

Co-funded
by the European Union



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



Co-funded and implemented
by the Council of Europe

European Union - Council of Europe joint project
Strengthening child friendly justice through effective cooperation and coordination among
different Barnahus-type services in the regions of Spain

MAPPING STUDY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BARNAHUS MODEL IN SPAIN

LEGAL AND POLICY SITUATION AT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL
LEVEL FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILD VICTIMS OF SEXUAL
VIOLENCE

SUMMARY REPORT

*The project is co-funded by the European Union via the Technical Support Instrument, and co-funded and implemented
by the Council of Europe, in cooperation with the European Commission, Directorate-General for Structural Reform
Support (DG REFORM)*



MINISTERIO
DE DERECHOS SOCIALES
Y AGENDA 2030

SECRETARÍA DE ESTADO
PARA LA AGENDA 2030

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). Views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union or the Council of Europe.

Authors:

Emilie Rivas, Save the Children Spain

Susana Capell, Save the Children Spain

Cristina Massó, Save the Children Spain

Peer review:

Itziar Gómez Fernández, independent expert

© Council of Europe, November 2023. All rights reserved. Licensed to the European Union under conditions.

The European Commission and the Council of Europe, in collaboration with the Spanish Ministry of Social Rights and Agenda 2030, commissioned this report within the framework of the joint project **“Strengthening child-friendly justice through effective co-operation and coordination among different Barnahus-type services in the regions of Spain”**.

The report pursues the following objectives:

- Review the legal framework for the protection against Sexual Violence against Children in the different regions.
- Analyze existing resources that offer services to victims of Sexual Violence against Children in the different regions.
- Identify best practices and challenges in the provision of services to victims of Sexual Violence against Children.
- Make proposals to promote the implementation of the Barnahus model in the different regions of Spain.

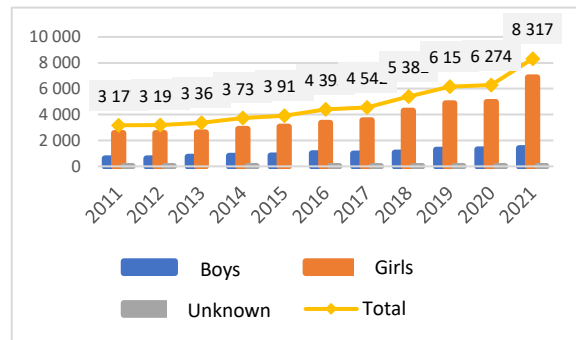
The study’s methodology consisted of both **quantitative and qualitative research techniques**. A documentary analysis was conducted to develop the legal framework applicable to the protection of children against sexual violence. In parallel, **50 interviews were conducted with national and regional focal points working in the fields of justice, health and child protection**, which were used as the basis for the quantitative and comparative analysis of the present mapping. Questionnaires were also provided to focal points working in the field of gender equality in each region.

The research team designed an evaluation tool, which used the quality standards of the Barnahus model developed by the PROMISE network, as the main framework for the analysis. The tool comprised of indicators from both the Barnahus quality standards and the Organic Law 8/2021 of June 4 on comprehensive protection for children and adolescents against violence (LOPIVI). Subsequently, the **items of analysis were classified into seven thematic blocks**, incorporating one or several quality standards of the Barnahus model and specific articles of the LOPIVI. These include:

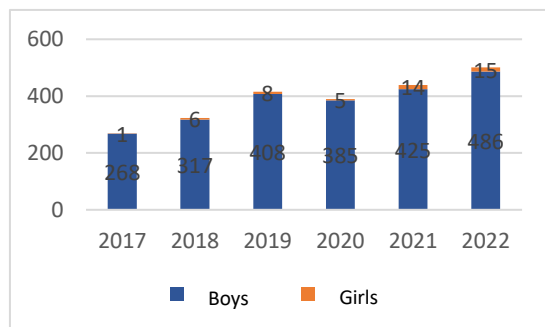
- Legal framework for the protection against Sexual Violence against Children:** norms, protocols and other tools available in each region specifically related to Sexual Violence against Children
- Specialized resources for victims of Sexual Violence against Children:** it analyses the level of specialization of existing resources in each region, the services offered and the target groups that have access to these.
- Quality and specialized training:** it addresses the specialization of professionals that work with victims of to Sexual Violence against Children
- Judicial process and interdepartmental collaboration:** analysis of the practice of preconstituted evidence, case management and collaboration with key actors, such as the Office of Assistance to Victims of Crime (OAVD) from the Justice Department.
- Child-friendly spaces:** it focuses on whether the spaces where the preconstituted evidence is prepared are adapted to children’s needs.
- Prevention and awareness-raising on sexual Violence against Children:** it considers initiatives focused on preventing Sexual Violence against Children such as communication and awareness-raising campaigns as well as training professionals from other fields such as education.
- Implementation of the Barnahus model:** analysis of the level of implementation of the Barnahus model in each region.

