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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Strasbourg, 17 June 2025

Committee of Experts on access to child-friendly justice through multidisciplinary and interagency services (ENF-JUS)

Meeting report

First meeting (Strasbourg, [Palais de l'Europe](#), Room 3)
(In presence)

Wednesday, 14 May 2025 - 9:30 am to 12:30 pm / 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Thursday, 15 May 2025 - 9:30 am to 12:30 pm / 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm CET

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Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting

1. The first meeting of the Committee of Experts on access to child-friendly justice through multidisciplinary and interagency services (ENF-JUS, hereinafter “the Committee”) was held on 14-15 May 2025 in Strasbourg.
2. The meeting was opened by Roberto Olla, Acting Chair, Head of the Human Dignity and Gender Equality Department of the Council of Europe. He welcomed the Committee members and observers and recalled the Committee's task under its terms of reference, which is to develop a comprehensive intergovernmental tool, in the form of a recommendation inspired by the Barnahus model, and operational guidelines. Roberto Olla explained that the Barnahus model was considered promising practice by the Council of Europe in the field of child-friendly justice. He also drew the Committee's attention to the Mapping study on multidisciplinary and interagency child-friendly justice models responding to violence against children in Council of Europe member States, and to the Guidelines on child-friendly justice, the review of which will be finalised during the course of 2026.
3. Agnes von Maravić, Head of the Children's Rights Division, introduced herself and the Secretariat of the Committee. She drew the Committee's attention to the work which has already been achieved in the field of child-friendly justice, inspired by the Barnahus model, on the basis of national efforts and the collaboration through the Barnahus Network and the ISO IWA work. Agnes von Maravić underlined that, in the preparation of this draft recommendation, it was important for the Committee to base itself on existing texts and practices, without replicating them.

Agenda item 2: Tour de table

4. The Secretariat introduced Tanja Gerwien and Zara Gasparyan, Secretary and Co-Secretary to the ENF-JUS, respectively, and Anne Kayser, Secretary to the CDENF.
5. The Secretariat invited the Committee members to introduce themselves.

Agenda item 3: Election of the Chair and Vice Chair

6. The Committee was invited to elect its Chair and Vice-Chair, pursuant to Article 12 of Resolution CM/Res(2021)3 on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.
7. Taina Lajasaalo (Finland) was the only candidate for the position of Chair and Liam Coen (Ireland) was the only candidate for the position of Vice-Chair.
8. Both candidates were elected unanimously by a show of hands for their respective positions.

Agenda item 4: Appointment of the Gender Equality Rapporteur of ENF-JUS

9. The Committee was invited to appoint a Gender Equality Rapporteur and appointed Ms Eliška Hronová (Czechia).

Agenda item 5: Adoption of the agenda and order of business

10. The Committee adopted the agenda as it appears in Appendix I.

Agenda item 6: Information on relevant Council of Europe activities in the area of child-friendly justice

11. Zara Gasparyan, Co-Secretary of ENF-JUS, informed the Committee about relevant technical co-operation activities in the area of child-friendly justice. She recalled that the interest in the

Barnahus model resulted from a visit in 2012 to Iceland's Children's House in Reykjavik by the members of the Lanzarote Committee. States began seeking assistance from the Council of Europe to establish their own Barnahus centres, starting with Ukraine as one of the first States to implement this model nationally. Slovenia, Finland and then Ireland, Croatia and Spain all followed suit. Two more projects are ongoing in Slovenia: one [the best interests of the child in civil proceedings](#) and one on [child-friendly justice](#) based on the Guidelines on child friendly justice.

12. The Committee took note of this information. It then held a first exchange of views on relevant activities, practices, gaps and challenges concerning child-friendly justice in their respective countries.
13. The Committee shared the view that political will was important, but that dedicated individuals, whether from the public sector or from associations or NGOs, were key in introducing and spreading the Barnahus model throughout Europe - while also noting that individual commitment alone is not sufficient without supportive policy frameworks and national-level steering and coordination.
14. The Committee also shared the view that there was a need for services addressed to children who witness domestic violence and for those involved in high-conflict separation or divorce proceedings. In some countries, such as Slovenia, the Barnahus model is available to child victims of most crimes, while in other countries the target group was often very restricted. In this respect, the Committee noted that a contributing factor was often a general lack of resources in countries to cater for all target groups.
15. The Committee also discussed the possibility of widening the target group for Barnahus services to include children in conflict with the law. In many countries such as Czechia and Finland, for example, Barnahus services are only open to child victims, and not to children in conflict with the law.
16. The Committee then discussed issues relating to interpretation services available to children who do not speak the local language. Interpretation had become an issue in Barnahus settings in many countries as a result of an increase in immigration. Issues with the quality of interpretation services could also lead to secondary trauma in children. The Committee noted that the quality of the interpretation could also have an impact on the validity of pre-recorded testimony in court proceedings. The linked topic of children with disabilities and speech impediments, who might face similar problems with interpretation services, were also discussed.

