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REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
Ministry of Justice, Public Administration
and Digital Transformation

Building a Europe
for and with children



Final Conference

Programme

19 May 2026
(9:00-13:30)

National and University Library, Zagreb (Croatia)

and on Zoom <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85633072194>

Joint EU-Council of Europe project “Implementing the Barnahus Model in Croatia” 23HR02

The Project is co-funded by the European Union via the Technical Support Instrument, and implemented by the Council of Europe, in cooperation with the European Commission.

Context

The European Union-Council of Europe Joint Project “[Implementing the Barnahus Model in Croatia](#)” aims to improve the access and quality of the justice system for child victims of violence in Croatia, 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.

Building on the work already carried out by Croatia, the project aims to support the Croatian authorities in its first steps towards the establishment of a Barnahus in the country. The Barnahus Model is a child-friendly response model for the coordination of criminal and child welfare investigations of child abuse cases and providing support services for child victims and their families under one roof. The Barnahus model was recognised as a promising practice by the Committee of the Parties to the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Committee) in 2015. The model has been replicated in Finland, Ireland, Norway, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

The Project is co-funded by the European Union via the Technical Support Instrument, and implemented by the Council of Europe, in cooperation with the European Commission and the Croatian Ministry of Justice, Public Administration and Digital Transformation from 1 September 2023 to 30 June 2026.

The project is divided into three components, leading to the following outcomes:

1. Legal, policy and institutional framework is established for the sustainable operation of Barnahus model in Croatia
2. Knowledge and capacities of professionals working with and for children to respond to child sexual abuse are strengthened
3. Awareness of professionals and the wider public on the situation of child sexual abuse in Croatia is enhanced

Results of the project

Following the inception phase from September to December 2023 and the [launch conference](#) on 30 January 2024, the project entered into a more analytical phase with the preparation and the presentation of two assessment reports at a first [Roundtable](#) on 8 October 2024 :

- An analysis of the legislative, policy and institutional framework regarding protection of children and procedures for cases on violence against children, including sexual violence in Croatia (in [Croatian](#) and in [English](#)) with a Mapping and desk research review of the international standards and principles as well as the existing Croatian legislation relevant for professionals handling cases of children victims of sexual violence and abuse ([Full version in Croatian](#) / [Summary in English](#)).
- a training gap analysis for professionals working with and for child victims of sexual abuse and exploitation (in [Croatian](#) and in [English](#)).

In addition, a [study visit](#) was organised on 5 and 6 November 2024 in Helsinki with the support of the Finnish authorities to exchange information with Croatian professionals working with and for children (all of them were members of the Advisory Group).

Following the above-mentioned activities and deliverables, three strategic documents were developed by national and international experts and presented at a second [Roundtable](#) on 27 May 2025 :

- A Roadmap including a Cost Structure Analysis for the implementation of the Barnahus Model in Croatia by Liisa Järvillehto and Tom Pakkanen (in [Croatian](#) and [English](#)).
- A Report on procedures and protocols supporting an inter-agency agreement between ministries and other stakeholders which includes a Memorandum of Understanding on implementing the Barnahus model in Croatia by Ivana Celio Cega (in [Croatian](#) and [English](#)).
- A Survey on perceptions of child sexual abuse in Croatia by IPSOS d.o.o.(in [Croatian](#) and [English](#)).

The project component on capacity building started in summer 2025 with the translation and adaptation into Croatian of the [HELP course on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and abuse](#). The course aims to enhance the knowledge of legal, justice and other professionals about this phenomenon and the ways to effectively address it. A total of 62 legal and non-legal professionals completed the course through two tutored sessions in 2025 and 2026.

Following the approval of the no-cost extension until June 2026, the project focused on two crucial deliverables for the future implementation of the Barnahus model in Croatia:

- the guidelines on spatial and organisational coordination, based on consultations with national stakeholders but also with children who were victims or non-victims of sexual violence (in [Croatian](#) and [English](#)).
- A draft Law on Barnahus

The final conference will be an excellent opportunity to present the last two key deliverables, to celebrate the achievements of the project and to present its concrete results along with the next steps for their implementation, in the presence of the Minister of Justice, Public Administration and Digital Transformation, and other Ministers involved in the future Barnahus model, the European Union, the Council of Europe, national stakeholders, members of the academia, as well as national and international experts.

The event is designed to ensure interactivity and participation, as well as full understanding of the impact of the project through its key high-quality deliverables. All the final material will be shared with the participants prior to the event and will be available on the [project dedicated webpage](#).