Sexual Violence against Children in Spain: rise in sexual crimes and victimizations of children and under-aged offenders

According to data from the Ministry of Interior, in 2021, there were **16.989 complaints for crimes against sexual freedom** and, in half of cases (8.317) the victim was a child. Sexual abuse has been the most reported type of crime against sexual violence of children, representing almost 50% of all complaints in this category.



Graph. Evolution on number of complaints for crimes against sexual freedom against minors (0-17). Source: Ministry of Interior (2021)



Graph. Minors convicted for crimes against sexual freedom divided by sex. Source: INE 2022

Regarding the perpetrators of these crimes, convictions of **adult perpetrators** for crimes of sexual abuse and aggression of children under 16 have increased **131% between 2017 and 2021**¹. Equally, annual reports of the Public Prosecutors' office reveal a worrying tendency towards a rise in cases in which both the perpetrator and the victim were underage. **Between 2017 and 2021, the number of minors convicted for crimes against sexual freedom increased by 86%**². This growth is directly linked to increased awareness on the importance of reporting cases, but also to the lack of sex education and the influence of online pornography, which is free

and unlimited.

Lastly, notifications of cases of child maltreatment in Spain have more than doubled in the past 10 years, showing an increase of 53.52% between 2012 and 2021.³

A legal framework that favours protection against Sexual Violence against Children

Amongst the several provisions of international law that regulate children's rights, ratified by the Spanish government, the Council of Europe's **Convention for the protection of children against sexual exploitation and abuse (Lanzarote Convention)** is one of the most important international legal tools for the protection against Sexual Violence against Children. Similarly, there are numerous international guidelines and recommendations, such as the **Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on child-friendly justice** and the **new Council of Europe's Strategy on the Rights of the Child (2022-2027)**⁴. The Strategy establishes Child-friendly Justice (point 2.4. of strategy) as a priority to avoid secondary victimisation and is committed to continuing to promote the implementation of the Barnahus model. At national level, Spain's **legal framework for the protection of children against violence has recently made significant progress and is considered quite comprehensive**. Due to adoption of several laws, Spain has today a robust legal framework that can guarantee, in all its territory, the effective protection of violence against children. Concretely, there are three relevant laws addressing child victims of sexual violence and the Barnahus model:

- **Law 4/2015, of 27 April, on the Statute of Victims of Crime:** it led to an important change of perspective on victim's rights, changing from a system previously centered on the Penal Code to a

¹ According to the statistics of the National Institute of Statistics (INE).

² <https://cdn.20m.es/adj/2019/06/10/4007.pdf>

³ The data does not consider information from Catalonia and Melilla, as there is no information available for 2021, and neither Galicia as there is no data between 2018 to 2021.

⁴ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/strategy-for-the-rights-of-the-child>

more victim-centered approach, resulting in the creation of specific structures to attend victims in all Spanish regions.

- **Organic Law 8/2021, of 4 June, on the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents against Violence (LOPVI):** a comprehensive, pioneering law that **addresses all forms of violence against children**, stating a firm commitment to end violence against children in Spain. It also describes all phases of action in a suspected case of Sexual Violence against Children as well as all actors that should be involved in the process. To date, some key measures included in the LOPVI have already been implemented, such as the creation of the **Sectoral Conference**, the approval of the **Strategy to Eradicate Violence against children (2022)**, the **National Strategy for the Rights of Children and Adolescents 2023-2030**, the creation of the **National Council of Child and Adolescent Participation (CEPIA)**. Lastly, the creation of the **Commission to monitor the implementation of the law** in February 2023.
- **Organic Law 10/2022, of 6 September, on the comprehensive freedom of sexual freedom (LOGILS):** this law represented important progress by incorporating the provision to implement the **Barnahus model** as a reference model for child victims of sexual abuse to ensure due process of judicial proceedings and avoid secondary victimization. It also addresses the main principles of the islandic model: interdepartmental collaboration, comprehensive and specialized resources on Sexual Violence against Children, highly qualified professionals, in order to offer a quality-based care to victims of Sexual Violence against Children. Prior to the LOGILS, there were two different types of crimes: sexual abuse and sexual aggression, which differentiate by the use of intimidation and violence to commit the crime. Nowadays, both types of crimes are englobed into the category of “sexual aggression”.