Agenda item 7: Workshop on Bridging the Gap: International Standards and National Practices in Child Sexual Violence Proceedings

17. The Chair invited Mireya Garcia-De-Murcia from the Children's Rights Division, responsible for the cooperation project Barnahus Spain, to conduct the workshop on *Bridging the Gap: International Standards and National Practices in Child Sexual Violence Proceedings*.
18. During the Workshop, the Committee members took part in an exercise based on a case study to understand how the Barnahus model can improve compliance with the ECHR, the Lanzarote Convention and the Guidelines on Child Friendly Justice.

Agenda item 8: Working methods and workplan

19. The Committee instructed the Secretariat to relaunch a call among national delegations for the proposal of an expert to fill the vacancy in the Committee of Experts ENF-JUS and entrusted the Bureau to preselect the new member among the candidates for CDENF approval in written proceedings.
20. The Committee adopted the working methods and workplan.

Agenda item 9: Draft Recommendation on multidisciplinary and interagency services for child-friendly justice, including operational guidelines

21. The Committee took note of a presentation by Susanna Greijer, consultant, on the first draft of elements as a basis for the preparation of a draft recommendation on multidisciplinary and interagency services for child-friendly justice, including operational guidelines and its draft explanatory memorandum.
22. The Committee held an exchange of views with the consultant and agreed to proceed with the preparation of a draft recommendation on the basis of this first draft of elements.
23. The Committee established that the draft recommendation should not replicate other existing texts, but rather refer to them. It also agreed, amongst others, to explore and describe system-level enablers for useful policy guidance in the preparation of this draft.
24. The Committee engaged in a discussion on the focus that the recommendation should take, notably that the recommendation should focus on the time before and during proceedings, with a view to expanding it to the post-proceedings period. It should focus on response, reparation and rehabilitation, while prevention and reinsertion were considered to be outside the current possibilities in the sector. With respect to the type of proceedings concerned, the Committee agreed that both criminal and civil proceedings may be included.
25. The Committee discussed the level of standards that the recommendation should set. The consultant's proposal to use a three-tiered approach under each section of the recommendation based on the level of services currently present in each country, was well received by the Committee.
26. The Committee then discussed a potential title for the recommendation, without reaching a conclusion and decided to re-discuss the matter at future meetings.
27. The Committee instructed the consultant and the Secretariat to review the first draft of elements as a basis for the preparation of a preliminary draft recommendation and draft explanatory memorandum including operational guidelines, in the light of the discussion and comments of the group and to integrate possible further comments to be submitted by 6 June 2025. A finalised text would then be circulated for adoption by the Committee in a written procedure.

Agenda item 10: Exchange of views between experts on the organisation of consultations with relevant stakeholders, including the discussion on child participation in the context of the work of the ENF-JUS

28. The Committee held a first exchange of views on the relevant stakeholders and on the modalities and organisation of consultations or hearings in the forthcoming work on the recommendation on multidisciplinary and interagency services for child-friendly justice, including operational guidelines and modalities for involving children and their views in the development process of the recommendation.
29. The Committee agreed that there was a need for child participation in the context of its work. The consultant agreed with the Committee and noted that child participation was most useful early in the process and proposed that member States be invited to send key questions to Barnahus facilities in their countries. These structures could then ask children who have received such services, about their experiences. The Committee welcomed this idea.
30. The Secretariat reminded the Committee that a voluntary contribution would be welcomed to finance a child participation process within the context of the work of the ENF-JUS.

Agenda item 11: Any other business

31. No further issues were raised.

Agenda item 12: Date and place of next meetings

32. The Committee took note that the next meeting will be held in person, in Strasbourg, on 15-16 October 2025.

Agenda item 13: Approval of the meeting report

33. The meeting report was circulated shortly after the meeting and approved by all Committee members via a written procedure.