Agenda	
8:00-9:00	Registration of participants <i>Outside the conference room:</i> Video on Barnahus and other Children's Rights Division videos available in Croatian Brochures summarising the findings of the IPSOS survey on perception of child sexual abuse Posters on the project outcomes Visibility material on child sexual abuse and exploitation in Croatian
9:00-9:30	Welcoming remarks
	<i>Moderator: Antonia Ćosić, Journalist and psychologist</i> • Damir Habijan, Minister of Justice, Public Administration and Digital Transformation • Irena Hrstić, Minister of Health • Zrinka Mužinić Bikić, State Secretary, Ministry of Science, Education and Youth • Margareta Mađerić, State Secretary, Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy • Kjartan Björnsson, Head of Unit, Governance and Public Administration, SG REFORM, European Commission (<i>online</i>) • Irena Guidikova, Head of Human Dignity and Gender Equality Department, Council of Europe
9:30-9:45	Memorandum of Understanding on Implementing the Barnahus Model in Croatia
	<i>Official signature by the Ministers or the representatives of the signatory agencies</i>

9:45-10:05	Keynote Speech
	<i>Moderator: Antonia Ćosić, Journalist and psychologist</i> • <i>Saga Brodersen, expert, survivor of sexual exploitation</i> • <i>Gabriella Kärnekull Wolfe, expert, survivor of trafficking and child sexual abuse</i> <i>A Barnahus journey: the Barnahus model through the eyes of two survivors who have experienced Barnahus in Sweden (expectations, strengths and challenges of the model)</i>
10:05-10:30	Overview of Barnahus in Europe and the project in Croatia
	<i>Moderator: Antonia Ćosić, Journalist and psychologist</i> • <i>Barnahus a European Journey by Zaruhi Gasparyan, Head of Cooperation and Capacity Building Unit, Children's Rights Division, Council of Europe</i> • <i>Overview of the Barnahus project in Croatia by Frederique Privat de Fortunie, Senior Project Officer, Council of Europe</i> • <i>The next steps of the roadmap by Liisa Järvillehto, Clinical Psychologist, Forensic Psychology Centre for Children and Adolescents (HUS), Helsinki University Hospital, Finland and Tom Pakkanen, Forensic Psychologist (PhD), Forensic Psychology Centre for Children and Adolescents (HUS), Helsinki University Hospital, Finland (online)</i>
10:30-11:15	Panel I: the future Barnahus in Croatia: what will it look like?
	<i>Moderator: Antonia Ćosić, Journalist and psychologist</i> • <i>Daška Leppee Pažanin, Advisor to the Ombudsperson for Children and Nina Ćurčić, Advisor of the Ombudsperson on the guidelines on spatial and organisational coordination</i> • <i>Exchange of views with children from the Ombudsperson for Children's Network of Young Advisors consulted on the future Barnahus moderated by Davorka Osmak Franjić</i> Q&A session
11:15-11:45	<i>Coffee Break and official picture with participants</i>
11:45-12:30	Panel II: Strengthening expertise and capacity of professionals working with and for child victims and witnesses of sexual exploitation and abuse: early outcomes
	<i>Moderator: Antonia Ćosić, Journalist and psychologist</i> • <i>Lara Barberic, lawyer and main tutor of the HELP course on the protection of Children against sexual exploitation and abuse</i> • <i>Legal professionals who completed the HELP tutored course:</i> <i>Ms Marina Miočić Vataavuk, Deputy Municipal State Attorney in Zadar</i> <i>Ms Alida Saračević, Deputy Municipal State Attorney in Virovitica</i> <i>Ms Sandra Knok Čanić, Deputy County State Attorney in Bjelovar</i> Q&A session <i>Certification ceremony for the members of second cohort present in the room (10 min)</i>

12:30-13:00	Panel III: Building the Legal Backbone of a Child-Centred Justice System
	<i>Moderator: Antonia Ćosić, Journalist and psychologist</i> • <i>Ivan Crnčec, State Secretary, Ministry of Justice, Public administration and digital transformation</i> • <i>Ivana Celio Cega, Legal Advisor and Human Rights independent expert</i> • <i>Lana Petö Kujundžić, Judge, High Criminal Court of Croatia</i> Q&A session
13:00-13:15	Moving forward: driving change through the Theory of Social and Behavioural Change
	<i>Moderator: Antonia Ćosić, Journalist and psychologist</i> • <i>Natalia Voutova, Head of Council of Europe Office in Georgia and Council of Europe Social & Behaviour Change Lead</i> Q&A session
13:15-13:30	Closing remarks
	<i>Moderator: Antonia Ćosić, Journalist and psychologist</i> • <i>Tatjana Katkić Stanić, Ombudsperson for Children of Croatia (video recorded message)</i> • <i>Ana Kordej, Acting Director, Directorate for Criminal Law, Ministry of Justice, Public Administration and Digital Transformation</i> • <i>Rima Joujou Deljkic, Resident Country Coordinator, SG REFORM, European Commission</i> • <i>Zaruhi Gasparyan, Head of Cooperation and Capacity Building Unit, Children's Rights Division, Council of Europe</i>
13:30-14:30	Lunch (buffet)