Provision of legal aid to children on the move in Europe and Central Asia

Lessons from experiences in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Turkey
Context

• Children on the move in contact with the law, whether regular or irregular

• Asylum-seeking process, residency status, detention, trafficking, discrimination in accessing public services...

• Providing recommendations to UNICEF and its partners on strengthening access to justice for children on the move
Challenges in providing legal aid

• **Stability** of the national legal framework
• **Sustainability** of legal aid for children on the move through State engagement
• **Dearth of specialised lawyers**, poor legal literacy
• **Availability, quality** of information
• **Conditionality** of access to legal aid
• **Documentation** from country of origin
Challenges (cont.)

• **Disparities** in law implementation
• **Detention**, reception conditions limiting access to children
• **Gender** dimensions of legal aid
• **Age assessment**
• Child friendly **procedures**
• **Uncertain legal status**
• **Stigmatization**
Ways forward (1/3)

• Strengthen linkages with the **broader access to justice agenda**
• **Broaden understanding** of legal aid
• Consider legal aid **beyond migratory status** e.g. access to health, education, criminal, civil proceedings
• Evidence based **policy advocacy**
• Promote **integrated approaches**
Ways forward (2/3)

• **Bridging** with civil society
• Ensure access to trained **cultural mediators**
• **Prioritize legal aid** as a right upon arrival
• Immediate assignment of **legal guardians** to unaccompanied children
• Reaching the **hard-to-reach** (collaboration with DLA Piper in Italy)
Legal aid to children on the move in Italy

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBOSZf0Uz8k&list=PLkWsKYZGolfKZXCqwLQKF8sZcmq2Stnix
Ways forward (3/3)

• Foster **coordination** among stakeholders, clear division of labour
• Create **conditions for children to receive** legal aid
• Integrate **gender approaches**
• Consider **transnational administrative issues**