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Strasbourg, 28 November 2022

Implementation and development of Barnahus model in Europe: Mapping study

Questionnaire

Council of Europe
Children's Rights Division

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Implementation and development of Barnahus model in Europe: Mapping study

Background

Between September 2022 and May 2023, the Council of Europe Children's Rights Division is conducting a mapping study on the implementation and development of the Barnahus model in different national contexts across Europe. Barnahus (Children's House) is a leading European model first developed in Iceland as a child-friendly multidisciplinary and interagency response to sexual abuse and exploitation of children.

The aim of this study is to consolidate the knowledge on the use of the Barnahus model or "Barnahus-type services" in different countries, to have an overview of the availability of such structures across Council of Europe member States and better understand their functioning, success factors as well as obstacles in their implementation. The study also ultimately aims at strengthening and developing further action at pan-European level to promote the Barnahus model across Europe, notably by facilitating relevant international exchanges as well as contributing to the definition and dissemination of the highest standards regarding this promising practice of child-friendly justice.

This initiative falls under **Priority 4 of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027), "Child-friendly justice for all children"**, under which the Barnahus model "will continue to be promoted, upon the request of member States, in partnership with other organisations, including through co-operation projects, to ensure that the best interests of the child are upheld in investigations and criminal proceedings, and to provide support for child victims and witnesses of sexual and other forms of violence in a child-friendly and safe environment".

The **mapping study builds on international and Council of Europe standards**, in particular the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ETS No. 5, 1950), and the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (the Lanzarote Convention, CETS No. 201, 2007). The Lanzarote Convention is the most ambitious and comprehensive legal instrument on the protection of children against sexual abuse and sexual exploitation to date. The emphasis on child-friendly, multidisciplinary and interagency collaboration is a common theme throughout the Convention, including those covering coordination (Article 10); investigation (Articles 30; 31; 34); interviews with the child (Article 35); protected measures and assistance to victims (Articles 11; 14; 31).

There is **growing international recognition of the paramount importance of child-friendly multidisciplinary and interagency (MDIA) services** being made available for child victims and witnesses of violence. In its 2015 implementation report, the Committee of the Parties to the Lanzarote Convention identified the Icelandic Barnahus model as a good practice example for a child-friendly MDIA response. The EU Directives on Victim's Rights (2012/29/EU) and Child Sexual Abuse (2011/93/ EU) set out comparable standards for the member States of the European Union.

In addition to legally binding standards, the mapping study is guided by policy instruments adopted by the Committee of Ministers, notably

- Council of Europe Policy guidelines on integrated national strategies for the protection of children from violence (Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)10)
- Committee of Ministers Guidelines on child-friendly justice (2010)
- Recommendation Rec(2011)12 on children's rights and social services friendly to children and families

- Committee of Ministers Guidelines on child-friendly health care (2011)
- Recommendation Rec(2012)2 on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18.

In view of these developments, the attention to the rights of the child and procedural safeguards in criminal investigations and proceedings involving child victims and witnesses of crime is growing. The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) is making reference in its case law to Council of Europe standards, including legally binding Conventions and other policy instruments. On several occasions, the Court has held member States accountable to their framework duties and investigative duties in accordance with these standards.¹

The Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF), at its 6th plenary meeting, has been invited to take note of the study and to support it to the greatest extent possible by providing any relevant information about national policies and practice in this area in response to this survey. All CDENF delegations will also benefit of receiving the final report in order to get an overview of the use of the Barnahus model across Europe and access information on relevant structures in other countries.

Key terms and definitions

The questionnaire uses the following key terms:

- a. “*Child*” refers to any person under 18 years of age, in accordance with UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 1.
- b. “*Violence*” against children refers to all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, in accordance with UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19.
- c. “*Barnahus*” refers to a public institution or entity where multidisciplinary and interagency services for child victims and witnesses of violence collaborate in the same safe and child-friendly premises to coordinate parallel criminal and child protection investigations. Barnahus provides a coordinated and effective response to the child, preventing secondary victimisation and re-traumatisation during investigations and proceedings, while ensuring full respect of principles of due process. The central aim is to gather evidence of high probative value through forensic interviewing and examination of the child. The child also receives support and assistance, including medical and therapeutic evaluation and treatment, or is referred to appropriate follow-up support and assistance.²
- d. “*Barnahus-type services*” refers to a diversity of multidisciplinary and interagency services for child victims and witnesses of crime that combine some, but not all, of the typical features and services of Barnahus. Barnahus-type services may be public, private or based on public-private cooperation. At a minimum, they provide a safe and child-friendly environment for forensic interviewing of children and aim at coordinating parallel criminal and child protection investigations. Barnahus-type services may not ensure respect for principles of due process during the forensic interview of the child, requiring the child to repeat his or her statement in court. Barnahus-type services may not provide the full range of services offered by Barnahus,

¹ See for instance: X. and others v. Bulgaria, Application No. 22457/16, 2 February 2021; R.B. v. Estonia, Application No. 22597/16, 22 June 2021.

² Council of Europe, *Protection of children against sexual exploitation and abuse, Child-friendly, multidisciplinary and interagency response inspired by the Barnahus model*, Building a Europe for and with Children, undated, p. 2.

in relation to child protection, criminal investigation, medical and therapeutic evaluation and treatment.

