advisory Board by providing equal opportunities and taking positive measures to encourage the participation of children belonging to vulnerable groups and gender balance.

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<sup>11</sup> Based on the opportunities explained above, the composition, role and working methods of such advisory group were discussed with the children at the consultation and the following proposals were made.

<sup>12</sup> The first Child Advisory Board can be set up by the management of the Children's House in consultation with children who participated in any previous consultation.

The Child Advisory Board is supported by a mentor who can be employed by the Children's House but should not carry a conflicting position.<sup>13</sup> Their role is specifically defined in the employment contract and performed in accordance with the needs and request of the Child Advisory Board among others by providing technical assistance, training and child-friendly information.<sup>14</sup> Members of Child Advisory Board receive training prior to their appointment as well as during their mandate (corresponding to the need).<sup>15</sup>

The Chair of the Child Advisory Board is elected by the members for 1 year.<sup>16</sup> The Child Advisory Board holds meetings at least once per month and decides about its annual plan and agenda.<sup>17</sup> The advocacy and promotional activities of Child Advisory Board are project based with emphasis on clear goals, specific activities and results.<sup>18</sup> The work and achievements of the Child Advisory Board are presented to and discussed with the management of Children's House once per year.

Members of the Child Advisory Board can participate in Children's House activities (outside the scope of the Child Advisory Board activities) but this is a right not an obligation.<sup>19</sup> The Child Advisory Board can initiate activities including the involvement of their peers in any activity while ensuring that the best interest of all children involved is taken into account at all times.

The Child Advisory Board can turn to Child Participation Officer with a complaint related to exercise of the right to participation. In case of safety issues, the children can turn to the Child Safeguarding Officer.

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<sup>13</sup> The children at the consultation particularly emphasized that the mentor should not be the Coordinator of the Children's House.

<sup>14</sup> The idea of the mentor originally comes from the children at the consultation, previously we considered possible role of the child participation officer as such but the children made it clear what they expect from this supporting adult.

<sup>15</sup> The training needs were emphasized by the children at the consultation which shows that they want to be adequately prepared to participate in such activity. The team-building aspect of the training is also important.

<sup>16</sup> The children at the consultations recommended to appoint one member who can act as a spokesperson on behalf of the group as needed.

<sup>17</sup> The children at the consultations recommended regular meetings and the proposed timeframe, at least once per month, also originates from them.

<sup>18</sup> The project-based approach was also recommended by the children at the consultations.

<sup>19</sup> It was clear from the child consultations that the interest of the children with regard to the different activities of the Children's House might differ. Taking this account, all the possible opportunities for collective participation is mentioned in this draft Policy by stressing that each Child Advisory Board has the right to decide about which activity to be engaged with. It is a right, not an obligation.



#### **4.2. Participation in development and reform of legislation and policy related to the Children's House**

The Child Advisory Board and/or children is/are consulted by the Children's House or the Ministry of Justice in relation to the amendment of the Child Protection in Criminal Proceedings and Comprehensive Treatment of Children in the Children's House Act. The Child Advisory Board and/or children can be consulted by the Children's House or the Ministry of Justice in relation to the development or amendment of any other relevant legislation or policy. The children's views should be given due weight which means that their opinions are considered regardless of the form it was expressed and in accordance with their age and maturity.

#### **4.3. Participation in selection, design and refurbishment of the Children's House premises**

The Child Advisory Board is consulted by the Children's House in relation to the selection, design and refurbishment of Children's House premises. The Child Advisory Board can initiate such process by turning to the Coordinator of the Children's House. Following the experiences from child consultations, feedback on how child consultations influenced the selection, design and refurbishment in practice must be assured.

#### **4.4. Participation in the operation of the Children's House**

Child Advisory Board/ children as a group can be consulted and involved in the following decisions, activities and events:

- strategic and budgetary decisions related to the Children's House,
- recruitment, selection and evaluation of staff,
- regular professional training,
- development and implementation of awareness-raising and educational activities targeting the public and children,
- any other significant decision or activity relevant for children.

The Child Advisory Board has access to and can be invited to the meeting of:

- The Council of the Children's House,
- The Expert Council of the Children's House,
- Any other body of the Children's House.

Participation in any of the activities mentioned above is a right not an obligation for the Child Advisory Board and children.<sup>20</sup>

#### **4.5. Participation in the regular evaluation of the Children's House**

Evaluation mechanism and the satisfaction surveys of the Children's House are developed and regularly reviewed in consultation with the Child Advisory Board and children as a group. The Child Advisory Board can participate in the analysis of the replies given to the satisfaction surveys and in the preparation of annual evaluation reports.

The Child Advisory Board takes part in the regular evaluation of the Children's House in line with the Evaluation Policy/Methodology of the Children's House.<sup>21</sup>

#### **4.6. Participation in international human rights monitoring**

The Child Advisory Board and/or children take part in the international human rights monitoring of the Children's House, particularly as part of the monitoring activities of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Lanzarote Committee of the Council of Europe.

### **5. Monitoring and evaluation**

Child Participation Officer is designated to monitor and promote children participation both on individual and collective level at the Children's House. At the individual level, the Child Participation Officer is responsible for ensuring that the right of children to express their views in all procedures in Children's House is respected, receive complaints related to the practice of the right to be heard and address them. At the collective level, the Child Participation Officer is to support the activities of Child Advisory Board while respecting the role of the mentor, among others by providing assistance to the regular meetings and ensuring smooth communication and cooperation with the management of Children's House.

As part of the regular evaluation of the Children's House, this Policy and its implementation are regularly evaluated by the Children's House in consultation with children and the Child Advisory Board. In case the Child Advisory Board deems necessary, they can also initiate the revise or amendment of this Policy by turning to the Coordinator of the Children's House.

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<sup>20</sup> Based on the views of the children participating at the consultation.

<sup>21</sup> To update with a cross-reference to the Evaluation Policy/Methodology.

## **Annex<sup>22</sup>**

- Child-friendly information about the Children’s House focusing on individual child participation and possible scenarios involving decision making and/or separately prepared information on collective child participation (including reference to complaints about the violation of the right to participation)
- Information leaflet for parents and caregivers about the Children’s House and child participation thereof
- Consent forms to participate in the different procedures (child-friendly format)
- Evaluation forms (child-friendly format)

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<sup>22</sup> Documents recommended to be developed and attached to this Policy in consultation with children.