



DANISH PRESIDENCY
2019-2020



**Children
at Risk**

CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk¹

Annual Report
Danish Presidency 2019 – 2020

¹ The CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk consist of senior officials appointed by the ministries responsible for children's issues in the member countries to the Council of the Baltic Sea States; Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden.

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Executive summary

The Danish Presidency's main aspirations in the area of children at risk included a focus on prevention, early intervention, the welfare of children in care and child-friendly case handling, within the current mandate and to formulate a new mandate and strategy for the Expert Group on Children at Risk for 2020-2023.

In 2019-2020, the CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk contributed to the priorities through dialogue, exchange and expert contributions. The new mandate and the strategy were developed through structured dialogue and consultation. Focus was also placed on the implementation of the priority on child-friendly justice, with the launch of Promise 3 and the Promise Barnahus Network.

The CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk met once in person and twice virtually during the Danish Presidency:

- In the meeting in November 2019, the Danish Presidency organised a highly appreciated roundtable on prevention, early intervention and relevant services to establish an environment that reacts quickly and efficiently to risk situations for children, including expert interventions and an Expert Group tour de table.
- Drawing on the exchange, the Expert Group adopted the following take-home-messages in the November 2019 meeting:
 - International cooperation and exchange of practices has a strong role to play in promoting prevention, early intervention and relevant services at national level. The Expert Group can play a role to build bridges among municipalities both nationally and internationally.
 - Early intervention is in the best interest of the child and constitutes an effective allocation of funds.
 - The rapport between the family and the persons they meet can have a notable impact on how well the service is received and the progress the family makes. Participatory approaches promote progress, ensures interventions are relevant, and can build trust. Participation empowers families and children and is an important tool for reform.
 - To ensure inclusivity, it is important to balance reaching the target groups who need the programmes the most against ensuring a great uptake of target groups that may not be in same need of the interventions through universal interventions. The most vulnerable and in need are hard to reach, and demand targeted, selective and indicative approaches.
- In the virtual meeting on the 13th of February, the Expert Group members engaged in a structured discussion regarding the new mandate and strategy, 2020-2025. The Secretariat was tasked to make revisions on the draft based on the discussions and comments from the Expert Group members.
- In the virtual meeting of 6 May, the members adopted the CBSS Children at Risk Expert Group's Mandate and Strategy 2020-2025, which was adopted in the CSO meeting in June.
- The members further agreed on a take home message from the May meeting on the impact of Covid-19 on children and the role of the expert group:

The expert group acknowledges that the current situation with COVID-19 presents additional challenges for children in general, and especially for children in vulnerable situations. Furthermore, there is the risk that many of the children's challenges go undetected when normal everyday life is disrupted. This creates a need for unconventional forms of support functions in order to ensure that the children are still able to get the help they need. In the group, we can benefit from exchanging experiences about good practice in relation to the current situation and the subject will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

- The Regional Strategy for Cooperation on Children at Risk 2017-2020 and the activity plan were updated to capture the rapid development in the field of child rights and protection.
- The flagship projects of the CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk are instrumental in the group's work in addressing its priorities and implementing the Regional Strategy for Cooperation on Children at Risk 2017-2020. Several flagship projects have now come to an end and are being followed up through dissemination of results and outputs. PROMISE remains a key priority as the ambitious PROMISE 3 and the parallel Promise Barnahus Network were launched.
 - PROMISE: Promotes the Barnahus and similar models throughout Europe and coordinates the European Barnahus Movement. During the year, PROMISE 2 gave support for national implementation in 10 countries. PROMISE 3 (2020-2022) commenced in April 2020, aims to deliver university level training in forensic interviewing and relevant therapy necessary for Barnahus in Europe and a case management tool including a child participation tool. The PROMISE Network, which was launched in November 2019, aims to ensure long-term support for Barnahus and similar services by formalising the European Barnahus movement into a European PROMISE Network with a steering group and a General Assembly.
 - ProGuard: CBSS Expert Group was a partner in a project aimed at strengthening the professional level of guardianship systems in Europe. A toolkit has been developed to support guardians in their efforts to work in the best interest of the child, by strengthening their professionalism, mandate and position. A pilot assessment system (PAS) for guardians has also been developed for guardianship organisations to assess how the national system fulfils common and transparently defined general European standards. The project closed in fall 2019.
- Cooperation with other units in the CBSS Secretariat, such as the Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings, the Civil Security Team and Baltic 2030, ensures the mainstreaming of children's rights and child protection in the work of the CBSS and gains access to complementary expertise.
- During 2019, all Member States contributed to the Children at Risk Unit, and the Children at Risk Unit operating budget was in balance.

