

31st North-South Prize of the Council of Europe

At its meeting in Lisbon on 29 October 2025, the Jury¹ of the North-South Prize of the Council of Europe selected **Mr Bragi Guðbrandsson** and **Mr Rami Abou Jamous** as the laureates of the 31st edition of the Prize.



Short version:

Mr Bragi Guðbrandsson is an Icelandic expert in children's rights and child protection policy, known internationally for pioneering the Barnahus (Children's House) model and for his work in shaping international standards and cooperation at the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and Council of Europe Lanzarote Committee.

Full version:

Mr Bragi Guðbrandsson is an Icelandic expert in children's rights and child protection policy, known internationally for pioneering the Barnahus (Children's House) model and for his work in international human rights advocacy and monitoring. He has contributed significantly to the development of multidisciplinary and child-friendly justice responses to violence and sexual abuse against children.

Mr Guðbrandsson is a member and former Vice-Chair of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child since 2019, a body of independent experts that monitors the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child under the auspices of the United Nations. In this capacity, he participates in the review of states' compliance with the Convention and contributes to international guidance on the protection of children's rights.

¹ The Jury is chaired by the President of the North-South Centre Executive Committee and is made up of members of the Bureau of the North-South Centre. The deliberations took place during the 35th meeting of the Executive Committee, which took place on 29 October 2025. Before the public announcement, the Laureates confirmed their acceptance of the Prize.

In Iceland, Mr Guðbrandsson served as Director General of the Government Agency for Child Protection from its establishment in 1995 to 2018, where he led national reforms in child protection policy and legislation. In 1998, he initiated Barnahus in Reykjavík, creating a pioneering multidisciplinary model integrating law enforcement, child protection, medical assessment and therapeutic services in a child-friendly environment where children provide pre-recorded testimony for court proceedings. The Barnahus model has since been adopted or adapted in up to 30 European countries and is widely recognised as a leading practice in child-friendly justice. Mr Guðbrandsson has also played a leading role in the proliferation of Barnahus by advocating the model as well as advising governments and civil society organisations in multiple states on its implementation in diverse social and legal environments.

At the European level, Mr Guðbrandsson has contributed significantly to the activities of the Council of Europe, including by serving as Chair and Vice-Chair of the monitoring body of the Lanzarote Convention on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. He has worked extensively on a number of Council of Europe instruments in child rights, including drafting the Lanzarote Convention (2010), the Guidelines of Child-Friendly Justice (2010), the Guidelines of Child-Friendly Social Services (2011), and the Recommendations on Positive Parenting (2006) and on the Rights of Children in Institutions (2005).

From 2002 to 2018, Mr Guðbrandsson also served as a member—and the first Chair—of the Working Group on Children at Risk within the Council of the Baltic Sea States, promoting regional cooperation on the protection of children from violence, exploitation and trafficking.

Mr Guðbrandsson has received several international awards for his contribution to children's rights, including the Juvenile Justice Without Borders International Award (2022) from the International Juvenile Justice Observatory, the Premios Centenario Award (2019) presented in Madrid on the centenary of Save the Children, the Children's Rights Defender Award (2018) from Hopes for Children UNCRC Policy Center, and an Honorary Certificate from the Council of the Baltic Sea States (2018) in recognition of his contribution to regional cooperation in child protection.