



**An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,  
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige**  
Department of Children, Equality,  
Disability, Integration and Youth

Co-funded  
by the European Union



Co-funded and implemented  
by the Council of Europe

# **Final Conference of the Barnahus Project in Ireland**

**Joint EU-Council of Europe project**

**“Support the implementation of the Barnahus project in Ireland”**

**29 January 2025**

**The Alex Hotel**

**41-47 Fenian St, Dublin, D02 H678, Ireland**

## Context

The European Union-Council of Europe Joint Project “**Support the implementation of the Barnahus project in Ireland**” aims to strengthen the country’s response mechanism to child sexual abuse, to ensure that undue delays in the treatment of such cases is diminished, and that all children who are victims of sexual violence benefit from a child-friendly access to justice.

In 2017, Ireland successfully implemented the **Children First Act 2015**, which introduced mandatory reporting for suspected cases of child abuse. It was followed by the development of a **pilot Barnahus project in Galway in 2019, which began receiving referrals in November 2020**. The goal of the European Union-Council of Europe project is to address the challenges encountered during the pilot project and to facilitate the opening of two additional centres: **Barnahus South in Cork and Barnahus East in Dublin**.

The project is co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe and is implemented by the Council of Europe’s Children’s Rights Division in close co-operation with the Irish Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) from 12 August 2022 to 21 April 2025.

The Final Conference of the Barnahus project in Ireland, occurring on January 29, 2025, will be an excellent opportunity to celebrate the **achievements of the project** and present its concrete results, in the presence of representatives of the Irish government, the European Commission, the Council of Europe, other national stakeholders, members of the academia, as well as national and international experts.

The event will showcase the several deliverables developed to **improve the quality, efficiency coordination and operation** of the Barnahus centres to respond to and manage child sexual abuse cases in a child-friendly manner and in line with promising practices. The present programme is based on the **two main components of the project**:

1. The three Barnahus sites are initiated. The design and operations are set up, well-coordinated and standardised to respond to and manage child sexual abuse cases in a child-friendly manner and in line with promising European practices;
2. The model is integrated into practice and staff is confident in its use and in applying interagency processes.

<b>Agenda</b>	
9:00-9:30	<b>Arrival tea and coffee</b>
<b>Moderator of the event: Áine Kerr</b> <b>Entrepreneur and broadcaster</b>	
9:30-10:00	<p><b>Welcoming remarks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Kevin McCarthy, Secretary General, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth</i></li> <li>• <i>Nathalie Berger, Director for Support to Member States' Reforms, DG REFORM, European Commission (video-message)</i></li> <li>• <i>Roberto Olla, Head of the Human Dignity and Gender Equality Department, Council of Europe</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Projection:</b> Galway Barnahus video</p>
10:00-10:30	<b>Keynote speech:</b> <i>Matthew McVarish, Brave Movement Representative to Council of Europe's Lanzarote Committee</i>
10:30-11:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Results and key achievements at national level</b> <i>Des Delaney, Chief Social Worker, Child Care Performance and Social Work</i></li> <li>• <b>Progress and developments at regional level</b> <i>Aoife O'Malley, Barnahus West</i> <i>Fiona Geraghty, Barnahus South</i> <i>Eilísh Hardiman, Barnahus East</i></li> </ul>
11:00-12:00	<b>Panel I – Legal achievements</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Siobhan Barron, Department of Justice</i></li> <li>• <i>Ian Lackey, Detective Superintendent, An Garda Síochána</i></li> <li>• <i>Julie O'Donnell, Tusla</i></li> <li>• <i>Judge Carole-Anne Coolican</i></li> <li>• <b>Questions from the audience</b></li> </ul>
12:00-13:00	<b>Panel II – Capacity-building and interagency coordination activities</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Emma Harewood, Council of Europe international expert</i></li> <li>• <i>Eimear Lacey, Children's Health Ireland</i></li> <li>• <i>Dr Maria Lotty, University College Cork, Council of Europe national expert</i></li> <li>• <i>Dr Joanne Nelson, Consultant Paediatrician, Barnahus West</i></li> <li>• <b>Questions from the audience</b></li> </ul>
13:00-14:00	<b>Lunch break</b>
14:00-15:15	<b>Panel III – Awareness-raising and child participation</b>
14:00-14:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Emma Harewood, Council of Europe international expert</i></li> <li>• <i>Mark Murphy, Juvo, Council of Europe national expert</i></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Questions from the audience</b></li> </ul>
14:30-15:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Child participation session</b> <i>Carmel Ward, Early Childhood Ireland, Council of Europe national expert</i></li> <li>• <b>Questions from the audience</b></li> </ul>
15:15-15:30	<p><b>Projection:</b> Video on project results</p> <p><b>Concluding remarks and key takeaways</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Des Delaney, Chief Social Worker, Child Care Performance and Social Work Unit, DCEDIY</i></li> <li>• <i>Johannes Börmann, Head of Sector at the Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM), European Commission</i></li> <li>• <i>Zaruhi Gasparyan, Head of the Cooperation Projects Unit at the Children's Rights Division of the Council of Europe</i></li> </ul>