Composition and administration

Danish Chair of the CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk

Maria Pârja, Socialstyrelsen

Lithuanian vice-chair of the CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk

Daina Urbonaitienė, Ministry of Social Security and Labour

Rūta Pabedinskienė, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service

The CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk

The CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk (CAR) consists of eleven members. The line ministries in the CBSS member states dealing with children's issues, mainly ministries of social and family affairs and designated child ministries have appointed representatives to the Expert Group. The European Commission Coordinator for the Rights of the Child has an open invitation to take part in the meetings and in other expert meetings organised by the Expert Group. The European Commission has a seat in the group as part of the CBSS set up.

The Expert Group adopted a new logo, inserted on page 1.

The website of the Expert Group on Children at Risk is: www.childrenatrisk.eu.

The Children at Risk Unit at the CBSS Secretariat

Since 2002, the work as approved by the CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk is executed by the Children at Risk Unit within the Permanent International Secretariat of the Council of the Baltic Sea States. The Children at Risk Unit provides secretarial and professional support to the Expert Group, interfaces with strategic partners, drafts relevant documents and reports, and develops and executes projects.

- Senior Adviser and Head of Unit (mandate ended in August 2019) – Turid Heiberg
- Senior Advisor and Head of Unit (as of September 2019) – Olivia Lind Haldorsson
- Programme Coordinator and Promise Network Coordinator – Shawanna von Blixen
- Promise Competence Centre Coordinator (as of 1 April 2020) – Linda Johnson
- Project and Team Assistant (as of 15 April 2020) – Anastasia Edwardson

The work is actively supported by CBSS staff specially assigned to support the Children at Risk Unit:

- Media and Communications Assistant - Silvija Marcinkeviciute
- Financial Controller - Mia Skyten

Mandate, Regional Strategy, ToR

The Danish Presidency worked within the framework of the Mandate and the Regional Strategy for Cooperation on Children at Risk, July 2017-2020. The priority areas are closely related and the achievements in one priority area have relevance and impact in the other priority areas. The Terms of Reference for the members of the group is complementing the Mandate and Strategy. The strategy

was updated considering many new achievements and commitments. The Expert Group's activity plan was updated accordingly with relevant activities for the period of 2019-2020.

Work began in the autumn to develop a new strategy for June 2020 - May 2025. The new [mandate](#) and [strategy](#) were adopted in the expert group in early May and by the CSOs in June 2020.

Finance

The Children at Risk Unit operates on a budget built on member states' contributions.

During 2019, all Member States contributed to the Children at Risk Unit, and the Children at Risk Unit operating budget was in balance. All members have also contributed to the 2020 budget.

The Expert Group has been successful in securing funds for specific actions through the European Commission. Co-financing, a regular feature of external funding for projects, has been covered by the employment costs of the Children at Risk Unit staff.

Priorities 2017-2020

During the strategy period 2017-2020, the CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk is supporting the member states in bolstering their child protection and welfare systems, notably in the following priorities:

- Prevention, early intervention, parenting and family support
- Child-friendly justice
- The wellbeing and best interests of children in alternative care
- Protecting children from sexual abuse and sexual exploitation
- Preventing trafficking and exploitation of children
- The best interests of children in migration

The work of the CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk, is based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It promotes children's rights and regional cooperation to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and violence against children. The Expert Group emphasises the importance of integrated strategies to ensure comprehensive and sustainable child protection systems at the national and regional levels. Additionally, the Sustainable Development Goals 2030, which reinforce the global long-term commitment to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and violence of children, is a key reference for the work of the Expert Group.