Distribution of powers in Spain and the Barnahus model

For the implementation of the Barnahus model it is important to consider that the regional organization of Spain responds to a model of distribution of powers that is highly decentralized and attributes certain level of autonomy to municipalities and provinces (local entities) as well as its regions (I art. 2. CE). The **competencies that are linked to the implementation of the Barnahus model in Spain are mostly competences shared between the State and the regions**. These include security, health, education, legal system as well as the procedures and organization of the Public Administration. However, competencies on Justice are exclusive to the State. Overall, the Spanish regions count with different schemes regarding the distribution of power, which have a direct influence in the implementation of the Barnahus model:

- **Andalucía, Aragón, Canarias, Catalonia, Navarra, Comunidad Valenciana, Galicia and Basque Country:** they have **competences on all the areas related to the Barnahus model** including administration of regional Justice Institutions, security, health services, education, social services, Children and Adolescents and administrative organisation.
- **Cantabria, Madrid, La Rioja and Asturias:** have **competences on all areas except for security** (although they do have the capacity to coordinate local police forces).
- **Castilla-La Mancha, Castilla y León, Extremadura, Balearic Islands and Murcia:** have **competences on all areas except for security** (with the exception of local police) and **the administration of justice** (not transferred in some cases).
- **Ceuta and Melilla:** have **competences in all areas except for security, administration of justice and education** (they have a minor role in the state’s competence regarding education). Regarding health services, the Health Department⁵ counts with some competences in this area and the National Institute of Health Management (INGESA) is responsible for the service provision in the Autonomous Cities.

The quality standards of the Barnahus model in Spain

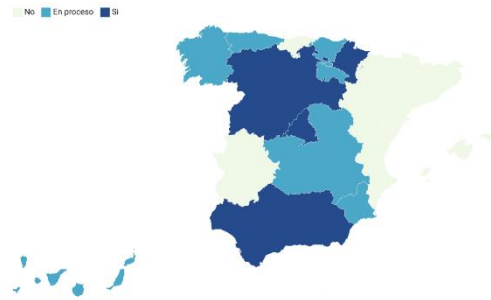
The quality standards of the Barnahus model have served as a guide to capture where the Spanish regions stand in regard to the Barnahus model. The standards ultimately illustrate the maximum level of

⁵ The Health Department is competent for those public health responsibilities transferred from the Central Government as well as for establishing technical registries and ensuring the minimum conditions of Health Centres and their services.

achievement in each of the areas analysed. This section also gathers the progress made in the implementation of measures included in the LOPIVI.

Theme 1: Legal framework for the protection of children against sexual violence

The vast majority of regions have a **legal framework that includes the protection against Sexual Violence against Children**, either in their regional laws that protect children or through specific protocols and handbooks that guide the action of the different professionals involved in cases of Sexual Violence against Children.



Map Children's law updated with the changes introduced by LOPIVI. Source: prepared by the author on the basis of data obtained in study.

Only **32% of the regions have specific laws on children's rights that include the new developments brought about by the LOPIVI** including Andalucía, Castilla-La Mancha, Madrid and Navarra. At the moment, the Basque Country is in the process of elaborating a new law on children's rights adapted to LOPIVI. There are differences in the level of progress achieved by the regions as regards the legal framework to protect children against sexual violence:

Only **32% of the regions have specific laws on children's rights that include the new developments brought about by the LOPIVI** including Andalucía, Castilla-La Mancha, Madrid and Navarra. At the moment, the Basque Country is in the process of elaborating a new law on children's rights adapted to LOPIVI. There are differences in the level of progress achieved by the regions as regards the legal framework to protect children against sexual violence:

- In only **three regions** - Community of Madrid, Navarra and Catalonia –the implementation of the **Barnahus** model is included in their respective legal frameworks.
- **Only two regions, La Rioja and the Balearic Islands, have specific interdepartmental protocols** for cases of Sexual Violence against Children. In the other regions, coordination between the actors is guided through generic protocols on violence against children, but not specific on Sexual Violence against Children.
- Only **Andalusia, Catalonia and the Basque Country have regional strategies that focus on sexual violence against children**, and in the case of Catalonia, it addresses specifically the promotion of the Barnahus model.

Theme 2: Specialized resources for children and adolescents victims of sexual violence

The most important change introduced by the Barnahus model lies in offering **specialized, comprehensive and interdepartmental** services to victims of Sexual Violence against Children, with specialized and trained professionals to guarantee their best interests and prevent secondary victimization, which is also reflected in article 12 of the LOPIVI.



Map. Specialized, comprehensive and interdepartmental resources for Children and Adolescent victims of sexual violence. Source: prepared by the author on the basis of data obtained in study.

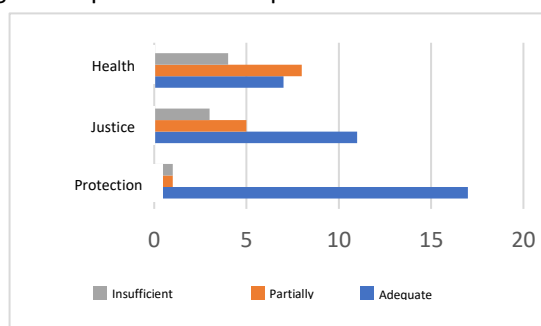
- Overall, all regions have **specialized resources for victims of Sexual Violence against Children** in at least one of the areas of study including child protection, justice and health.
- About half of the regions (10) have **specialized and comprehensive resources for victims of Sexual Violence against Children**, with the majority of them being managed within the framework of child protection agencies. In some cases, these resources are intended solely for children and adolescents in the protection system, while in other they offer universal care to all children but not for all services.
- Some services included in the Barnahus model **are well covered**: all services related to the judicial proceedings such as the forensic interview and medical examination or free legal aid are available in all the regions. Conversely, other **services are generally less developed**, such as specialized psychological treatment for victims of Sexual Violence against Children and exploratory interviews for cases that are not prosecuted.
- The study revealed that the specialized resources identified are usually **managed in two different ways**: either directly executed by Public Administration personnel, or indirectly, through direct covenant with specialized private entities.