- e. “*MDIA services*” refers to multidisciplinary and interagency services. Multidisciplinary refers to different professional disciplines such as child protection, social services, medical and health care services, child psychology, law enforcement, the judiciary, specialists in forensic interviewing, and other professions relevant to the case. Interagency refers to various state agencies or public entities. State agencies may collaborate with individual experts and private service providers, as appropriate in the local context and the circumstances of the case. MDIA services are typically regulated by national or sub-national legislation, a cooperation agreement or protocol, or a memorandum of understanding, which set out the roles and responsibilities of each actor, how they will work together and with the child and the child’s family.

QUESTIONNAIRE: MAPPING STUDY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE BARNAHUS MODEL ACROSS EUROPE

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this survey, which will support the work of the Council of Europe Children's Rights Division. You are kindly invited to return the completed questionnaire **by 19 of December 2022** to the following address: children@coe.int.

CONTACTS

Please indicate the contact person for this questionnaire:

Country	Lithuania
Institution/Organisation	Support Center for Sexually Abused Children (hereinafter – Lithuanian Barnahus)
Name and Surname	Silvija Milimavičiūtė
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If any other institution contributed to preparing this document, please list them below:

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HOW TO FILL IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

Barnahus and Barnahus-type services or other MDIA services:

Please note that Part 1 of the questionnaire is directed at member States having Barnahus or Barnahus-type services in place, whereas Part 2 is for member States where such services are currently not in place. We would ask you to make a self-assessment of the services in place in your country, based on the definitions proposed above. If this self-assessment leads you to conclude that

- Barnahus or Barnahus-type services are in place in your country, kindly proceed to complete Part 1 of the survey.
- Other MDIA services are in place in your country, kindly proceed to complete Part 2 of the survey.
- If Barnahus or Barnahus-type services are being developed in your country, please complete Part 1 if the new service is already operational, and Part 2 if it is not yet operational. Please feel free to share further information on the development process by e-mail.

Tips for completing the survey:

- Most questions provide you with a choice of answers to click on.
- You can add comments to some questions; this is optional, i.e. you can use the comment line without feeling obliged to do so.
- Please feel free to complement your responses to the questionnaire by sharing further information, as well as any relevant reports and supporting documents, by email (children@coe.int).

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

In my capacity as the contact person for replies provided to the Council of Europe Children's Rights Division, I understand that any data, information or assessment, including personal data or confidential information, that I supply to the above survey will be exclusively used by the Council of Europe in the framework of the mapping study on the implementation and development of the Barnahus model across Europe. I agree to this use being made of any information provided. I understand that, after the analysis of responses by the Council of Europe Secretariat (Children's Rights Division/DGII) and any mandated expert, the original replies provided, containing the above personal data, would be deleted by the same Secretariat by 31 July 2024 at the latest.

By ticking the box below, I formally consent to the use of my personal data and any other information I supply as described above. If I submit personal data or confidential information of another person, I confirm that I have obtained the authorisation from that person to do so.

X I agree

Survey

1. Are Barnahus or Barnahus-type services available in your country?

Multiple responses possible

a. Yes, Barnahus services are available

b. Yes, Barnahus-type services are available

c. No, Barnahus or Barnahus-type services are not available but are in the process of being set up

d. No, Barnahus or Barnahus-type services are not available but the government is interested in setting them up

e. No, Barnahus services or Barnahus-type services have been available but have been discontinued / closed

f. No, Barnahus services are not available

g. No information

Comments:

If you select 1.a. or 1.b., please kindly proceed with Part 1 (page 8 to 21), otherwise kindly proceed to Part 2 (page 22 to 32).

Part 1: Barnahus and Barnahus-type services

Information on Barnahus or Barnahus-type services

1.1. When was Barnahus or Barnahus-type service first set up in your country?

Year: 2016

No information

Comments:

1.2. How many Barnahus or Barnahus-type services are currently operating in your country?

If your country has both Barnahus and Barnahus-type services, please provide the number for both options.

Number of Barnahus: 1

Number of Barnahus-type services: 0

No information

Comments:

1.3. How many Barnahus or Barnahus-type services are in the process of being set up in your country?

If your country is setting up both Barnahus and Barnahus-type services, please provide the number for both options.

Number of Barnahus: 0

Number of Barnahus-type services: 0

Not applicable

No information

Comments:

1.4. Are Barnahus or Barnahus-type services present throughout the country?

Single response possible

Yes, they serve children throughout the national territory

No, they serve children only in some regions or cities

No, they serve children only in some regions or cities but are in the process of being expanded to serve children throughout the national territory

No, they used to serve children throughout the national territory but have been reduced to some regions or cities

No information

Comments:

Legal and policy framework

1.5. Please provide information about the law and policy framework relevant for the setting up and operation of Barnahus or Barnahus-type services in your country.

Multiple responses possible

The establishment and operation of Barnahus or Barnahus-type services is regulated by

- national law
- national policy
- regional or local law
- regional or local policy
- memorandum of understanding or cooperation protocol
- other, please specify:
- No information

Please kindly provide the references for above indicated laws, policy documents or agreements, which are available in the public domain:

The specific laws are available only in Lithuanian language, here:

Order on the Approval of Recommendations for the Provision of Complex Assistance for Children Potentially Victims of Sexual Violence at the Support Center: <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/47c504104a4d11e6b5d09300a16a686c/asr>

Law on the Fundamentals of the Protection of the Rights of the Child of the Republic of Lithuania: <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.26397/asr> (currently, describes children protection from all forms of violence, incl. sexual violence and the need to provide children with proper help and assistance).