Children may experience different forms of violence every day or they may be exposed to certain forms of violence during their childhood. Thus, promoting comprehensive measures of child protection, including prevention, detection, intervention, and care is a cross-cutting approach. Listening to the child is also an essential component and part of several of the Expert Group facilitated projects. Promoting the well-being and safety of children constitutes a strategic contribution to the sustainability, safety and security of the Baltic Sea Region.

The [regional strategy for cooperation on children at risk 2017-2020](#) and the [Children at Risk Expert Group activity plan for 2019 – 2020](#) were updated based on ongoing developments, achievements and commitments. In 2019-2020, the Presidency emphasised Prevention, early intervention, parenting and family within the current mandate through exchange and expert contributions. Focus was also placed on the priority on child-friendly justice, with the launch of Promise 3 and the Promise Barnahus Network.

Regional and global exchange

In all its work, the CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk aims to support professionals and officials by improving their capacity to prevent abuse, exploitation, trafficking and violence of children by sharing good practices and by promoting new tools and the most recent knowledge. The [Regional Strategy for Cooperation on Children at Risk 2017-2020](#) operationalises these goals in the context of the priorities established in the CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk [Mandate July 2017-2020](#).

To achieve this, the Expert Group initiates and coordinates projects. A suitable group for each task is formed through cooperation with ministries, ombudsman offices for children, academia, international organisations and national organisations and agencies. Partners in the Baltic Sea Region are the main priority, while partners from outside the region are relevant depending on the funding source. International cooperation presents an important opportunity to gain new insights and good practices from outside the region, and to showcase the Baltic Sea Region as a proactive, safe and supportive region for children.

The Children at Risk Unit functions as a hub for professionals and policy makers by facilitating contacts across the region. Many of the Expert Group's activities are made possible through the close cooperation with international and other regional entities and with ministries, ombudsman offices for children, professionals, academics, organisations, parents and children.

The Expert Group cooperates with other units in the CBSS Secretariat such as the Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings and Baltic 2030. In 2019-2020, a close collaboration was also developed with the CBSS Secretariat's Civil Security team on the role of children and youth in building a resilient society, and with the Regional Identity team on the topic of child/youth. The collaboration with other units ensures the mainstreaming of children's rights and child protection in the work of the CBSS, and gains access to complementary expertise.

The Expert Group disseminates its work and follows trends by contributing and participating in advisory groups, conferences and meetings. Participation is ensured by the staff of the Children at Risk Unit and enhanced when possible alongside the Chair or other members of the Expert Group. In this way, the group contributes knowledge to projects and activities targeting the Expert Group's priorities and expertise. The aim is to increase regional and global awareness about the human rights of children and the urgency of ending violence against children in all its forms.

During the Danish Presidency, the Expert Group contributed to regional exchange of good practice, notably in the European Commission Conference on projects promoting the rights of the child, the EU Finnish Presidency Conference on supporting non-violent and participatory childhoods, the Council of Europe conference mid-term review on the CoE Strategy for the Rights of the Child and the UNICEF Regional Conference on Access to Justice for children.

Danish Presidency highlights

The Danish Presidency of the CBSS priorities on children at risk included prevention, early intervention and the welfare of children in care and child-friendly case handling and; the adoption of a new mandate as the current mandate and strategy comes to an end in June 2019.

The CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk contributed to the priorities through dialogue and exchange of good practice. The Danish Presidency organised a highly appreciated roundtable on prevention, early intervention and relevant services to establish an environment that reacts quickly and efficiently to risk situations for children, including expert interventions and an Expert Group tour de table. Drawing on the exchange, the Expert Group adopted key messages (see below), highlighting that the Expert Group can play an important role to build bridges among municipalities both nationally and internationally.

