

# **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=PLkWsKYZGolfKZXCqwLQKF8sZcmq2Stni>

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# 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**