Appendix 1

Agenda and Order of Business

Wednesday 14 May 2025

Timing (CET)	Agenda Item	Working documents Reference documents
9:30 am	1. Opening of the meeting The meeting will be opened by the Acting Chair: Roberto Olla, Head of Human Dignity and Gender Equality Department, Council of Europe Welcome words by Roberto Olla and Agnes von Maravic, Head of the Children's Rights Division.	
9:50 am	2. Tour de table <u>Required action:</u> All members, observers and participants of the ENF-JUS are invited to introduce themselves and their area of expertise.	<u>Reference documents</u> - List of participants – ENF-JUS(2025)LoP1 List of members of ENF-JUS
10:30 am	3. Election of the Chair and Vice Chair <u>Required action:</u> The ENF-JUS is invited to elect its Chair and Vice-Chair pursuant to Article 12 of the Resolution CM/Res(2021)3 on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.	<u>Reference documents</u> - List of candidatures – ENF-JUS(2025)01 - Article 12 of Appendix 1 to Resolution CM/Res(2021)3 on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods
10:45 am	4. Appointment of the Gender Equality Rapporteur of ENF-JUS <u>Required action:</u> The ENF-JUS is invited to appoint a gender equality rapporteur according to its terms of reference.	<u>Reference documents</u> - List of candidatures – ENF-JUS(2025)03 Terms of reference of the ENF-JUS
11:00 am	5. Adoption of the agenda and order of business <u>Required action:</u> The ENF-JUS is invited to review and adopt the draft agenda and order of business.	<u>Working document</u> Draft agenda – ENF-JUS (2025)OJ1 prov Draft annotated agenda – ENF-JUS (2025)OJ1ANN prov
11:15 am – 11:45 am Coffee Break		
11:45 am	6. Information on relevant Council of Europe activities, including cooperation activities, in the area of child-friendly justice Presentation of cooperation team activities in key areas: - assisted in the establishment of the Barnahus model, strengthening, reinforcing and developing interagency co-operation and infrastructures to protect child victims and witnesses of sexual violence; - improved the capacities of professionals, including law enforcement and the judiciary in	<u>Reference documents</u> Terms of reference of the CDENF Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027) COE Website on Child-friendly Justice - CoE Conventions and Recommendations – Key Resources for implementing the Strategy (2022-2027) – CDENF(2022)INF2rev

tackling crimes against children appropriately and effectively, including through the implementation of the Barnahus model;

- set up and promoted the Barnahus model to improve cross-sectorial and interagency co-operation between relevant healthcare institutions, social services, judicial bodies, law enforcement and the prison administration.

Required action: The ENF-JUS is invited to take note of the information provided by the Secretariat on the Council of Europe activities, including cooperation activities, in the area of child-friendly justice.

12:30 pm – 2:00 pm Lunch Break

2:00 pm	7.	Workshop on Bridging the Gap: International Standards and National Practices in Child Sexual Violence Proceedings	<u>Reference documents</u> • ECHR case • Lanzarote Convention <u>Working document</u> Abstract - Parallel session 5th World Congress on Justice with Children - ENF-JUS(2025)04
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3:30 pm – 4:00 pm Coffee Break

4:00 pm	8.	Working methods and workplan	<u>Working document</u> • Concept note: Proposals for initiating the (ENF-JUS) activity on access to child-friendly justice through multidisciplinary and interagency services for children – ENF-JUS (2025)01
9.30 am	9.	Draft Recommendation on multidisciplinary and interagency services for child-friendly justice, including operational guidelines (deliverable (1) of the terms of reference) • Presentation by Dr Susanna Greijer, consultant to the ENF-JUS of the first draft of elements as a basis for the preparation of a draft Recommendation and draft Explanatory Memorandum on “multidisciplinary and interagency services for child-friendly justice”, including operational guidelines.	<u>Working document</u> • The first draft of elements as a basis for the preparation of a draft Recommendation on multidisciplinary and interagency services for child-friendly justice, including operational guidelines and its draft Explanatory Memorandum (restricted document) <u>Reference documents</u> • Mapping study on multidisciplinary and interagency child-friendly justice models responding to violence against children in Council of Europe member states

Required action: The ENF-JUS is invited to:

- take note of the presentation by the consultant on the first draft of elements as a basis for the preparation of a draft Recommendation and draft Explanatory Memorandum on “multidisciplinary and interagency services for child-friendly justice”, including operational guidelines;
- hold an exchange on the first draft of elements as a basis for the preparation of a preliminary draft Recommendation and draft Explanatory Memorandum on

“multidisciplinary and interagency services for child-friendly justice”, including operational guidelines;

- take note of the comments provided by the Observers and Participants of ENF-JUS;
- instruct the consultant and the Secretariat to review the first draft of elements as a basis for the preparation of a preliminary draft Recommendation and draft Explanatory Memorandum on “multidisciplinary and interagency services for child-friendly justice”, including operational guidelines in light of the discussion and comments of the group.