Comments: please, have in mind that there is a plan to make Lithuanian Barnahus part of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic (it is planned that such changes will be implemented in 2023). Therefore, operation related to Lithuanian Barnahus will be also more specifically described in the Law on the Fundamentals of the Protection of the Rights of the Child of the Republic of Lithuania.

1.6. Does the law and policy framework indicated above make reference to international or Council of Europe standards? If so, kindly indicate which ones:

Multiple responses possible

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ETS No. 5, 1950)
- Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention), CETS No. 201, 2007
- Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Guidelines on child-friendly justice (2010)
- Council of Europe Policy guidelines on integrated national strategies for the protection of children from violence (Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)10)

- Recommendation Rec(2011)12 on children's rights and social services friendly to children and families
- Committee of Ministers Guidelines on child-friendly health care (2011)
- Recommendation Rec(2012)2 on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18
- Case law of the European Court on Human Rights, please specify:
- Other, please specify:
- No information

Comments: Please, have also in mind that the Law on the Fundamentals of the Rights of the Child indicates that its' provisions are implemented not only in line with mentioned documents (that are marked above, like UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) but also in line with other ratified international agreements.

Institutional framework

1.7. Please provide information about the institution(s) that have the lead role in operating Barnahus or Barnahus-type services in your country.

Multiple responses possible

- Ministry of Interior
- Law enforcement services (police, prosecution services)
- Ministry of Justice
- Judiciary (courts of law)
- Ministry of Health
- Health care sector (university hospital, clinic, medical centre)
- Ministry of Social Affairs / Family / Children (in Lithuania: Ministry of Social Security and Labor of the Republic of Lithuania. As mentioned above, there is a plan that in 2023, Lithuanian Barnahus will be under the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under Ministry of Social Security and Labour)
- Child protection agency at the national, regional or local level
- Regional authority (regional ministry or other)
- Local authority (municipality or other)
- Independent state entity or human rights institution
- Private sector (private service provider, for-profit-organisation, company or other)
- Non-governmental organisation or other civil society actors
- X Other, please specify:
- Not applicable
- No information

Comments:

Professionals working at Barnahus or Barnahus-type services

1.8. How many professionals are working at Barnahus or Barnahus-type services in your country?

Multiple responses possible

- Number of law enforcement officers:
- Number of medical staff:
- Number of social workers: 1
- Number of child psychologists: 5
- Number of forensic interviewers (other than professions above):
- Number of management staff: 3
- Number of administrative staff: 4
- Number of other professionals, please specify:
- No information

Comments:

1.9. Are the staff employed directly by Barnahus or Barnahus-type services?

Single response possible

- Yes, they are employed by Barnahus or Barnahus-type services
- No, they are employed by their own agency or organisation but are deployed to Barnahus or Barnahus-type services (full-time / part-time)
- No, they are employed by their own agency or organisation but are deployed to Barnahus or Barnahus-type services on an as-needed basis
- Other, please specify:
- No information

Comments:

There is also a cooperation agreement with The State Forensic Medicine Service. Based on the agreement, forensic medical experts arrive at the Lithuanian Barnahus when necessary, to perform forensic medical examinations. In a local State Forensic Medicine Service subdivision there are 17 forensic medical experts who may provide mentioned services.

Target group and scope of service provision

1.10. Please describe the target group(s) of Barnahus or Barnahus-type service.

Multiple responses possible

- Child victims of any form of neglect
- Child victims of any form of violence
- Child victims of any criminal offences
- Child victims of sexual offences
- Child victims of trafficking
- Children who are suspected to have experienced violence or criminal offences
- Child witnesses of criminal offences
- Migrant, asylum seeking and refugee children
- Parents of children assisted by Barnahus or Barnahus-type services (non-offending)

- Family members of children assisted by Barnahus or Barnahus-type services, such as siblings, grandparents or others (non-offending)
- Children who are suspects or accused persons in criminal proceedings
- Children who display harmful sexual behaviour (without being suspects or accused persons in criminal proceedings)
- Children who have committed, or are suspected to have committed, an act of violence who are under the age of criminal responsibility
- Children in the context of parental separation or divorce
- Others, please specify:
- The target group is not specifically defined
- No information

Comments: The target group is all children who are victims or suspected victims of sexual violence, including victims of trafficking when sexual abuse is involved and all other related cases.

1.11. If two or more Barnahus or Barnahus-type services are operating in your country, do they serve the same target group?

Single response possible

- Yes
- No, the target groups differ
- No information

Comments: There is only one Support Center for Sexually Abused Children in Lithuania.

1.12. Please describe the reach of Barnahus or Barnahus-type services in your country: which children are referred to the service?

Multiple responses possible

- All children in the target group are guaranteed a referral to Barnahus or Barnahus-type services in my country
- All children in the target group are guaranteed a referral in my country, on the condition that criminal investigations or proceedings are initiated
- All children in the target group are referred if they live in the area of reach of the Barnahus or Barnahus-type service
- Deciding upon a child's referral to Barnahus or Barnahus-type services rests within the discretion of specific officials or agencies, please specify:
- Barnahus or Barnahus-type services includes mobile services that can travel around my country for better reach
- The referral of children to Barnahus or Barnahus-type services is regulated at the decentralised level and may differ from place to place
- The referral of children to Barnahus or Barnahus-type services is not specifically regulated
- No information

Comments: Theoretically, all children who are suspected to be victims of sexual violence should receive a referral from State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service.