The Danish Presidency successfully facilitated the development and adoption of the new mandate and strategy through structured dialogue and consultation. The new mandate and strategies enter into force on 1 July 2020 and end on 30 June 2025.

The Promise Barnahus Network was launched on the side-lines of the Finnish EU Presidency Conference on supporting non-violent and participatory childhoods. Nearly 100 participants from 25 countries gathered in Helsinki to celebrate the commitment of the founding members of the Network, and to explore their own future involvement. An exhibition showcased both high-level support for the network and the words of professionals and children alike about the impact of Barnahus. Quotes from Children and professionals drew visibility to individual Barnahus from all around Europe. The Promise Barnahus network builds on the achievements of the Promise project, which aims to establish Barnahus as a standard practice in Europe by promoting multidisciplinary interventions for child victims and witnesses of violence, which are organized in a child-friendly setting and under one roof, to provide rapid access to justice and care. The key objective of the Promise Barnahus network is to facilitate activities that support the network members to improve their positive impact on the lives of child victims and witnesses of violence and their families at national and European level.

Meetings of the CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk

The CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk met once in person in Copenhagen and twice virtually during the Danish Presidency.

4-5 November meeting:

- The Danish Presidency organised a very appreciated roundtable on prevention, early intervention and relevant services to establish an environment that react quickly and efficiently to risk situations for children. The roundtable featured presentations on:
 - Restructuring the range of interventions offered - with an emphasis on prevention. Speaker: Anne Sophie Sandstød Nielsen, National Board of Social Services
 - Model for early detection of children at risk. Speaker: Louise Elisabeth Madsen, National Board of Social Services.
 - A municipality's experience with restructuring the range of interventions offered - with an emphasis on prevention. Speaker: Sidsel Rønne Ackermann, Hvidovre municipality.

Expert Group members presented recent developments in this area in a tour de table including reflections, good practices and challenges related to prevention, early intervention and relevant services in their countries. Based on the exchange, the Expert Group agreed on the following Take Home Messages:

- International cooperation and exchange of practices has a strong role to play in promoting prevention, early intervention and relevant services at national level. The Expert Group can play a role to build bridges among municipalities both nationally and internationally.
- Early intervention is in the best interest of the child and constitutes an effective allocation of funds.
- The rapport between the family and the persons they meet can have a notable impact on how well the service is received and the progress the family makes. Participatory approaches promote progress, ensures interventions are relevant, and can build trust. Participation empowers families and children and is an important tool for reform.
- To ensure inclusivity, it is important to balance reaching the target groups who need the programmes the most against ensuring a great uptake of target groups that may not be in

same need of the interventions through universal interventions. The most vulnerable and in need are hard to reach, and demand targeted, selective and indicative approaches.

- The Expert Group members held initial discussions on the new mandate and strategy, which will run from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2025. The Secretariat was tasked to draft a new mandate and strategy based on the outcomes of the meeting discussions, the ongoing strategy, mandate and ToR (2017-2020) and the CBSS priorities (and vision document), bearing in mind the key message of *consolidation* from the Expert Group meeting in Riga in May 2019 and the 20 years anniversary celebration.

13 February meeting:

- The Expert Group members engaged in a structured discussion about the new mandate and strategy, chaired by the Danish Presidency
- The Secretariat was tasked to make changes to the draft strategy based on the discussion and further comments from the Expert Group members.

6 May meeting:

The second Expert group meeting was held online due to the exceptional circumstances caused by Covid-19. The Chair regretted that the face-to-face meeting in Copenhagen had to be cancelled but welcomed that the members could meet online. She also highlighted the impact of Covid-19 on children at risk and suggested that the group adopt a take-home-message in this regard.