Family picture scheduled on 12.20 pm (until 12.30 pm)

12:30 pm – 2:00 pm Lunch Break

- 2:00 pm 10. Exchange of views between experts on the organisation of consultations with relevant stakeholders, including the discussion on child participation in the context of the work of the ENF-JUS**

Required action:

The ENF-JUS is invited to:

- hold a first exchange on relevant stakeholders as well as on the modalities and organisation of consultations or hearing in the upcoming meetings;
- discuss the child participation dimension in carrying out its deliverables, as proposed in the workplan;
- exchange on synergies and co-operation with other relevant international and national initiatives.

3:00 pm – 3:30 pm Coffee Break

- 3:30 pm Any other business**

- 3:40 pm Date and place of the next meeting**

Proposals to be approved:

- 2nd meeting of ENF-JUS: 15-16 October 2025

- 3:45 pm Approval of the meeting report**

4:00 pm - End of the meeting

Appendix 2

List of participants

MEMBERS / MEMBRES

Czechia / Tchèque

Eliška Hronová

Senior legal officer office of the Czech government agent before the European Court of Human Rights,
Ministry of Justice / *Juriste principal auprès de l'agent du gouvernement tchèque devant la Cour européenne
des droits de l'homme, ministère de la Justice*

Finland / Finlande

Taina Laajasalo

Research Professor at the Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare / *Professeur de recherche à l'Institut
finlandais de la santé et du bien-être*

Greece / Grèce

Eftychia Katsigaraki

Ministry of Justice, General Directorate of Special Legal Affairs & Human Rights / *Ministère de la Justice,
Direction générale des affaires juridiques spéciales et des droits de l'homme*
General Director / *Directrice Générale*

Iceland / Islande

Páll Magnússon

Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Iceland to the United Nations Office and other international organizations
in Geneva / *Conseiller, Mission permanente de l'Islande auprès de l'Office des Nations Unies et autres
organisations internationales à Genève*

Ireland / Irlande

Liam Coen

Principal Officer, Access to Civil Justice Policy Lead, Department of Justice / *Responsable principal,
responsable de la politique d'accès à la justice civile, ministère de la Justice*

Poland / Pologne

Beata Wojtkowska

Vice President Empowering Children Foundation / *Vice-présidente Fondation Empowering Children*

Slovenia / Slovénie

Andrej Del Fabro

Barnahus Project Manager, Head of Child Friendly Criminal Justice Department
Republic of Slovenia, Ministry of Justice / *Responsable du projet Barnahus, chef du département de la
justice pénale adaptée aux enfants République de Slovénie, ministère de la Justice*

PARTICIPANTS

CBSS

Sven Wilson

Policy and Research assistant / *Assistant politique et recherche*

OBSERVERS STATES TO THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE / ETATS OBSERVATEURS AUPRES DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Greece

Eleni Kanaki

Permanent Representation / *Observateur.trice Permanent*

CONSULTANTE

Dr Susanna Greijer (PhD)

Independent consultant / *consultante indépendante*

COUNCIL OF EUROPE SECRETARIAT / *SECRÉTARIAT DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE*

DGII – Directorate General of Democracy / *Direction générale de la Démocratie*

Human Dignity and Gender Equality Department / *Service de la dignité humaine et de l'égalité de genre*

Roberto Olla

Head of Department / *Chef de service*

Children's rights division / *Division des droits de l'enfant*

Agnes von Maravić

Head of Division / *Cheffe de Division*

Cooperation Unit - Children's Rights Division / *Unité de coopération - Division des Droits des Enfants*

Mireya Garcia de Murcia

Project Officer / *Responsable de projet*

Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child / *Comité Directeur Pour les Droits de l'Enfant*

Anne Kayser

Secretary of the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF) / *Secrétaire du Comité directeur pour les droits de l'enfant (CDENF)*

Justine Vizier

Project Officer / *Chargée de Projets*

Alyssa Legendre and Carolina Savonitto

Trainees / *Stagiaires*

SECRETARIAT OF THE ENF-JUS / *SECRÉTARIAT DU ENF-JUS*

Magdalena Bochinska

Secretary to the ENF-JUS / *Secrétaire du ENF-JUS*

Children's Rights Division (DGII) / *Division des Droits des enfants (DGII)*

Tanja Gerwien

Secretary to the ENF-JUS / *Secrétaire du ENF-JUS*

Children's Rights Division (DGII) / *Division des Droits des enfants (DGII)*

Zara Gasparyan

Co-Secretary to the ENF-JUS / *Co-secrétaire du ENF-JUS*

Children's Rights Division (DGII) / *Division des Droits des enfants (DGII)*

Audrey Winum

Project Assistant / *Assistante de projet*

Children's Rights Division (DGII) / *Droits des enfants (DGII)*