1.13. Which services are provided at Barnahus or Barnahus-type services in your country?

Multiple responses possible

- Interview of the child as part of child protection case assessment (including exploratory interview)
- Forensic interview or hearing of the child as part of administrative or judicial proceedings
- Medical examination(s) of the child (for instance paediatric, gynaecologist, psychiatrist, dentist, others), please specify:
- Forensic medical examination aimed at securing evidence for administrative or judicial proceedings
- Interagency and multi-disciplinary case conference
- Assistance services for the child: crisis intervention
- Assistance services for the child: short-term psychological support and therapeutic services
- Assistance services for the child: longer-term psychological support and therapeutic services
- Assistance services for (non-offending) family members: crisis intervention
- Assistance services for (non-offending) family members: short-term psychological support and therapeutic services
- Assistance services for (non-offending) family members: longer-term psychological support and therapeutic services
- Referral to relevant services, please specify:
- Prevention services, please specify: Sexual abuse prevention activities aimed at primary school pupils as well as at specialists working with and for children
- Short-term accommodation for the child and non-offending family member or support person for the duration of the examinations carried out at Barnahus or Barnahus-type services
- Shelter for the child and non-offending family member or support person (for the duration of examinations carried out at Barnahus or Barnahus-type services and beyond)
- Others, please specify: Child psychological assessment. Also, Lithuanian Barnahus prepares recommendations for local specialists for further, long-term assistance and help for a child and his/her family.
- No information

Please specify if these services are provided to all children referred to Barnahus or Barnahus type services, or whether they are offered only under specific circumstances: Forensic medical examinations and forensic interviews are only carried out when requested by law enforcement. Child psychological assessment can be provided to any referred child. Prevention activities are usually carried out in schools as requested by the school (there is too plan to develop more of preventive activities in the near future).

1.14. Do all Barnahus or Barnahus-type services in your country provide the same set of services?

Single response possible

- Yes, all provide the same set of services
- No, the type of services provided differ between different Barnahus or Barnahus-type services present in the country
- No information

Comments: There is only one Support Center for Sexually Abused Children in Lithuania.

1.15. Is it possible for the child to choose the gender of the professionals conducting the interview, medical or other examinations, as applicable?

Multiple responses possible

- Yes, the child can choose the gender of the person conducting the interview
- No, the child cannot choose the gender of the person carrying out the interview
- Yes, the child can choose the gender of other professionals carrying out medical or therapeutic evaluation or treatment (if applicable)
- No, the child cannot choose the gender of other professionals carrying out medical or therapeutic evaluation or treatment (if applicable)
- This differs between different Barnahus or Barnahus-type services present in the country
- Other, please specify:
- No information

Comments: The specialists in Lithuanian Barnahus attempt to match the child's and the psychologist's/forensic medical expert's gender, but that is not always possible due to workload and other reasons.

1.16. In addition to Barnahus or Barnahus-type services, are other multidisciplinary and interagency services for children in place in your country?

Please select as appropriate and kindly provide information in the comments line.

- Yes, multidisciplinary and interagency services for children involved in family law proceedings (parental separation and divorce), please specify:
- Yes, multidisciplinary and interagency services for children involved in care proceedings, please specify:
- Yes, multidisciplinary and interagency services for children who are suspects or accused persons in criminal proceedings, please specify:
- Yes, multidisciplinary and interagency services for children involved in asylum or immigration proceedings, please specify:
- Other, please specify:
- No other multidisciplinary and interagency services for children are not in place
- No information

Comments: services of Lithuanian Barnahus can be provided to all children who have experienced or may have experienced sexual violence, does not matter of child's status. Therefore, e.g., if an unaccompanied minor/child in migration or child in care system, or any other child is or might be victim of sexual abuse, the child can receive services of Lithuanian Barnahus.

Child interview

1.17. Which professionals are conducting interviews of children in Barnahus or Barnahus-type services in your country?

Please note that this question refers to the professional sitting in the same room as the child and speaking directly to the child during the interview.

Multiple responses possible

- Professional forensic interviewers employed exclusively for conducting interviews
- Child psychologist
- Social or child protection worker
- Police officer
- Prosecutor
- Judge
- This differs between different Barnahus or Barnahus-type services present in the country
- Other, please specify:
- No information

Comments:

1.18. Do the professional(s) identified above require a specific training to carry out the interview in a child-friendly manner?

Single response possible

- Yes, in all cases
- Yes, for certain interviews, please specify:
- No, they are trained as part of general academic or vocational training
- No specific training required
- This differs between different Barnahus or Barnahus-type services present in the country
- Other, please specify: Some psychologists are trained as part of general academic training (depends on specific academic program), others require a specific training
- No information

Comments:

1.19. Do the professionals conducting interviews of children in Barnahus or Barnahus-type services in your country use an evidence-based interviewing protocol? If so, kindly specify which one.

Multiple responses possible

- Yes, the NICHD Protocol is used in every case
- Yes, the NCAC Protocol is used in every case
- Yes, another protocol is used in every case, please specify:
- This differs between different Barnahus or Barnahus-type services present in the country
- The use of an interviewing protocol is not specifically regulated
- No information

Comments: The use of a protocol is not regulated (by the law), however, all psychologists in Lithuanian Barnahus are trained and use the NICHD Protocol.