To date, there is only one **specialized, comprehensive and interdepartmental specialized resource** for victims of Sexual Violence against Children s in Spain, located in Tarragona (Catalonia). It offers all services integrated in the Barnahus model, such as exploratory interviews for all suspected cases, forensic interviews, medical examinations, accompaniment of the victim and non-offending family members, as well as specialized psychological treatment.

Theme 3: Quality of the resources and specialized training on sexual violence against children

Specialized training is a central element of the Barnahus model, included in the standard 9 of the model as well as by the LOPIVI, which in its article 5 refers to the need for **specialization and training of professionals** who are in regular contact with children and adolescents to ensure early detection of violence. It is important to highlight that at this time **there is no formal and regulated training on child and adolescent victimization**, rendering it difficult to assess the degree of specialization of professionals on this area.

- The **level of specialization of professionals** working at the comprehensive and specialized resources analysed in the regions is **very heterogeneous**, which make comparison more difficult. However, the resources belonging to the Child Protection area count with the highest level of specialization of their staff, followed by those of Justice. Resources from the Health area have quite diverse levels of specialization.
- The Public Administration contracting system **does not favor the specialization of professionals**. First, there is no formal training on child protection that could be required in recruitment processes. Second, there is **significant staff turnover** in some of the resources, which hampers the retention of specialized professionals and discourages investment in specialized training, which usually incurs a high cost.
- Overall, there is a **lack of specialized training on key topics** such as child development, Sexual Violence against Children or trauma. Only in half of the regions, the professionals that provide psychological treatment or do forensic interviews use evidence-based protocols.



Graph. Level of specialization of specialized resources on CSA. Source: prepared by the author on the basis of data obtained in study.

Theme 4: Interdepartmental collaboration and judicial proceedings

Standard 2 of the Barnahus model refers to **creating and implementing processes and structures to ensure interdepartmental collaboration** amongst all administrations involved in cases of Sexual Violence against Children. Similarly, the LOPIVI, in its article 34, also states the need to develop specific protocols to promote interdisciplinary work amongst all actors in order to ensure the best interests of the child victim and avoid secondary victimization.



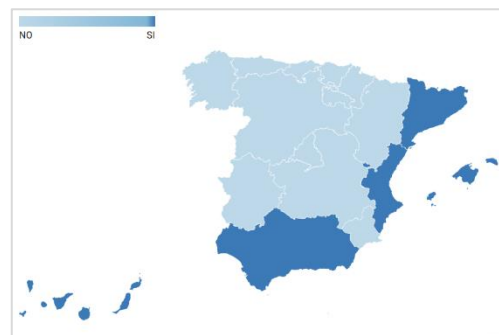
Map. Waiting list for the preconstituted evidence. Source: prepared by the author on the basis of data obtained in study.

- **Interdepartmental collaboration continues to be a challenge** for most regions partly due to the particularly complex division of powers existing in Spain. Comunidad de Madrid, Catalonia, Castilla-La Mancha, Asturias, Basque Country and Balearic Islands count with formal structures for interdepartmental collaboration with other relevant actors in cases of Sexual Violence against Children. Other regions such as Galicia, Aragón and Murcia have interdepartmental coordination meetings, but not specific to Sexual Violence against Children.
- Although the LOPIVI refers to the central role that the Office to Assist Victims of Crime (OAVD) should have in cases of Sexual Violence against Children, there are **significant differences in the regions regarding its role**. While in Navarra the OAVD has a very active role, in other cases like in the Canary Islands, the OAVD does not currently have a physical office and instead offers its services exclusively online.

- There is a **heterogeneous distribution of the number of Gesell chambers** in the Spanish territory. In **about half of the regions, the resources and spaces available for the production of preconstituted evidence are considered adequate**, while 31% of the regions are considered only partially adequate and in need of additional resources. Lastly, **16% of Spanish regions have insufficient resources to produce preconstituted evidence**.
- There is disparity between the regions in relation to the **waiting period for the production of preconstituted evidence in cases of Sexual Violence against Children which ranges from only a few weeks to several months and up to a year in the worst case**. Nonetheless, it has been difficult to obtain quantitative data from all regions on this particular issue.
- In most regions, preconstituted evidence is not currently being used as a standard measure for **children over 14 years old**.