- The Meeting adopted the CBSS Children at Risk Expert Group's Mandate and Strategy 2020-2025, with reservations for final changes.
- The members agreed that the Expert group will engage in an exchange on the measures implemented to address the impact on children of Covid-19 in the member states.
- The members agreed on a take home message on the impact of Covid-19 on children and the role of the expert group: *The expert group acknowledges that the current situation with COVID-19 presents additional challenges for children in general, and especially for children in vulnerable situations. Furthermore, there is the risk that many of the children's challenges go undetected when normal everyday life is disrupted. This creates a need for unconventional forms of support functions in order to ensure that the children are still able to get the help they need. In the group, we can benefit from exchanging experiences about good practice in relation to the current situation and the subject will be on the agenda for the next meeting.*

Flagship Projects

Several flagship projects came to an end during the Latvian and Danish Presidency. The following projects were underway during the Danish Presidency of the CBSS. The Expert Group's annual Plan of Activities (2019 – 2020) elaborates further on all foreseen actions.

PROMISE 2 and 3: PROMISE promotes the Barnahus and similar models throughout Europe and coordinates the European Barnahus Movement.

Children at Risk Priority: Child-friendly justice.

Coordinated by the CBSS, co-funded by the European Union.

www.childrenatrisk.eu/promise

ProGuard: Strengthening and professionalising guardianship in Europe by creating a practical toolkit including a train-the-trainer methodology. Developing a pilot accreditation of guardianship tool.
Children at Risk Priority: The best interests of children in migration.
Coordinated by Nidos, CBSS is a partner. Co-funded by the European Union.
www.childrenatrisk.eu/proguard

Progress report for the Regional Strategy for Cooperation on Children at Risk 2017-2020

The [regional strategy for cooperation on children at risk 2017-2020](#) and the [Children at Risk Expert Group activity plan for 2019 – 2020](#) were updated based on ongoing developments, achievements and commitments. Several projects came to an end during the period and the activities were concentrated on ongoing and new project commitments, including the Promise 3 project and the Promise Barnahus network. This progress report mainly focusses on the strategic objectives that formed part of the [Children at Risk Expert Group activity plan for 2019 – 2020](#).

Prevention, early intervention, parenting and family support

During the Danish Presidency, the focus under this area was **prevention, early intervention and relevant services to establish an environment that react quickly and efficiently to risk situations for children**. For further details see a summary of the activities and outcomes under “Meetings of the CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk” above.

The Expert Group also decided to develop Terms of References for a Regional Registry of good practice on strengthening national child protection system, with a focus on prevention and early intervention.

Objective 1: To promote the elimination of corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading punishment of children through collaborative, multi-stakeholder planning and action within and between governments in the Baltic Sea Region, across EU Member States and beyond.

The Baltic Sea Region is fast becoming a no-corporal-punishment zone for children with 10 out of 11 countries having prohibited corporal punishment. Sweden was the first country in the world to do so in 1979; Finland achieved prohibition in 1983, Denmark in 1997, Estonia in 2015, Germany in 2000, Iceland in 2003, Latvia in 1998, Lithuania 2017, Norway in 1987 and Poland in 2010.

The [Non-Violent Childhoods](#) project, which was implemented 2017-2018, provided a platform and practical tools to promote concrete steps towards an implementation of national bans on corporal punishment of children. In 2019-2020, the outcomes of the project and the products were disseminated and promoted in regional fora, including the EU Finnish Presidency Conference on supporting non-violent and participatory childhood and the Council of Europe conference mid-term review on the CoE Strategy for the Rights of the Child, as well as with individual States and NGOs that have sought advice and consulted the project tools.

Objective 2: To collect and share information about the legislation, practices and national focal points in relation to cross-country childcare issues.

Cross-country childcare issues continued to feature as part of the regular exchange and the Tour de Table in the Expert Group meetings.

Child-friendly justice

Objective 1: To promote child-friendly, multi-disciplinary and interagency services supporting child victims of violence, the Barnahus model.

The Barnahus model is a leading European multi-disciplinary and interagency practice responding to violence against children. The model ensures a child-friendly environment and provides rapid access to justice and quality care for child victims and witnesses of violence. Barnahus have been set up, piloted or are being set up in almost all the countries of the Baltic Sea Region.