1.20. Regarding children participating in judicial proceedings as victims or witnesses of criminal offences, at what stage of proceedings are children interviewed at Barnahus or Barnahus-type services in your country?

Multiple responses possible

- In the case assessment or investigation phase
- In the pre-trial phase
- During court proceedings
- The practice differs from place to place
- Other, please specify:
- No information

Comments: The current practice at the Lithuanian Barnahus is that children can have forensic interviews during the pre-trial investigation with the pre-trial judge. Theoretically, children can also be interviewed during the assessment/investigation phase with the investigating police officer, however, in practice it does not happen.

1.21. When is the interview of a child conducted in Barnahus or Barnahus-type services in your country video-recorded?

Multiple responses possible

- The interview is video-recorded in all cases
- The interview is video-recorded if conducted as part of civil proceedings (for instance, child protection cases)
- The interview is video-recorded if conducted as part of administrative proceedings (for instance, asylum or migration cases)
- The interview is video-recorded if conducted as part of criminal proceedings
- The interview is never video-recorded
- This differs between different Barnahus or Barnahus-type services present in the country
- Other, please specify:
- No information

Comments:

1.22. Are video-recorded interviews conducted in Barnahus or Barnahus-type services in your country admitted as evidence in administrative or judicial proceedings?

Multiple responses possible

- The video-recording is admitted as evidence in civil proceedings
- The video-recording is admitted as evidence in administrative proceedings
- The video-recording is admitted as evidence in criminal proceedings
- The video-recording is not admitted as evidence in administrative or judicial proceedings
- This differs between different Barnahus or Barnahus-type services present in the country
- Other, please specify:
- No information

Comments: The interviews in Support Center for Sexually Abused Children are conducted only as part of criminal, not other types of investigations.

1.23. Are any professionals observing the child interview conducted in Barnahus or Barnahus-type services in your country?

Please note that “observing” refers to persons present in another room watching the interview in real time, either from behind a dual mirror or through closed-circuit video-transmission.

Multiple responses possible

- Yes, all interviews are attended by observers (irrespective of whether administrative or judicial proceedings have been initiated or not)
- Yes, interviews are attended by observers in cases of civil proceedings
- Yes, interviews are attended by observers in cases of administrative proceedings
- Yes, interviews are attended by observers in cases of criminal proceedings
- There are no observers of the interview
- Other, please specify:
- No information

Comments: The forensic interviews at the Lithuanian Barnahus are conducted only as part of criminal, not other types of investigations. By law, forensic child interviews are always conducted by a judge or a police investigator with the help of a psychologist who is speaking directly to a child. Other observers are also present together with the judge. Child psychological evaluations are carried out only by a psychologist with no observers.

1.24. How are the professionals referred to above observing the interview?

Multiple responses possible

- From behind a dual mirror
- Through closed-circuit video-transmission
- This differs between different Barnahus or Barnahus-type services present in the country
- Other, please specify:
- No information

Comments:

1.25. Which professionals are present to observe the interview?

Multiple responses possible

- Law enforcement officer
- Prosecutor
- Judge
- Social or child protection worker
- Lawyer of the child
- Guardian of the child (if applicable)
- Parent (non-offending)
- Support person of the child
- Defendant (person suspected or accused in the case)
- Defence lawyer
- Other, please specify:
- This differs between different Barnahus or Barnahus-type services present in the country
- No information

Comments: Not all of them must be present in every forensic interview.

1.26. Which professionals observing the interview have the possibility to pose questions to the child, through the professional conducting the interview?

Multiple responses possible

- Law enforcement officer
- Prosecutor
- Judge
- Social or child protection worker
- Lawyer of the child
- Guardian of the child (if applicable)
- Parent (non-offending)
- Support person of the child
- Defendant (person suspected or accused in the case)
- Defence lawyer
- Other, please specify:
- This differs between different Barnahus or Barnahus-type services present in the country
- No information

Comments: All participants may pose the child questions if allowed by the judge.

1.27. Are child interviews in Barnahus or Barnahus-type services conducted in full respect of principles of due process, i.e. the judge, prosecutor, defence lawyer and the child's lawyer are present and can pose questions during the interview?

Single response possible

- Yes
- No
- Only in some situations, please specify: In most cases all of mentioned persons are present, however depending on the stage of the investigation and the decision of the officers responsible for the case some of them may not be present in some cases.
- This differs between different Barnahus or Barnahus-type services present in the country
- No information

Comments:

Coordination of criminal proceedings and child protection

1.28. Does the child interview conducted in Barnahus or Barnahus-type services inform social welfare and child protection measures for the child and family?

Multiple responses possible

- Yes, this is automatically guaranteed in all cases
- Yes, in some situations, please specify:
- No, this is not part of the mandate

- This differs between different Barnahus or Barnahus-type services present in the country
- No information

If yes, please provide some information on how this is done:

Comments: When a child arrives at the Lithuanian Barnahus, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service and law enforcement are informed in all cases. When child psychological assessment is performed, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service always receives a child psychological assessment report. Data from forensic interviews is confidential according to law.

1.29. If during an interview conducted in Barnahus or Barnahus-type services a child discloses violence, neglect or exploitation by a parent or other holder of parental responsibility, are care proceedings automatically initiated?

