

The link between missing migrant children and trafficking



OSCE 17th Alliance
Conference

Vienna 3–4 April 2017



**Missing
Children
Europe**

Missing Children Europe

Membership



**Missing
Children
Europe**

30 organisations



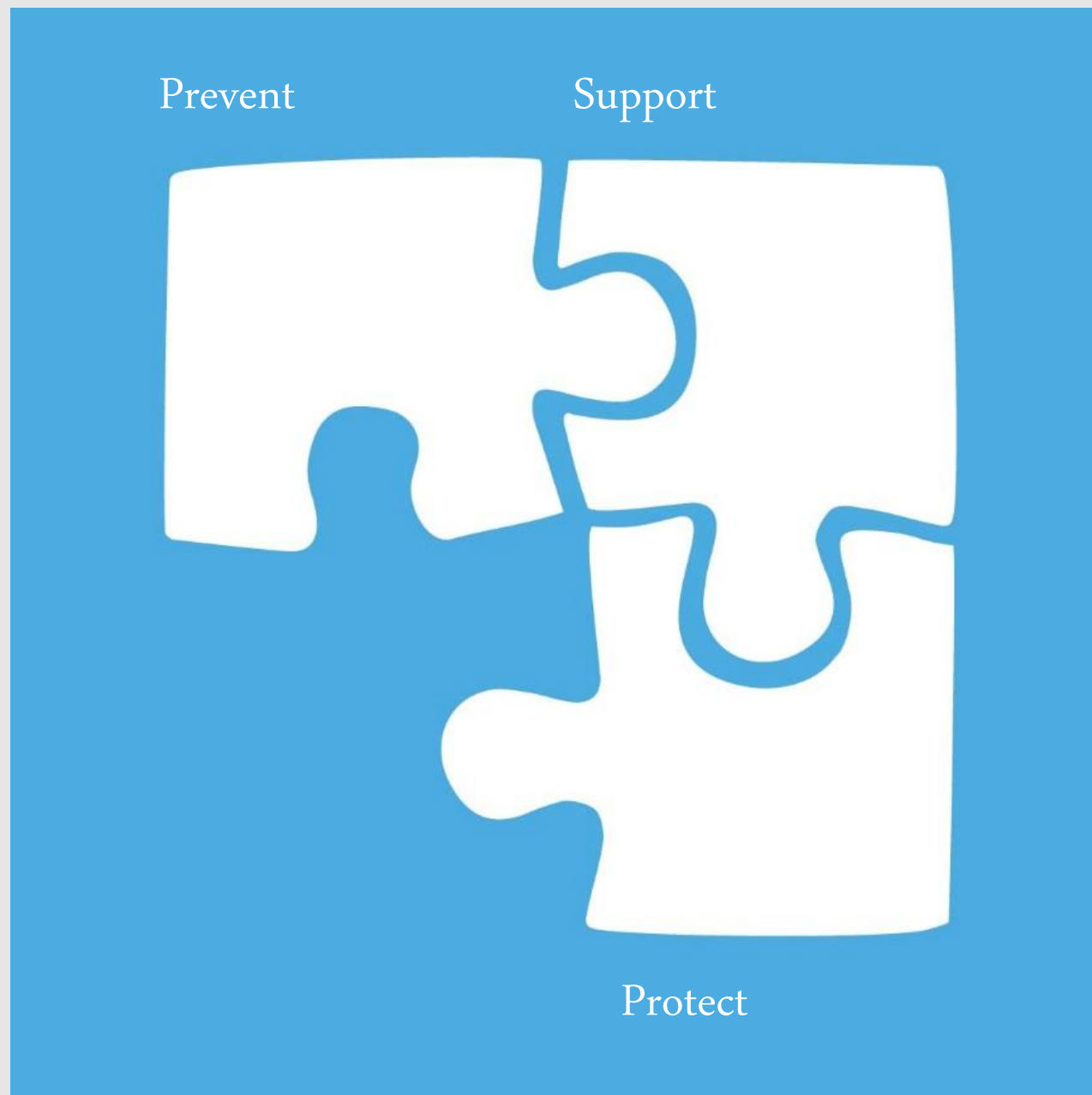
25 European countries

Missing Children Europe

Mission

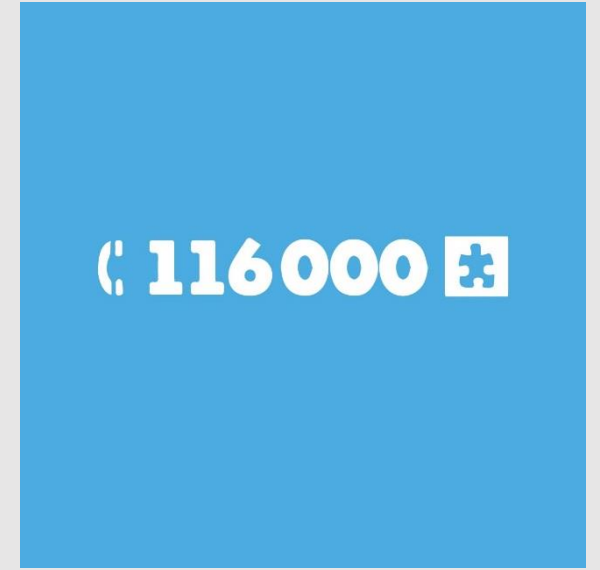
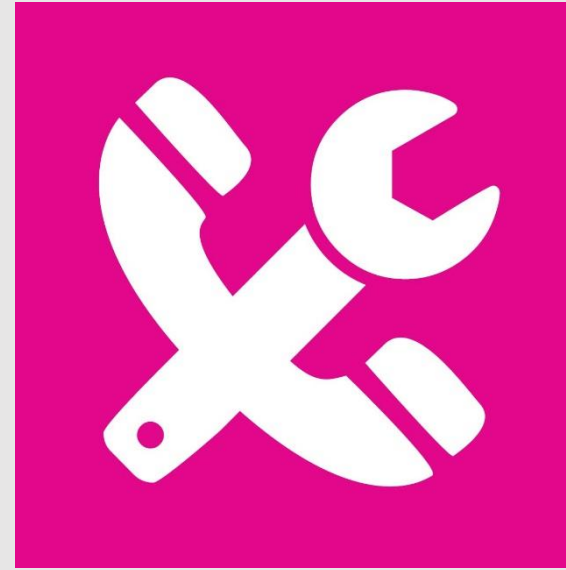


**Missing
Children
Europe**



Missing Children Europe

Cross-border network



**Missing
Children
Europe**

Missing Children Europe

☎ **116 000** 🧩

Hotline for missing children:

Same number in 30 European countries

Free 24/7 emotional, psychological, administrative & legal support

Close cooperation with LEA and other child protection services

Migrant children in Europe

2015



- More than 96 000 unaccompanied children applied for international protection

2016



- 1 in 4 asylum seekers in the EU are children.
- >50% less than 14 years old
- in Italy 91% of children were unaccompanied



**Missing
Children
Europe**

Missing migrant children



- In 2015, at least 10.000 unaccompanied children went missing (Europol).
- In 2016
 - Italy: 28 children per day go missing
 - Sweden: 7-8 unaccompanied children missing each week
 - France: 1in3 children in Calais went missing
 - Germany: 8,991 children were missing in August 2016, 867 aged less than 13.



**Missing
Children
Europe**

Missing migrant children

Only 1 to 2% of the cases reported to hotlines

- DK – BE: lower priority than other missing children cases
- SL: asylum application withdrawn
- 4 MS legal or procedural regulations on missing migrant children
- Standard no action period in some countries

From a study of the European Commission, 2013

Reasons for going missing

- Poor [reception](#) conditions
- Lack of [information](#)
- Interest to apply for protection in [another country](#)
- [Length & complexity of procedures](#)
- [Lack of information](#) on procedures/protection available
- Fear of being [sent back to another EU country/country of origin](#)
- [Lack of coordination](#) at national and cross border level
- Victim of [trafficking](#) or other forms of exploitation



**Missing
Children