Building on progress made in the EU funded PROMISE project (2015-2017), the objective of PROMISE II was the implementation of Barnahus in 10 European countries (2017-2019).

PROMISE II was successfully completed January 2020. It supported strategic dialogues between ministries, national authorities including social welfare, child protection, police, prosecution, judges, health systems and service providers in the 10 partner countries. Roadmaps and stakeholder agreements are being developed. A case management tool is developed to enable quality assurance and monitoring at national level and to provide comparable data at Europe level. The project also developed a child participation tool to gather the views and experiences of children who have been in Barnahus, and a legal briefing, which discusses the application of Barnahus in different legal systems.

PROMISE 3 (2020-2022) commenced in April 2020, aiming to, among other things, deliver university level training in forensic interviewing and relevant therapy necessary for Barnahus in Europe and a case management tool including a child participation tool.

[The PROMISE Barnahus Network](#), which was launched in Helsinki in November 2019, aims to ensure long-term support for Barnahus and similar services by formalising the European Barnahus movement into a European PROMISE Network. The Network functions according to democratic values with an elected Steering Group and a General Assembly for all members to voice their opinion about needed progress. The General Assembly, engaging actors from across the Baltic Sea Region and beyond, held in April 2020 adopted a five-year strategy, which sets out the key objectives and activities for the network between 2020 – 2025.

Objective 2: Continue the cooperation with the Council of Europe on promoting the Child-Friendly Justice Guidelines.

The Children at Risk Unit is in regular communication with the Council of Europe about opportunities to cooperate on the subject, including parallel efforts to support the spread and competence of Barnahus in Europe. The Council of Europe, which has provided a statement of support of the Promise Barnahus network, is using the PROMISE publications and referencing the PROMISE project in their ongoing work.

The wellbeing and best interests of children in alternative care

Objective 1: Through the AudTrain child rights and system-based Audit of Child Welfare Facilities project increase the capacity and skills of professionals responsible of auditing and monitoring children's situation and rights in residential care. Enhance children's rights to be heard, to be safe and secure and to be supported in their development in residential care.

The AudTrain material is available on the AudTrain website and the Secretariat directs interested parties to existing training opportunities in this area.

Objective 2: Follow-up of the Tallinn Recommendations on Alternative Care and Family Support and on the Conclusions from the Warsaw Roundtable on Deinstitutionalisation and Foster Care.

The wellbeing and best interests of children in alternative care remains an important area of exchange of the Children at Risk Expert group, including in the Tour de Table in the Expert Group meetings.

Protecting children from sexual abuse and sexual exploitation

Objective: the CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk will continue to support the development of expertise and the dissemination of good practices and evidence-based methods on protecting children from sexual abuse and exploitation through regional cooperation. To promote child friendly investigations in relation to the legal process is of interest for the Expert Group and integrated in the Barnahus model.

The CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk supports the work of the Lanzarote Committee of the Council of Europe and the Expert Group is an observer to the Lanzarote committee. The Head of Unit and some of the Expert group members regularly comment and discuss suggestions from the Council of Europe and the Lanzarote committee.

Preventing trafficking and exploitation of children

Objective 1: to develop a regional approach on how to strengthen child-sensitive communication and best interests determination and to develop a methodology(ies) for hearing the child's story.

In 2018, a report was developed based on the methodologies developed for child participation as part of the consultations during 2016 – 2018 in the context of the PROTECT project. The report, *Listen Up! Creating conditions for children to speak and be heard. Professional communication with children at risk of exploitation and trafficking. Experience and lessons learned from the Baltic Sea Region*, was promoted with key actors in the region, including in the Nordic Network on trafficking in children.

Child sensitive communication and methods for hearing children's stories is a key element of the Promise 3 project, which commenced 1st of April 2020. Children will be invited to develop tools and information for children and will provide feedback on the revision of the Barnahus quality standards, including child participation.

Objective 2: To support the self-organising of survivors of trafficking and exploitation in childhood.