Theme 5: Resources with child-friendly spaces

Standard 4 of the Barnahus model provides for **spaces and environments to be adapted to the needs of children**, which also recommends for the Barnahus facilities to be preferably located in a residential area. Similarly, standard 6 encourages **forensic interviews with child victims to be carried out in spaces designed or adapted for this purpose**. Forensic interviews and the production of preconstituted evidence are conducted in court premises in the vast majority of regions. However, there are some exceptions in Tarragona (Catalonia), Mallorca, Andalucía and Canary islands, amongst others.

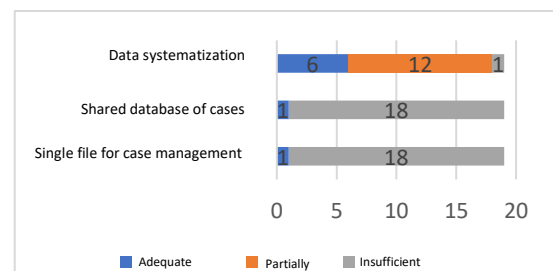


Map. Best practices on child-friendly spaces for the practice of preconstituted evidence. Source: prepared by the author on the basis of data obtained in study.

The **specialized court on violence against children** in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria seeks to pursue child-friendly justice by providing adapted spaces during judicial proceedings. Child-friendly Gesell chambers, waiting areas and an exploratory room for medical examinations that include decoration and materials tailored to the needs of children and adolescents. Also, a specific protocol to guide all legal professionals working in this Court was developed to guide their interactions with children, ensuring that the child's best interests are catered for at all times. Lastly, a very relevant precedent has taken place recently as this court has facilitated for the first time that a girl victim of sexual abuse could make her declaration from her own home as preconstituted evidence.

Theme 6: Data collection, awareness-raising and prevention of Sexual Violence against Children.

Standard 10 of the Barnahus model states the importance of collecting data and sharing statistical data on Sexual Violence against Children as well as developing awareness-raising campaigns for the prevention of Sexual Violence against Children. Only in Catalonia there is a shared database with information on cases between several actors. Six regions systematize the data on Sexual Violence against Children, while twelve regions only do it partially or with some of the actors.



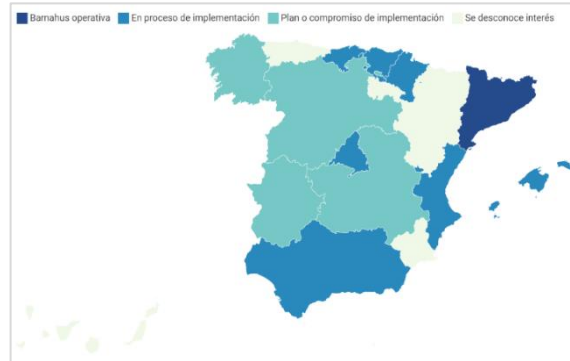
Graph. Data collection and systematization on CSA. Source: prepared by the author on the basis of data obtained in study.

Most regions in Spain (68%) have implemented awareness-raising initiatives related to Sexual Violence against Children. Best practices have been identified in the prevention of Sexual Violence against Children. For instance, the Amino Association's prevention program in Galicia, the program called "Sexualities" in Asturias or the campaigns of the Fundación Márgenes y Vínculos in Extremadura and Ceuta. Nonetheless, **there is much diversity on the level of implementation of these prevention measures** in the different regions.

Theme 7: Implementation of the Barnahus model

Significant and noteworthy progress has been made in several Spanish regions regarding the implementation of the Barnahus model, and a formal interest on applying the Barnahus model has been expressed in most of the remaining territories.

- In Catalonia, there is the **only active Barnahus pilot in Spain**, set up in 2021 and located in the Camp de Tarragona. The Catalan government approved a formal plan for the implementation of the model throughout the Catalan territory with the construction of 13 Barnahus centers in total.
- At the moment, **the Basque Country, Madrid, Navarra, Cantabria and Comunitat Valenciana** are in advanced stages on the implementation of the Barnahus model. The Basque Country set up a Technical Working Group for the preparation of the Barnahus pilot and Madrid has finalized the tender process for the first pilot in this region.



Map Level of implementation of the Barnahus model in Spanish regions.
Source: prepared by the author on the basis of data obtained in the study

- Save the Children has conducted **diagnostics for the implementation of the Barnahus model** in Comunidad Valenciana, Andalucía, Madrid, Navarra, País Vasco, Cantabria and Balearic Islands (Ibiza) to adapt the model to each of these regions.
- The Barnahus model is being **tailored to each region**. For instance, in Catalonia, Andalucía, Comunidad Valenciana and Comunidad de Madrid, the Barnahus model is led by the **Directorate General for Children and Adolescents**, while in Cantabria Barnahus will be led by the Department of Employment and Social Policies. Conversely, in Navarra, the **Directorate General of Justice** will lead the model, and in Asturias it has similarly been the Justice actors who have shown interest in implementing the model. Lastly, in the Balearic Islands will be led by the Insular Councils of Ibiza and Mallorca.
- For now, the set-up of Barnahus pilot has been the norm in all the regions that have started implementing the model. Initially Barnahus will **focus exclusively on Sexual Violence against Children** although other types of violence may be included in the future once the model is more consolidated.