Europe**

Migrant children victims of trafficking

Europe

European Commission and Europol:

- Sharp increase of child trafficking due to migration
- More victims among unaccompanied children
- Increased cross-over between smuggling and trafficking

Migrant children victims of trafficking

UK

Heading back to harm, from Missing People and ECPAT UK

- National Crime Agency report: 113 missing unaccompanied and/or trafficked children (2014-15)
- In reality: 167 trafficked and 593 unaccompanied children went missing – 207 still missing
- Only 45 over 217 local authorities had data.



**Missing
Children
Europe**

Migrant children victims of trafficking

Sweden

FRA: human trafficking increased in 2016 and about a third of the reported cases concerns children.

Report, from the County Administrative Boards of Sweden

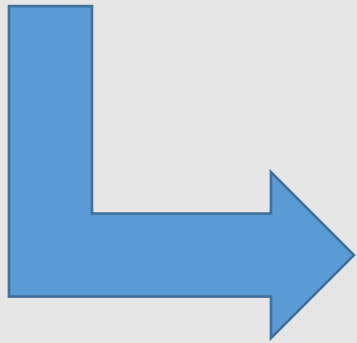
- 1829 unaccompanied children disappeared in 3.5 years
- 4% of all unaccompanied children assigned to a municipality were «missing»
- Two classes of children disappearing every month



**Missing
Children
Europe**

Recommendations - prevention

- Persistent lack of training of professionals
- Unclear division of responsibilities



- Investing on training of law enforcement in response of cases of missing migrant children → SUMMIT Handbook
- Formalisation of the cooperation between key stakeholders (also for response)



Example: SUMMIT Handbook

P R E V E N T I O N

Reception centre:

- Build trust with the child and respond to immediate needs, including the provision of adequate housing

- Collect information on the child > see template for collection of information on an unaccompanied child page xxx
- Assess risk of missing > see checklist page xxx
- Provide information on procedures in age and gender appropriate and culturally sensitive ways > see checklist: information to unaccompanied children as means to prevent disappearance page xxx
- Support the child in maintaining family links
- Discuss alternatives to unsafe migration, including the proposal to discuss risks for unsafe migration with the child's family
- Highlight that other children have gone through similar experiences and establish the contact