Survivors are organising in the region, including with the support of the PSF Facility. Activities include an online festival featuring inspirational talks from survivors and professionals from across the BSR and the adoption of a Manifest.

Objective 3: Be pro-active in the Nordic Network against Trafficking in Children and other specific networks at national or regional level

During the reporting period, the Children at Risk Unit took part in the meetings of the Nordic Network against Trafficking in Children. Representatives from the Nordic countries aims to meet twice a year to discuss current issues and learn from good practices. The network is led by representatives from ministries and designated agencies and includes organisations that are active in combating trafficking and develop relevant tools. The Children at Risk Unit contributes with its knowledge and expertise to these conversations.

Objective 4: Increase the cooperation with the Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB) at every level including at the strategic and project level to strengthen the impact of CBSS efforts.

The CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk continues to cooperate and seeking opportunities to collaborate with other units in the CBSS Secretariat, including Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings.

The best interests of children in migration

Objective 1: to promote the conclusions and recommendations from the Stockholm conference and translate them into new projects to promote good practices and protect migrant and asylum-seeking children including unaccompanied children.

The Stockholm Conclusions Promoting Good Practices in Protecting Migrant and Asylum-Seeking Children, especially Unaccompanied Children, and Finding Solutions for the Children, Families, Societies and States (2016) continues to inform the work of actors across the Baltic Sea Region.

Objective 2: To promote a formal European network of guardians and a European system of accreditation to encourage a firmer level of professional guardianship in national systems in the Europe.

The ProGuard Project (2017 – 2019) aimed to strengthen and professionalise guardianship in Europe by creating a practical toolkit including a train-the-trainer methodology and a pilot accreditation tool for national guardianship systems.

The toolkit, which aims to support guardians in their efforts to work in the best interest of the child, by strengthening their professionalism, mandate and position is available in English, French, Finnish, Greek, Danish, German, Italian at www.guardianstoolkit.eu

The project also developed a Pilot Assessment System (PAS), a tool which national guardianship systems for unaccompanied and separated children in migration can use to assess themselves on how their system fulfils common and transparently defined European standards on guardianship.

[The outcomes and deliverables of ProGuard](#) have been disseminated to a broad audience in the Baltic Sea Region and were transferred to the European Guardianship Network (EGN) during a second meeting in Glasgow autumn 2019.

ProGuard was co-funded by the EU and led by Nidos in the Netherlands. The partners included METAdrasi (EL), Danish Red Cross (DK), Jugendhilfe Süd-Niedersachsen (DE), The Association of Employees of Latvian Orphan's and Custody Courts (LV), Amici dei Bambini (IT), Centre for missing and exploited children (HR), Child Circle (BE), National Institute for Health and Welfare (FI), Missing Children Europe and The Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat. The CBSS/Expert Group on Children at Risk supports the Baltic Sea regional participation and dissemination of results.

List of events and meetings under Danish Presidency

27-29 August, Tartu Estonia: Presentation on Promise and Barnahus by Turid Heiberg at Children of the World: Touch of Change, 7th Conference of the international society for child indicators <https://www.isci2019.org/>

28 August, Stockholm: Project launch meeting for the PSF funded survivors network (Turid Heiberg, Head of the Children at Risk Unit)

12 September: Webinar: [Considerations for evidence recording at the Barnahus](#) (Head of Children at Risk Unit Olivia Lind Haldorsson, Programme Coordinator for CAR Shawna von Blixen)

16 September, Galway: Official opening of Galway Barnahus (Head of Children at Risk Unit Olivia Lind Haldorsson)

15 October, Slovakia: Presenting the Benefits of the Barnahus model, [via video](#). (CAR Programme Coordinator Shawna von Blixen)

15 October, Helsinki: Nordic Network on child trafficking (Head of CAR Olivia Lind Haldorsson)

24-25 October, Brussels: EU Conference on projects promoting the rights of the child, presenting about the success of the PROMISE partnership for the conference and also training material. (Programme Coordinator for Children at Risk Shawna von Blixen, Financial Controller Mia Skyten)