Conclusions

1. **Great diversity in the type of organizational structures of Spanish regions:** resulting from Spain's strongly decentralized and asymmetrical organization system, there is a wide variety of administrative and normative structures in Spanish regions, which directly influence the Barnahus model. Therefore, **it is unlikely that Spain will develop a unique Barnahus model, as it will be necessary to adapt the model to each region**, taking into account the competences assumed as well as their organizational structure.
2. **National and regional legal framework for the implementation of the Barnahus model:** the development of the new Organic Laws 8/2021 and 10/2022 is a unique opportunity to update regional laws and incorporate the creation of specialized, comprehensive and interdepartmental resources for victims of Sexual Violence against Children such as the Barnahus model.
3. **Significant increase of cases of Sexual Violence against Children:** according to data from the Ministry of Interior and the State's Prosecutors office, as well as the data collected by the regions, there has been a significant increase of cases of Sexual Violence against Children. Hence, there is a heightened need for specialized resources to care for victims of Sexual Violence against Children.
4. **Improve the visibility of Sexual Violence against Children** most of legal documents and norms examined refer and seek to assess if the child is at risk or in a vulnerable situation, instead of referring specifically to the diverse types of violence against children. Yet, it is important to name specifically

Sexual Violence against Children as a separate, and particularly severe, type of violence against children.

5. **Best practices in the provision of services to victims of Sexual Violence against Children:** numerous best practices focusing on victims of Sexual Violence against Children have been identified in the Spanish regions. Some initiatives have years of experience such as the Program of the Directorate General for Children in Andalucía (1992) or the SEIF resources in Biskaia (2001). Others are more recent but yet of utmost importance, such as the Barnahus in Tarragona or the Specialized Court in Las Palmas.
6. **Commitment to the Barnahus model:** there is a high level of political and social commitment for the implementation of new and more comprehensive models to care for victims of Sexual Violence against Children in Spain. Some regions have already started applying the Barnahus model such as the Basque Country, Comunidad Valenciana, Comunidad de Madrid, Cantabria, Navarra, Andalucía and Balearic Islands.
7. **Lack of uniformity and criteria for the practice of preconstituted evidence:** the enforceability of preconstituted evidence for cases of minors under 14 years old, as brought forward by LOPIVI, has led to most judicial parties generalizing the practice, although it is still conducted in a very uneven manner and not always with the desired quality. Despite some exceptions considered as good practices, the child has to go to court to give testimony. There are guides for professionals that interview children, but further training and guidance are still needed to judges and courts. Also, it would be important to promote a legal reform that demands further justification for judicial representatives that have been requested to use preconstituted evidence for victims over 14 years old and denied it.
8. **Interdepartmental collaboration is a challenge:** the collaboration amongst actors involved in cases of Sexual Violence against Children remains challenging. It is important to elaborate protocols that promote the interdepartmental collaboration of all actors in a Sexual Violence against Children case to ensure the best interest of the child and reduce secondary victimization (articles 34, 28, 41 of LOPIVI).
9. **Inexistence of a resource to evaluate all cases of Sexual Violence against Children:** most regions with specialized resources offer evaluation services in cases with a suspicion of Sexual Violence against Children but there is not a unique resource that centralizes the evaluation of all suspected cases, especially for those that are not prosecuted.
10. **Different models of care for child victims of sexual violence:** there are currently different models of comprehensive and specialized care for children victims of sexual violence led by Justice, Child Protection and Gender Equality Departments. It will be key to consider those existing resources to integrate them into the protocols of action of the Barnahus model in Spain.
11. **Lack of specialized teams on children and Sexual Violence against Children** there is room for improvement on the need for specialization of professionals on Sexual Violence against Children, especially in health and justice resources. In addition, the contracting system of Public Administration does not favour the specialization of professionals, thus posing a risk of hampering the implementation of the Barnahus model, which requires highly specialized personnel on victimization of children and trauma.

Recommendations

Theme 1: Legal framework

- **Include the development of the Barnahus model in the coordination mechanisms between the State and the regions** to ensure consistent normative developments and progress in the implementation of the model respecting the principle of equality. This could be done by incorporating the Barnahus model in one of the existing conferences, either directly at technical level in a sectorial conference or in a sectorial commission. Conversely, a new conference could be set up for specifically for the Barnahus model, although it should be ensured that its functioning is included in a law or in specific rules of internal organization.
- **Introduce in the regional Children's Law currently in development** an article on the creation of a specialized, comprehensive and interdepartmental model to care for victims of Sexual Violence against Children following the example of Comunidad de Madrid and Navarra.