Multiple responses possible

- Yes, this is automatically guaranteed in all cases
- Yes, in some situations, please specify:
- No, this is not part of the mandate
- This differs between different Barnahus or Barnahus-type services present in the country
- No information

If yes, please provide some information on how this is done:

Comments: If during psychological assessment a child discloses violence, neglect or exploitation by any person, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service and/or the police is informed (duty to report such cases is established for everyone (all physical and legal persons, does not matter who they are – specialists working with children, general society members etc.) in the law). These institutions perform investigation/evaluation of such cases according to procedures established in the law. If a child discloses during forensic interview, the officers observing the interview proceed according to their competence.

Data and statistics

1.30. How many children have Barnahus or Barnahus-type services in your country assisted over the past years, as applicable?

2019:

- Total number of children assisted: 344
- Number of boys: 119
- Number of girls: 225
- Number of non-binary children:
- Data not available

Comments:

2020:

- Total number of children assisted: 317
- Number of boys: 97
- Number of girls: 220
- Number of non-binary children:
- Data not available

Comments:

Data by age groups:

- 0-3 y.o.: 5 girls, 5 boys
- 4-7 y.o.: 33 girls, 17 boys
- 8-10 y.o.: 33 girls, 23 boys
- 11-13 y.o.: 55 girls, 32 boys
- 14-16 y.o.: 78 girls, 17 boys
- 17 y.o.: 16 girls, 3 boys

2021:

- Total number of children assisted: 332
- Number of boys: 99
- Number of girls: 233
- Number of non-binary children:
- Data not available

Comments:

Data by age groups:

- 0-3 y.o.: 5 girls, 3 boys
- 4-7 y.o.: 39 girls, 22 boys
- 8-10 y.o.: 32 girls, 27 boys
- 11-13 y.o.: 50 girls, 20 boys
- 14-16 y.o.: 93 girls, 21 boys
- 17 y.o.: 14 girls, 6 boys

2022:

- Total number of children assisted: 265
- Number of boys: 81
- Number of girls: 184
- Number of non-binary children:
- Data not available

Comments: The statistics about non-binary gender expression are not collected.

Data by age groups (data by age groups covers first three quarters of 2022. Please, have in mind, that total data of assisted children provided above for 2022 is higher because total number covers children from January to early December 2022. Data by age groups for the whole 2022 will be available at the start of 2023):

- 0-3 y.o.: 3 girls, 0 boys

4-7 y.o.: 20 girls, 9 boys
8-10 y.o.: 22 girls, 17 boys
11-13 y.o.: 27 girls, 11 boys
14-16 y.o.: 60 girls, 13 boys
17 y.o.: 4 girls, 2 boys.

1.31. Are data on children assisted by Barnahus or Barnahus-type services in your country disaggregated by age?

Single response possible

- Yes, age-disaggregated data are available
 No, age-disaggregated data are not available

We kindly ask you to send available data for the years 2019-2022 to children@coe.int.

Comments: data of 2019-2022 disaggregated by age groups is provided in question 1.30.

1.32. Are data on children assisted by Barnahus or Barnahus-type services in your country disaggregated by forms of violence that children have experienced?

Multiple response possible

- Yes, data are disaggregated according to different forms of violence
 Yes, data are disaggregated according to criminal offences investigated or prosecuted
 Data are disaggregated according to other relevant indicators, please specify:
 No, data disaggregated by forms of violence or criminal offences are not available

We kindly ask you to send available data for the years 2019-2022 to children@coe.int.

Comments:

1.33. Are data available regarding convictions in cases assisted by Barnahus or Barnahus-type services in your country?

Single response possible

- Yes, data on convictions are available
 No, data on convictions are not available

We kindly ask you to send available data for the years 2019-2022 to children@coe.int.

Comments:

1.34. Can you indicate the average duration of criminal proceedings carried out with support of Barnahus or Barnahus-type services (from referral to Barnahus or Barnahus-type services to the conviction of the perpetrator (first instance))?

Average duration of proceedings:

Comments: After the child receives services in the Lithuanian Barnahus, the Barnahus does not receive information about any further case proceedings or convictions.

Budget

1.35. What is the overall budget of Barnahus or Barnahus-type services operating in your country?

Multiple responses possible

- Budget of Barnahus services per year: 180 000 euro
- Budget of Barnahus-type services per year:
- No information

Comments:

Research and evaluation

1.36. Has any of the Barnahus or Barnahus-type services operating in your country been evaluated?

Multiple responses possible

- Yes
- An evaluation is currently underway
- An evaluation is planned for the year:
- No evaluation done thus far
- No information

Please kindly provide the reference to any evaluation reports available in the public domain or provide such reports via e-mail (children@coe.int). Should those resources not be available in English or French, please kindly provide an English or French translation or summary:

Comments:

1.37. Has research been conducted on Barnahus or Barnahus-type services operating in your country?

Multiple responses possible

- Yes, research by the academia
- Yes, research by an independent institution
- Yes, research by ministries or other state agencies
- Yes, research by civil society organisations or NGOs
- Research is currently underway
- Research is planned for the year:
- No research carried out thus far
- No information

Please kindly provide the reference to any research reports available in the public domain or provide such reports via e-mail (children@coe.int). Should those resources not be available in English or French, please kindly provide an English or French translation or summary:

Comments:

1.38. Have children been consulted in your country regarding their experiences with Barnahus or Barnahus-type services?

Multiple responses possible

- Yes, children have been consulted
- Consultations of children are currently underway
- Consultations with children are planned for the year:
- No consultations carried out thus far
- No information

Please kindly provide the reference to any consultation reports available in the public domain or provide such reports via e-mail (children@coe.int). Should those resources not be available in English or French, please kindly provide an English or French translation or summary:

Comments:

Challenges and success factors, innovation and learning

1.39. What were the main difficulties in setting up Barnahus or Barnahus-type services in your country?

Multiple responses possible

- Organising multidisciplinary and interagency cooperation (MDIA)
- Sharing personal data of the child in the MDIA service
- Understanding the concept of Barnahus or Barnahus-type services
- Law reform to set up the service
- Procedural requirements in criminal proceedings
- Mobilising political support
- Securing budget
- Guaranteeing sustainability of the service
- Finding suitable premises
- Other, please specify:
- No information

Comments:

1.40. Are there any specific challenges that Barnahus or Barnahus-type services in your country are currently struggling with?

Please kindly provide any examples and information you would like to share in the comment line below or send relevant reports and materials via e-mail (children@coe.int).

Comments:

There is a need to increase the use of Lithuanian Barnahus as a tool to ensure best interest of child (increase the number of informal child interviews about sexual abuse, instead of decreasing them).

Also, the policies are not being well-aligned and thought-out. As a result, some children get referred to the Lithuanian Barnahus for psychological assessment although it is not helpful for them in their specific case.

1.41. Are there any outstanding success factors, innovative aspects or projects in relation to Barnahus or Barnahus-type services in your country that you would like to bring to the attention of the Barnahus mapping study?

Please kindly provide any examples and information you would like to share in the comment line below or send relevant reports and materials via e-mail (children@coe.int).

Comments:

Part 2: Other MDIA services for child victims and witnesses of crime in member States

Section to be kindly completed by member States where Barnahus or Barnahus-type services are currently not in place.

Past experiences and future plans regarding Barnahus or Barnahus-type services

2.1. Has a Barnahus or Barnahus-type service been operating in your country, which subsequently was closed or discontinued? If yes, please share the main reasons for it.

Single response possible

- Yes, Barnahus or Barnahus-type services had been set up but were subsequently closed or discontinued
- No, Barnahus or Barnahus-type services have not yet been set up
- No information

Main reasons for closing Barnahus or Barnahus-type services:

Years of operation of Barnahus or Barnahus-type services (from-to):

Comments:

2.2. Are there state or non-state actors advocating for the development of a Barnahus or Barnahus-type service in your country?

Multiple responses possible

- Yes, state actors are advocating for it
- Yes, civil society actors are advocating for it
- Yes, there is a public or political debate on it
- No, there is no advocacy or debate on it
- No information

Comments:

2.3. What would you consider the main incentives for setting up Barnahus or Barnahus-type services in your country?

Multiple responses possible

- More effective prosecution in criminal proceedings involving children as victims and/or witnesses of crime
- More effective implementation of international and Council of Europe standards
- Implementation of EU law (where relevant)
- More effective protection of child victims of violence / criminal offences
- Prevention of violence against children
- A social investment in the best interests of children and society
- Other, please specify:

- No information

Comments:

2.4. What would you consider the main difficulties or obstacles in developing Barnahus or Barnahus-type services in your country?

Multiple responses possible

- Organising multidisciplinary and interagency cooperation (MDIA)
- Sharing personal data of the child in the MDIA service
- Understanding the concept of Barnahus or Barnahus-type services
- Law reform to set up the service
- Procedural requirements in criminal proceedings
- Mobilising political support
- Securing sufficient budget
- Guaranteeing sustainability of the service
- Finding suitable premises
- Other, please specify:
- No information

Comments:

Child interview

2.5. Which professionals are conducting interviews of child victims or witnesses of violence or criminal offences in your country?

Please note that this question refers to the professional sitting in the same room as the child and speaking directly to the child.

Multiple responses possible

- Professional forensic interviewers
- Child psychologists
- Social or child protection workers
- Police officers
- Prosecutors
- Judges
- Other, please specify:
- The practice differs from place to place
- No information

Comments:

2.6. Do professionals require a specific training to interview children who are victims or witnesses of violence or criminal offences?

Multiple responses possible

- Yes, in all cases

- Yes, for certain interviews, please specify:
- No, they are trained as part of general academic or vocational training
- No specific training required
- This differs from place to place
- Other, please specify:
- No information

Comments:

2.7. Are child-friendly rooms available for the interview of a child victim or witness?

Multiple responses possible

- Yes, in police stations
- Yes, in courts
- Yes, in the premises of social service providers
- Other, please specify:
- No, specific child-friendly places for conducting interviews of children are not available
- No information

Comments:

2.8. If child-friendly interviewing rooms exist, are they available throughout the country?

Multiple responses possible

- Yes, child-friendly interviewing rooms are available throughout the country
- No, child-friendly interviewing rooms are available only in some cities or regions
- Other, please specify:
- No information

Comments:

2.9. Do the professionals conducting interviews of child victims or witnesses in your country use an evidence-based interviewing protocol? If so, kindly specify which one.

