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Emne: FRA ALERT - SUMMARY REPORT on Child-friendly justice (embargo until 5 May, 12.30 PM CET)

Dear Friends from EU Parliaments,

On 5 May 2015, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) will publish a new report entitled *Child-friendly justice – perspectives and experiences of professionals*, which suggests how the EU and its Member State could act to cater to the needs of the hundreds of thousands of children that are involved in legal proceedings across the EU.

FRA's findings show that child participation practices vary widely not just across, but also within, Member States, and these practices are not always child-friendly. This points to a need for clear and consistent standards and guidelines which should be systematically monitored. The research also identified the need for awareness raising measures and the special training of professionals.

EXAMPLES OF KEY FINDINGS

- In recent years respect and fulfilment of the child's **right to be heard** has improved. Greater efforts are needed to ensure that children are heard in safe and child-friendly rooms, using techniques appropriate for a child's age and maturity. Children should be heard in as few hearings as possible involving a small number of well-trained professionals;
- National legislation often contains provisions on the **right to information**, but practices vary significantly. Regular, child-friendly information and material about child rights and judicial procedures, tailored to the child's age, throughout the proceedings, can improve trust;
- Although most Member States have made significant efforts to guarantee the child's **right to privacy and their right to protection** from harm and re-traumatisation, protective measures are often under-utilised. Separate rooms to prevent contact with defendants and the use of video by trained professionals in courtrooms and police stations should become standard;
- Despite legal provisions on equal treatment, staff often lack the expertise to deal with children in vulnerable situations, such as those with disabilities or those with a minority ethnic background. There is a need to ensure that children's access to justice and how they are treated is effectively monitored to prevent discrimination. Access to legal aid and support for children in vulnerable situations should be facilitated.

For the report, FRA interviewed professionals who are in daily contact with child victims or witnesses in judicial proceedings in 10 EU Member States. They also draw on the European Commission's analysis of statistical data, legislation and policies collected from all EU Member States. A report on the views of children will follow in 2016.

MATERIALS UNDER EMBARGO

The **summary report** (and related information for the press) is available on the [FRA website](#) with the password **FRA-child-justice**, under embargo until **12:30 CET on 5 May**.

We kindly ask you **NOT to communicate these externally** before the end of the embargo date and time.

ABOUT THE LAUNCH EVENT

FRA is committed to ensure that the findings of its project are widely disseminated among EU and national stakeholders to assist them in developing a child-friendly justice. This communication aims to brief you on the upcoming activities regarding the launch preparation and launch event:

FRA will launch its report on 5 May in Brussels, during **two live radio debates with Members of the European Parliament**. The radio debates form part of **Euranet Plus' monthly programme 'Citizen's Corner'**.

Euranet Plus is a radio network for EU news, made of 15 leading public and private broadcasters within the EU providing news to 20 million listeners on a daily basis.

- There will be two debates live streamed, the first one will be held **in Spanish (Date/Time slot: 5 May, 12.30 am to 13.15 am, live from the EP Brussels), the second one in English (5 May, 13.15 – 14.00, live from the EP Brussels)**. You will be able to join the discussion ahead of the debate on [Facebook](#) or on Twitter during the debate using the hashtags #childfriendlyjustice #rightsofthechild #CitizensCorner. Our Twitter handle is @EURightsAgency.
- The launch will be covered also by following broadcasters: AMS (DE), BFM (FR), BNR (Bulgaria), EsRadio (Spain), HRT (Croatia), Latvijas Radio (LAT), MTVA (HU), Polskie Radio (PO), Radio24 (IT), RR Ranscenca (PT), Radio Romania (RO), RTBF (BE), RTV SLO (SL), EKAI 100.3 (Greece), SKY Media (EE).

AWARENESS RAISING VIDEO CLIP FOR CHILDREN UPCOMING

Building upon some key findings of the project, FRA is developing three **video clips for children** from 12 to 18 in **Bulgarian, German, Estonian, English, Spanish, French, Croatian, Polish and Romanian**. **One of those video clips** will be released on 5 May on the FRA website.

We would like to encourage you to distribute the videos widely when available to relevant national stakeholders.

On a final note, I would like to inform you on additional activities organised by some FRA partners and stakeholders: the **German Institute for Human Rights** will publish a press release on 5 May. On the same day the **Finnish League for Human Rights** our FRANET partner will hold a release event.

We remain available to provide more information if needed and thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Best regards,

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Krzysztof Zalewski

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