- Adapt regional Children’s Law to the LOPIVI, in order to **ensure that all children and adolescents are cared by public services**, and not only by those in the child protection department.
- **Promote the elaboration of regional protocols specific to Sexual Violence against Children** that incorporate new forms of sexual violence such as Child Sexual Exploitation, online sexual violence and sexual violence among peers.
- **Promote the creation of regional interdepartmental commissions** to design interdepartmental protocols and the corresponding services.
- **Incorporate into regional laws the definition and action principles to prevent secondary victimization** in all the phases and for all actors involved in a case of sexual violence against children.
- **Assign an adequate budget to the regional Children’s Laws** to create interdepartmental services, campaigns and prevention programs, considering that it is an efficient investment both from a social and economic perspective.
- **In order to be consistent with LOPIVI, ensure that external entities that run specialized services receive specialized training on interventions with children** and is included in their internal directives and service notes.
- With the approval of the LOPIVI, **the obligation to communicate suspected cases of sexual violence against children should be strengthened and include the qualified duty to notify for professionals**. This could be promoted by establishing clear and accessible channels of notification as well as training on detection of cases of sexual violence against children.
- **Consider including in protocols for the health and judicial system the possibility for children and adolescents to select the gender of the person that conducts the exploration**. This is important considering that a victim of sexual violence may feel rejection towards people of the same gender as the aggressor.
- Emphasize efforts to prevent situations of violence, **incorporating into the legal framework all types of prevention actions considered by LOPIVI**. Take as reference art.23 in Title III that provides a definition for “prevention”, specifies the obligation to develop specific plans and programs to eradicate violence and highlights the need to count with a sufficient budget to implement such measures.

Theme 2: Specialized resources on Sexual Violence against Children

- **Create one resource to offer specialized evaluation of suspected cases of Sexual Violence against Children** potential victims of Sexual Violence against Children should be only evaluated by specialized professionals to guarantee the quality of the intervention and avoid any contamination of testimony. Thus, it is essential to have specialized teams for all suspected cases of Sexual Violence against Children
- **Expand and strengthen the network of Mental Health services for Children and Adolescents** in order to guarantee that it offers universal and quality care grounded on evidence-based methodologies for all children who need it. Include specialized psychological treatment on trauma and sexual violence to provide adequate responses to victims of Sexual Violence against Children
- **Evaluate existing specialized and comprehensive resources to promote their evolution into integrating an interdepartmental component**. Ultimately, interdepartmental resources would host professionals from other services linked to the Barnahus model and their functions would be organized and coordinated through protocols developed through a collaborative process.
- **Create functional expert teams in violence against children, including sexual violence**, in the health system to provide advice to pediatricians and health professionals.
- **Explore the possibility to broaden the attention of Pediatrician services (in primary health and hospital care) until 17 years old**, as it was included in the II National Strategic Plan on Children and Adolescences 2013- 2016 (PENIA).
- **In the light of the upcoming set up of specialized courts**, is advisable to increase the number of professionals in technical teams of the justice department so that they can ensure quality in their services in a context of increased cases of sexual violence against children. More specialization of professionals in the justice system could be ensured by creating **Units of comprehensive and specialized evaluation of violence against children**, receiving the appropriate specialized training.

- **Create a counselling service via telephone to provide advice to professionals regarding sexual violence against children**, incorporating this new line of intervention in the existing specialized services.

Theme 3: Quality of resources and specialized training on Sexual Violence against Children

- **Incorporate the obligation to acquire specialized staff and training** on trauma and Sexual Violence against Children in the agreements signed with private entities that manage the specialized resources, as well as in internal guidelines and service notes.
- **Provide regular specialized training** on prevention, detection, child victimization and treatment techniques based on evidence.
- **Elaborate a model of psychological treatment specific for victims of Sexual Violence against Children**, using methodologies based on evidence and shared amongst the different administrations and services that provide psychological aid in cases of Sexual Violence against Children
- **Training of justice professionals:** promote that judges, magistrates, prosecutors and all justice professionals in contact with children victims of sexual violence count with training on sexual victimization of children and adolescents.
- **Specialised and continuous education for health care professionals** on prevention, early detection and comprehensive approach to violence against children, including sexual violence.
- **Promote the creation of agreements with professional bodies** to ensure training in all regions and to **explore low-cost evidence-based methodologies** so that the price of such courses is not a barrier to count with trained professionals.
- **Create specialized Public Defender shifts for children and adolescents victims of sexual abuse** in the Bar Association and define minimum and continuous training needed for these lawyers.
- All **University degrees** that train professionals that will work with children and adolescents should include in their curricula topics related to violence against children and sexual victimization.
- **Make it an obligation to conduct external and independent evaluations of Barnahus and other specialized services**, in order to guarantee the quality standards and ensure the sustainability of the model in Spain.