31 October: Webinar: The PROMISE Child Participation Tool (Head of Children at Risk Unit Olivia Lind Haldorsson, Programme Coordinator for CAR Shawna von Blixen)

4-5 November, Copenhagen: Children at Risk Expert Group Meeting (Head of Children at Risk Unit Olivia Lind Haldorsson, Children at Risk Programme Coordinator Shawna von Blixen, Media and Communications Assistant Silvija Marcinkeviciute)

7 November: Webinar: The European Barnahus Movement – showcasing 4 years of network and partner progress (Head of Children at Risk Unit Olivia Lind Haldorsson, Programme Coordinator for CAR Shawna von Blixen)

12-14 November, Strasbourg: Council of Europe conference mid-term review on the CoE Strategy for the Rights of the Child (Head of CAR Olivia Lind Haldorsson)

25-27 November, Helsinki: PROMISE Barnahus Network Launch, and Finnish EU Presidency conference on prevention of violence against children, PROMISE final project meeting (Head of Children at Risk Unit Olivia Lind Haldorsson, Programme Coordinator for CAR Shawna von Blixen)

4 December, Stockholm: Roundtable on Advancement of Children's Rights in Kosovo, Lessons learned from the Baltic Sea Region (Head of Children at Risk Unit Olivia Lind Haldorsson)

5 December, Webinar: Presenting the learnings about EU project management as a result of an EU audit (Programme Coordinator for CAR Shawna von Blixen, Financial Controller Mia Skyten)

14 January, Online: Steering Group Meeting for the PROMISE Barnahus Network (CAR Head of Unit Olivia Lind Haldorsson and Programme Coordinator Shawna von Blixen)

31 January, Stockholm: Chris Newlin, USA Child Advocacy Centres, at CBSS for preparation meeting for PROMISE 3 training activities. (Head of Children at Risk Unit Olivia Lind Haldorsson, Programme Coordinator for CAR Shawna von Blixen)

4 February, Online: Children at Risk Expert Group Meeting (Head of Children at Risk Unit Olivia Lind Haldorsson, Children at Risk Programme Coordinator Shawna von Blixen)

25-27 February, Sarajevo-Bosnia and Herzegovina: UNICEF Regional Conference on Access to Justice: 25-27 February 2020 (CAR Head of Unit Olivia Lind Haldorsson)

2-4 March, Stockholm: Promise Partner TUSLA, meeting to finalise PROMISE 2 reporting and begin planning for PROMISE 3(CAR Programme Coordinator Shawna von Blixen)

12 March, Online: Steering Group Meeting for the PROMISE Barnahus Network (CAR Head of Unit Olivia Lind Haldorsson and Programme Coordinator Shawna von Blixen)

24 March, Online: General Assembly of the PROMISE Barnahus Network (CAR Head of Unit Olivia Lind Haldorsson and Programme Coordinator Shawna von Blixen)

April – May, Online: A series of Promise 3 project partners online meetings ((Head of Children at Risk Unit Olivia Lind Haldorsson, Children at Risk Programme Coordinator Shawna von Blixen, Project Assistant Anastasia Edwardson and Competence Centre Coordinator Linda Jonsson)

6 May, Online: Children at Risk Expert Group Meeting (Head of Children at Risk Unit Olivia Lind Haldorsson, Children at Risk Programme Coordinator Shawna von Blixen, Project Assistant Anastasia Edwardson and Competence Centre Coordinator Linda Jonsson)

11-15 May, Online: Promise 3 Project Kick-off meeting and training (Head of Children at Risk Unit Olivia Lind Haldorsson, Children at Risk Programme Coordinator Shawna von Blixen, Project Assistant Anastasia Edwardson and Competence Centre Coordinator Linda Jonsson)

2 July, Webinar: Learnings from the first year of The Lighthouse, the first Barnahus in the UK (moderated by Programme Coordinator Shawna von Blixen)