

Co-funded
by the European Union



EUROPEAN UNION

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Co-funded and implemented
by the Council of Europe



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

Building a Europe
for and with children



Second Roundtable to present the project's deliverables: the comparative study and the strategy and national actional plan

6 June 2025

Exe Lev Hotel (Karantanija hall)
Vosnjakova 1 1000 Ljubljana

**Joint EU-Council of Europe project
“Ensuring the best interests of the child in civil court
proceedings in Slovenia”
23SI08**

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, the Reform and Investment Task Force (SG REFORM).

Context

The European Union-Council of Europe Joint Project “**Ensuring the best interests of the child in civil court proceedings in Slovenia**” aims to ensure the better protection of children’s rights in civil court proceedings in Slovenia through ensuring the best interests of the child. Implementation of the Project contributes to the ongoing reform in Slovenia on upholding children’s rights and becoming a pioneer country spreading excellence in child-friendly justice in all EU Member States.

While Slovenia has made big steps forward for the protection of **children’s rights in criminal law proceedings**, significant improvements are still needed to uphold children’s rights **in the area of civil law**, particularly as regards delays in family law proceedings involving children. According to the **Slovenian Supreme Court report**, the main two challenges to overcome these delays are:

- **The lack of court experts in clinical psychology**, who are the most appointed experts in family law proceedings.
- **The excessive use of legal instruments**, as the law is often ineffective during the process and there is lack of systemic approach.

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 **Slovenian Ministry of Justice** from **1 September 2023 to 28 February 2026**.

The project is divided in two outcomes:

1. **A comprehensive Action Plan to reform Slovenia’s legal framework in the field of civil court proceedings involving children is adopted;**
2. **The implementation of the Action Plan has been initiated.**

State of play of the Project

During the inception phase which preceded the implementation of the project outputs and activities, the Council of Europe, with the support of the Ministry of Justice of Slovenia, organised a series of bilateral consultations with the national stakeholders to take stock of the project's starting point. The results of these consultations and research are included in the [project's inception report](#), which was endorsed by the Inter-ministerial working group (IMWG) before its presentation at the [project launch conference](#) on 13 February 2024 in Bled.

Following the launch conference, the project entered into a more analytical phase with the preparation of three reports:

- [an assessment of the current legal, policy and institutional framework](#) with a focus on priority issues identified with the Ministry of Justice and the IMWG,
- [a training gap analysis for professionals working with and for child involved civil court proceedings](#),
- [a comparative study of services, methods and tools](#) suitable to secure the best interests of the child in family proceedings in Council of Europe member and observer States. ([Summary report in English](#))

The first two reports were prepared by teams of national consultants selected through the official call for national expertise launched in early 2024. The comparative study has been developed by Daja Wenke, Independent Researcher and Policy Analyst, Rights of the Child - Implementation of International Standards. An online IMWG meeting was held on 18 September 2024 to present and exchange views on the first two above-mentioned reports, endorse them, and provide an overview of the state of play of the project.

A [Roundtable](#) was held on 24 October 2024 to present the challenges, gaps, and recommendations identified in the two national reports to a wider audience, initiate a dialogue between the expert teams and the participants, and ensure ownership of the recommended measures by key stakeholders, including NGOs, Academia, and civil society.

Following the above-mentioned activities and deliverables, Susanna Greijer, International Researcher, Legal & Policy Consultant on Children's Rights and Violence against Children prepared the Strategy and National Action Plan for ensuring the best interests of the child in civil court proceedings in Slovenia.

The first draft strategy and national action plan and the final comparative study were presented and discussed at the fourth meeting of the IMWG, which took place on 6 March 2025. The second draft of the strategy and national action was also commented in writing by the IMWG, and the feedback was incorporated into the final version dated 22 May 2025, which is now ready for discussion at the round table..

The purpose of this second roundtable, which will take place on 6 June 2025, is to present:

- the findings of the comparative study and some particularly relevant practices and methods that could be adapted to the Slovenian context and to exchange views with the Slovenian stakeholders.
- the Strategy and national action plan for ensuring the best interests of the child in civil court proceedings in Slovenia and to exchange views with the participants on its future implementation.

Agenda	
8:30-9:00	Registration of participants
9:00-9:15	Welcoming remarks
	• <i>Mag. Andreja Kokalj, Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice of Slovenia</i> • <i>Kjartan Björnsson, Head of Unit, Governance and Public Administration, SG REFORM, European Commission (online)</i> • <i>Roberto Olla, Head of Human Dignity and Gender Equality Department, Council of Europe (online)</i>
9:15-10:45	Panel I : Comparative study on service, methods and tools suitable to secure the best interests of the child in family proceedings in Council of Europe member and observer States
	<i>Moderator: Daja Wenke, Independent Researcher and Policy Analyst, Rights of the Child - Implementation of International Standards</i> <i>Keynote presentation by Daja Wenke</i> <i>Presentations of national practices and experiences:</i> • <i>Philip Ishola, Independent Consultant and Policy Analyst, Child Safeguarding, Welfare, Protection and Rights of the Child on the UK programme "Working together to safeguard children" (online)</i> • <i>Saara Asmundela, Superintendent, Finnish National Police on the LASTA SEULA model: a multi-agency risk assessment of children</i> • <i>Monica Hynds O'Flanagan, Interim Director of Innovation, Development and Guardian ad Litem service, Barnardos Ireland on their specialised training for Guardians ad litem</i> • <i>Dr. Ina Bovenschen, Research Associate, German Youth Institute on STARK website: a digital platform for children and parents concerned by parental separation (online)</i> Q&A session
10:45-11:00	Coffee break
11:00-12:15	Panel II : Presentation of the Strategy and National Action Plan
	<i>Moderator: Mag. Andrej del Fabro, Head of the Child-friendly Criminal Justice Department, Ministry of Justice of Slovenia</i> • <i>Susanna Greijer, Researcher, Legal & Policy Consultant on Children's Rights and Violence against Children</i> Q&A session
12:15-12:30	Closing remarks
	• <i>Mija Cankar, Secretary in Civil law Directorate, Ministry of Justice of Slovenia and Acting Director at the Children's House (Barnahus), Slovenia</i> • <i>Paola Gaffurini, Project Manager, Governance and Public Administration Unit, SG REFORM, European Commission (online)</i> • <i>Frederique Privat de Fortunie, Senior Project Officer, Children's Rights Division, Council of Europe</i>
12:30-14:00	Lunch