Theme 4: Judicial proceedings and interdepartmental coordination

- **Ensure the quality of the preconstituted evidence** to avoid that children testify in court due to bad quality of their recorded testimony. Hence, it is crucial that relevant professionals are properly trained in the practice of preconstituted evidence and follow a regulated protocol. In addition, a specialized technician should be part of the recording team and be responsible for the technical aspects.
- Prioritize **processing and hosting judicial proceedings related to sexual violence against children** in order to avoid undue delay that may influence the testimony of the child victim as well as harm their recuperation process and restoration of their basic rights.
- **Action guide for the practice of preconstituted evidence for minors** aimed at judges and courts that includes, amongst other elements: the space where the forensic interview should take place, the profile and training of the professional interviewing the child, the interview protocols to be used as well as specific measures to consider for children under 5 or with any type of disability.
- **Include in protocols and action guides that preconstituted evidence procedures involving minors should always be scheduled first thing in the morning** in order to avoid undue delays resulting in the child having to wait long hours.
- Develop specific guidelines for psychosocial teams and the Institute for Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences to **conduct preconstituted evidence procedures in Barnahus**.
- **Conduct studies** that examine the dismissal rate and its justifications, as well as the rate of realization of preconstituted evidence versus declaration in court in cases of sexual violence against children.
- **Creation of a specialised group on Children and Adolescents in the General Council of Judicial Power:** taking as an example the expert group on domestic and gender-based violence, create a specialised working group on children victims of violence in the Technical Cabinet of the GCJP. This group would be responsible for the elaboration of the action guide abovementioned as well as to provide corresponding training.

- **Modify the LECRIM:** promote the practice of preconstituted evidence with children over 14 years old and under 18, proposing the modification of art. 449 ter LECrim. Thus, the option to contradict the realization of the preconstituted evidence with minors between 14 and 18 would be motivated by a member of a judicial organ, ensuring the best interest of the child.
- Explore synergies and promote **coordination between the pilot experience of the specialized court on the Canary Islands and the Barnahus model** to advance child-friendly justice for victims of Sexual Violence against Children
- **Improve interdepartmental collaboration** identifying focal points in each department involved and setting up an interdisciplinary and interdepartmental technical working group as in the Basque Country.
- **Work together with the Ministry of Equality and Social Rights to elaborate a document that describes the procedures with women under 18.** Also, explore how to fit and coordinate the existing equality services and the set-up of the new comprehensive violence centers with the implementation of the Barnahus model for cases of sexual violence in adolescences.

Theme 5: Resources with child-friendly spaces

- **Adapt facilities and spaces**, so that victims of Sexual Violence against Children can access services in a child-friendly environment, where their privacy is respected and any contact with the alleged aggressor is avoided at all times.
- Barnahus must count with certain **protection and safety parameters, both internal and external**, to promote the creation of healthy and safe spaces (light, sound, temperature), which are at the same time accessible and promote emotional wellbeing of children and their families.
- Barnahus must be **accessible both by public transport and private vehicle**, and spaces should be adapted for children with disabilities and special needs. It is recommended that Barnahus are located in residential areas and are not identifiable as services for victims of violence.

Theme 6: Data collection, awareness-raising and prevention of Sexual Violence against Children

- Reinforce **communication procedures**, both for professionals as well as children and adolescents, with **communication campaigns** on the duty to report any suspicion of Sexual Violence against Children and the process to follow.
- **Promote the usage of shared common indicators** amongst Public Administrations, regions and specialized resources to collect data on violence against children, agreeing on criteria for age, gender, etc.
- **Include in the Statistical Portal of the Ministry of Interior** the category of “violence against children”, including in this category all types of specific sexual violence against children.
- **Promote the compilation, visibilisation and preparation of studies** on violence against children, including prevalence studies, in the Observatories of Childhood in the regions.
- **Conduct a study on services available for victims of gender-based violence** in each region to further analyse the care provided to minors by these services and unify referral criteria to child-specialised services.
- **Evaluate the assistance programs for teenagers** in Primary Health Care and promote actions to prevent and detect sexual violence.
- **Systematize, monitor and register cases of sexual violence against minors**, contributing to statistical data that allows to generate unified knowledge on the situation of violence against children in each region (art. 56 LOPIVI)
- Incorporate into regional legal frameworks the **obligation to implement a system to monitor cases of violence against children**, in which all notifications of cases should be registered and integrate it into the Unified Registry of Social Services on Violence against Children (RUSSVI). Information on any protection measures adopted by social services should also be included.

Theme 7: Implementation of the Barnahus model in Spain

- Incorporate **child participation mechanisms**, consulting children and adolescents, on future Barnahus services to be established.
- Coordinate the creation of centers for victims of sexual aggression with the Barnahus model in order to provide inclusive services to victims of Sexual Violence against Children, both from a

perspective of children's rights and gender, thus avoiding overlaps in the delivery of services, particularly in adolescents

- **Create mechanisms of collaboration between regions** to share experiences and advance towards a Barnahus model that meets all quality standard.