Guardian:

- Safeguard the child's best interest
- Promote the child's safety and well being as well as his / her participation
- Act as link between the child and others

- Assist in identifying a durable solution in the child's best interest
- Foresee provision of healthcare, education and training

Hotline for missing persons

- Provide child friendly information on services available across the 116 000 network
- Inform guardians and carers of the role of hotlines and functioning of the European network
- Work with law enforcement to make sure general missing children responses are also provided in cases of missing unaccompanied children

Law enforcement

- Inform partners of known risks / specific target groups related to trafficking / smuggling rights operating in the country

- Take action in case of identified risk > see template of actions in case of obvious concern page xxx

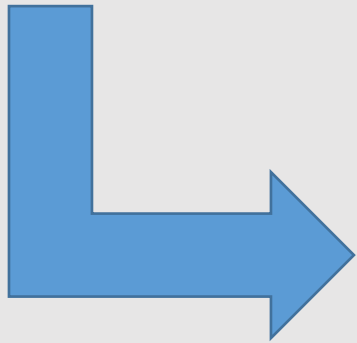
- Specific care in preparing the child to pass from childhood to adulthood

To download the handbook:

www.missingchildreneurope.eu/summit

Recommendations - prevention

- Relevant information on the child often incomplete and held in different places

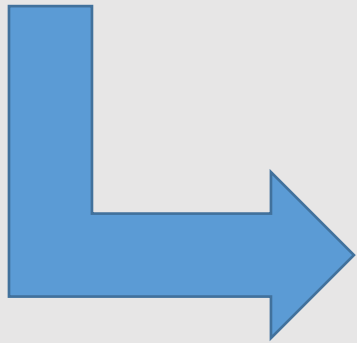


- Centralised systems collecting all information related to an unaccompanied child, including background (e.g. being previously victim of trafficking)



Recommendations - prevention

- No systematic assessment of risks of becoming victim of trafficking or re-trafficking

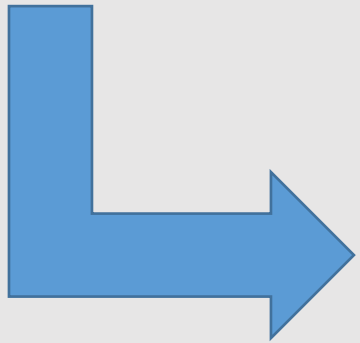


- training on indicators to all professionals in contact with children, including LEA
- improved exchange of information between LEA and carers
 - Early signalling of (potential) victims
 - Info needed to take appropriate decisions



Recommendations - response

- Assumptions are dangerous!

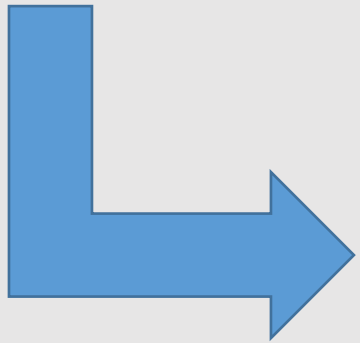


- A child is a child – every case deserves attention
- individual assessment of reasons why an unaccompanied child went missing



Recommendations - response

- Long and burdensome procedures for reporting a disappearance discourage quick reporting

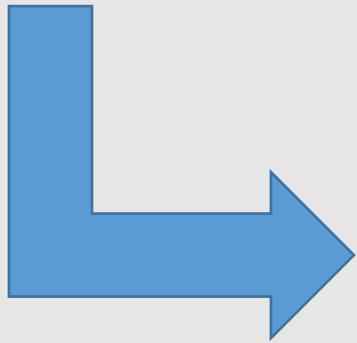


- Fast track reporting in cases of children already signalled as at risk of trafficking



Recommendations - response

- General lack of coordination between agencies
- Weak intelligence on link between missing and trafficking

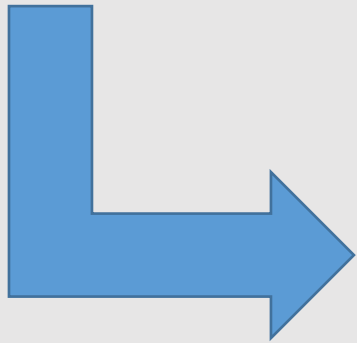


- Creation of multi-agency hubs including police, asylum authorities, child protection experts and anti-trafficking experts



Recommendations - response

- Challenging cross border cooperation when case is suspected to be transnational



- Enhanced use of existing and well-functioning tools, including the network of hotlines for missing children and SIS II
- Improved exchange of information and analysis at international level (more joint investigations)



**Missing
Children
Europe**

Thank you!

- > federica.toscano@missingchildreneurope.eu
- > +32 2 894 74 84
- > www.missingchildreneurope.eu

- > FB: [missingchildreneurope](https://www.facebook.com/missingchildreneurope)
- > Twitter: [MissingChildEU](https://twitter.com/MissingChildEU)



**Missing
Children
Europe**