Multiple responses possible

- Yes, the NICHD Protocol is used in every case
- Yes, the NCAC Protocol is used in every case
- Yes, another protocol is used in every case, please specify:
- It differs from place to place
- The use of an interviewing protocol is not specifically regulated
- No information

Comments:

2.10. Are interviews of child victims or witnesses of violence or criminal offences video-recorded?

Multiple responses possible

- The interview is video-recorded in all cases
- The interview is video-recorded if conducted as part of civil proceedings (for instance, in child protection cases)
- The interview is video-recorded if conducted as part of administrative proceedings (for instance, asylum or migration cases)
- The interview is video-recorded if conducted as part of criminal proceedings
- The interview is never video-recorded
- This differs from place to place
- Other, please specify:
- No information

Comments:

2.11. Are video-recorded interviews of child victims or witnesses admitted as evidence in administrative or judicial proceedings?

Multiple responses possible

- The video-recording is admitted as evidence in civil proceedings
- The video-recording is admitted as evidence in administrative proceedings
- The video-recording is admitted as evidence in criminal proceedings
- The video-recording is not admitted as evidence in administrative or judicial proceedings
- This differs from place to place
- Other, please specify:
- No information

Comments:

2.12. Regarding children participating in judicial proceedings as victims or witnesses of criminal offences, at what stage of proceedings are children interviewed or heard?

Multiple responses possible

- In the case assessment or investigation phase
- In the pre-trial phase
- During court proceedings
- The practice differs from place to place
- Other, please specify:
- No information

Comments:

2.13. Are any measures in place to reduce the number of interviews of child victims or witnesses of violence or criminal offences?

Multiple responses possible

- Yes, measures have been taken, please specify:
- No, no specific measures have been taken
- This differs from place to place
- No information

Comments:

2.14. Are any measures in place to ensure that children can choose the gender of the person interviewing them?

Multiple responses possible

- Yes, measures have been taken, please specify:
- No, no specific measures have been taken
- This differs from place to place
- No information

Comments:

Multidisciplinary and interagency (MDIA) services for child victims and witnesses of crime

2.15. What forms of multidisciplinary and interagency services for children are in place in your country?

Please select as appropriate and kindly provide information in the comments line.

- Multidisciplinary and interagency services for child victims and witnesses, please specify:
- Multidisciplinary and interagency services for children involved in family law proceedings (parental separation and divorce), please specify:
- Multidisciplinary and interagency services for children involved in care proceedings, please specify:
- Multidisciplinary and interagency services for children who are suspects or accused persons in criminal proceedings), please specify:
- Multidisciplinary and interagency services for children involved in asylum or immigration proceedings, please specify:
- Other, please specify:
- No information

Comments:

Target group and scope of MDIA services

2.16. Please describe the target group(s) of MDIA services in your country

Multiple responses possible

- Child victims of any form of neglect
- Child victims of any form of violence
- Child victims of any criminal offences
- Child victims of sexual offences
- Child victims of trafficking
- Children who are suspected to have experienced violence or criminal offences
- Child witnesses of criminal offences
- Migrant, asylum seeking and refugee children
- Parents of children assisted by MDIA services (non-offending)
- Family members of children assisted by MDIA services, such as siblings, grandparents or others (non-offending)
- Children who are suspects or accused persons in criminal proceedings
- Children who display harmful sexual behaviour (without being suspects or accused persons in criminal proceedings)
- Children who have committed, or are suspected to have committed, an act of violence who are under the age of criminal responsibility
- Children in the context of parental separation or divorce
- Others, please specify:
- The target group is not specifically defined
- No information

Comments:

2.17. Please describe the reach of MDIA services in your country: which children are referred to the service?

Single response possible

- All children in the target group are guaranteed a referral to the MDIA service in my country
- All children in the target group are guaranteed a referral to the MDIA service in my country, on the condition that criminal investigations or proceedings are initiated
- All children in the target group are referred who live in the area of reach of the MDIA service
- Deciding upon a child's referral to an MDIA service rests within the discretion of specific officials or agencies, please specify:
- MDIA services includes mobile services that can travel around my country for better reach
- The referral of children to an MDIA service is regulated at the decentralised level and may differ from place to place
- The referral of children to MDIA services is not specifically regulated

- No information

Comments:

2.18. Which specific services do MDIA services provide in your country?

Multiple responses possible

- Interview of the child as part of child protection case assessment (including exploratory interview)
- Forensic interview or hearing of the child as part of administrative or judicial proceedings
- Medical examination(s) of the child (for instance paediatric, gynaecologist, psychiatrist, dentist, others), please specify:
- Forensic medical examination aimed at securing evidence for administrative or judicial proceedings
- Interagency and multi-disciplinary case conference
- Assistance services for the child: crisis intervention
- Assistance services for the child: short-term psychological support and therapeutic services
- Assistance services for the child: longer-term psychological support and therapeutic services
- Assistance services for (non-offending) family members: crisis intervention
- Assistance services for (non-offending) family members: short-term psychological support and therapeutic services
- Assistance services for (non-offending) family members: longer-term psychological support and therapeutic services
- Referral to relevant services, please specify:
- Prevention services, please specify:
- Short-term accommodation for the child and non-offending family member or support person for the duration of the examinations carried out at the MDIA services
- Shelter for the child and non-offending family member or support person (for the duration of examinations carried out at MDIA services and beyond)
- Others, please specify:
- No information

Please specify if these services are provided to all children referred to Barnahus or Barnahus type services, or whether they are offered only under specific circumstances: