



**Dipartimento  
per le politiche della famiglia**

Presidenza del Consiglio dei ministri



Presidency of Italy  
Council of Europe  
November 2021 - May 2022

Présidence de l'Italie  
Conseil de l'Europe  
Novembre 2021 - Mai 2022



**APRIL 2022**

# **BEYOND THE HORIZON: A NEW ERA FOR THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**



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## **Promoting legal clinics as a means of strengthening children's access to justice**

- Implementation of children's rights into law, policies and practices
- Meaningful child and youth participation is key to assuring the best interests of the child
- Children are not adults and should be seen as a separate target group
  - Socio Legal Defence Centres Defence for Children
  - National and European Helpdesk
  - Young Advisory Boards

## Socio Legal Defence Centres - Defence for Children (SLDC)

Provide direct access to justice and social-legal support in individual complaints on child rights violations for:

- Children in conflict with the law
- Child victims and witnesses
- Adults confronted with child rights violations

Case management going beyond the legal sphere (social, educational)

- Providing information and referrals, psychosocial counselling and free-of-charge legal advice and representation – including in court.

## SLDC - Child friendly approach

- Multidisciplinary team
- Ensuring best interests of the child are considered by decision making
- Inclusionary: all children are rights holders and need to be heard and
- Active child participation: empowering children as agents of change
- Social advocacy: Inform, educate, advocate and monitor children's rights in policies, laws and practices (collective level)



## **Helpdesk Defence for Children The Netherlands**

- Individual cases in which the CRC is violated: youth care, youth justice, migration, education
- Strategic litigation in court, for example access to a lawyer
- Advocacy to make law, policy and practices childfriendly, for example no police custody unless..., no DNA testing etc.

## **European Helpdesk for refugee children on the move**

- Providing child friendly information on their situation, procedures and rights and support for families and professionals (like lawyers)
- Cooperation in 7 EU countries

11/05/2024 Advocacy: in Greece, the Netherlands and at European level.



## Young Advisory Boards / Experienced experts

Migrant young ambassadors' group:

- “We stay here” and “We are already here”: young people advocating for asylum procedures
- Platform HOPE: advocating for change focusing on child exploitation. Recent publication: Dutch Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Exploitation and Sexual Abuse
- ExPex: changing youth care aiming to end deprivation of liberty and youth institutions





Involving children in sharing their view on specific issues or sharing preliminary results with young people

**Example:** EU FOCUS on my Needs project, Working together for children in criminal proceedings

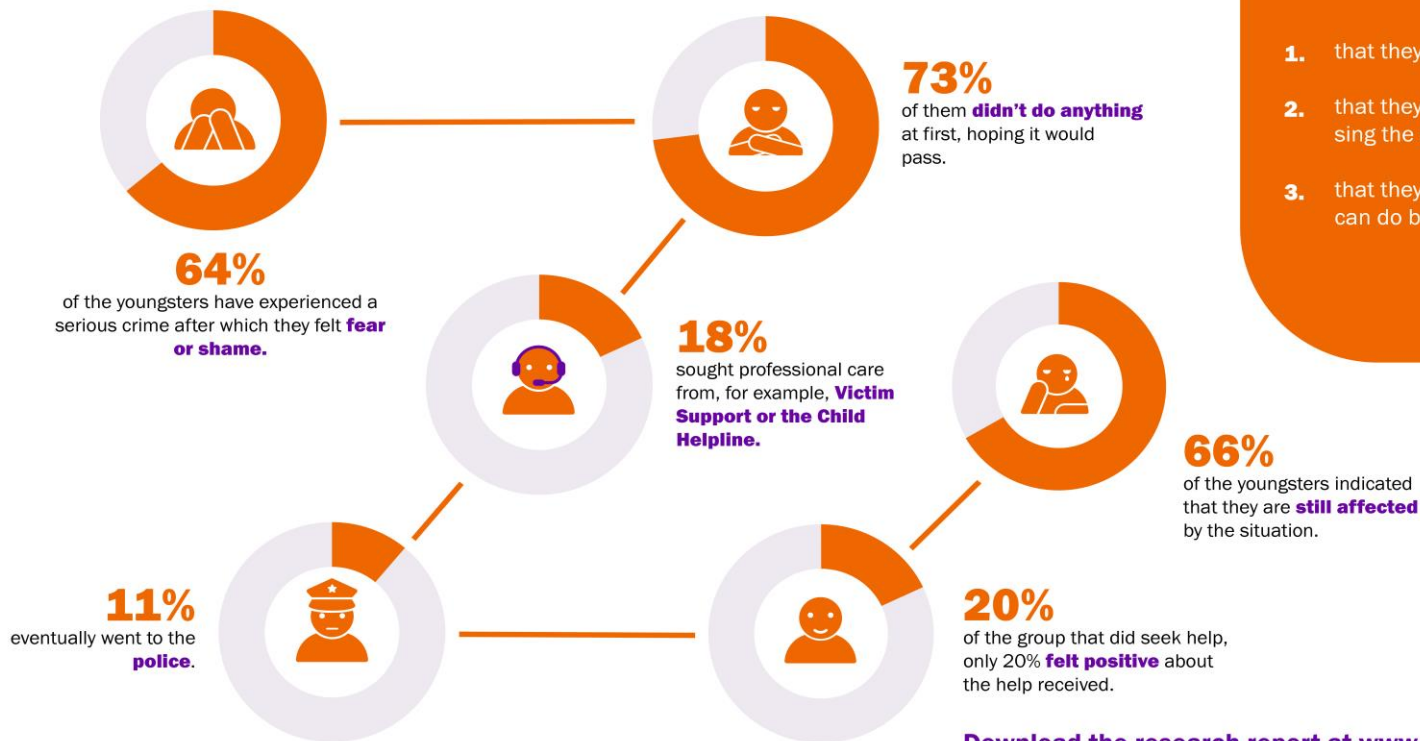
**Young Advisory Board:**

- Research and social media campaign child victims
- Questionnaire on the needs of child victims
- Report “Waiting for it to pass” launched on European
- Podcast on what child victims need



## Focus on My Needs

A study amongst youngsters in the Netherlands aged 12-18 years



## Victims between 12-18 years old need:

1. that they are being well listened to
2. that they are being helped processing the situation
3. that they are being told what they can do best



The report shows:

- insight into the scope of the unknown figures ('the black box')
- many do not dare to speak about their experience of a serious crime.
- It is important for underage victims that:
  - they are being well listened to
  - they receive help to process the situation
  - they are supported deciding on further actions to take

Questions?

