MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE

The identification of unaccompanied and separated girls in Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Serbia

unicef

for every child

Contents

List of Acronyms

BIA	Best Interest Assessment	**IPSN**	Identification of Persons with Special Needs
BID	Best Interest Determination	**UAM**	Unaccompanied minor
EASO	European Asylum Support Office	**UASC**	Unaccompanied and separated children
EUROSTAT	European Statistical Office		
GBV	Gender-based violence	**UNHCR**	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
IOM	International Organization for Migration	**UNICEF**	United Nations Children's Fund

Acknowledgments

1. INTRODUCTION

Migration is gendered, with gender roles, relations and inequalities influencing who migrates, why and how they move, and where they end up. Gender shapes the risks and threats that male and female migrants experience on their journey and on arrival, how they cope and the mechanisms in place for their protection.[1]

In April 2019, the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants noted that "an increasing number of women are moving on their own, which is leading to a so-called feminization of migration."

There has also been an increase in the number of girls on the move who are unaccompanied or separated from their loved ones,[2] often travelling along migration routes that are notoriously dangerous for adolescent girls. They may be moving to find new opportunities for work or education, or to join their families or partners.[3] Many are fleeing violence, including child marriage, in their home country, or are trafficked, which only increases their vulnerability to violence and exploitation. All of them face unique risks related to gender-based violence (GBV) before, during and after migration. Leaving home may not be the escape they hoped for, as they continue to be at risk in countries of transit and arrival.

Yet they are some of the most 'invisible' people within the European refugee and migrant response[4], often hidden away within other families or groups, or self-identifying as over 18. Because they are not always identified, they may be poorly represented in official statistics. Their 'invisibility' makes it difficult for them to access services – including dedicated child protection – which can heighten their vulnerability still further. Many service providers may be unaware of the need to adapt their services to reach girls who simply do not show up in the statistics that influence where and how services should be provided.

Persistent weaknesses in the systems that should identify these 'invisible' girls on arrival mean that they cannot always rely on the authorities to 'find' them. Many will only get the support they need as vulnerable children if they declare themselves to be unaccompanied and separated. And girls may have many reasons – including valid fears of violence at the hand of traffickers – to remain silent. What's more, poor reception conditions when they first arrive in Europe may lead them to conceal their age, abandon the official reception process and move on. In short, current systems may struggle to identify unaccompanied and separated girls unless the girls are able and willing to make themselves known.

Europe's influx of refugees and migrants

Since 2015, Europe has experienced an influx of refugees and migrants fleeing conflict, violence,

insecurity and a lack of opportunities in the Middle East, South Asia, East and West Africa.[5] Between 2014 and 2019, 2.1 million refugees and migrants arrived in Europe through the Mediterranean migration routes, including over 125,000 who arrived in 2019.[6] While every route to Europe is challenging, the risk of violence and abuse is particularly high for those using the Eastern and Central Mediterranean route, which passes through Libya.[7]

According to the 2019 report 'Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe', "Between January and June 2019, 8,236 children arrived in Greece, Spain, Italy and Bulgaria, of whom 2,794 (34 per cent) were unaccompanied or separated children (UASC)."[8] Nearly 86 per cent of requests for international protection for all UASC in 2018 related to boys.[9]

Only those girls who have been officially registered are included in these statistics, which are not yet capturing the situation of those who are unaccompanied or separated. They do not include girls who are trying to avoid detection (voluntarily or not) by, for example, travelling with others posing as family members, or by claiming to be over 18 years of age.

As a result, the refugee and migrant response is skewed by data limitations that mask the true number of girls who are migrating. That, in turn, means that they are not getting the attention and

support they need. Statistics – coupled with the fact that unaccompanied boys tend to travel alone or in groups with other boys and seem to be more likely to self-identify as children during registration once they reach Europe – reinforce the perception that UASC in Europe is all about boys. Yet girls are moving alone across Europe, and their experiences – and needs – differ from those of unaccompanied boys and, therefore, demand a different and specific response.

About this Analysis

This Analysis highlights the specific challenges faced by girls travelling to and through Europe via the Eastern and the central Mediterranean route. It aims to demonstrate to national authorities, frontline workers, and service providers the critical importance of identifying unaccompanied and separated girls to ensure their protection. At the same time, it highlights the challenges of ensuring that everyone involved in the refugee and migrant response is aware of the pressing needs of these girls, and actively looking for them.

It examines basic information on their situation, their experiences during their journeys and on their arrival in Europe, and the challenges to their identification. It includes a practical 'tip sheet' for frontline workers, outlining 10 signs that a girl might be unaccompanied or separated (see page 15 and Annex 1). Finally, recommendations are proposed for European institutions; authorities in Bulgaria, Italy, Greece and Serbia; and for United Nations agencies.

The scope of the Analysis is limited to the all-important initial window when a child arrives, and when identification can mean connecting them to protection systems. What happens later is beyond its scope, as this requires a specific piece of work.

Methodology

This Analysis was prepared by UNICEF as a contribution to the regional programme on 'Action

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Against Gender-Based Violence Affecting Refugee and Migrant Women and Children in Greece, Italy, Serbia and Bulgaria' funded by the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM). It is based on a review of secondary data, as well as limited direct data collection. A literature review was carried out with the support of the Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility (GBV AoR) Help Desk. Data on displacement and UASC within the European response were reviewed, and UNICEF also conducted multi-country consultations with 46 institutions and civil society organizations, including service providers.

Most importantly, the analysis is based on the direct experiences of approximately 20 current or former unaccompanied and separated girls in Greece and Italy, as well as feedback and advice from girls in Serbia.* These multiple sources provided in-depth insights into girls' experiences, and current practices and challenges related to the identification of – and initial response to – their specific needs and risks.

Box 1. Unaccompanied and separated children: definitions and terminology

Unaccompanied children are those who are separated from both parents and other relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for that care.[10]

Separated children are separated from both parents, or from their previous primary or customary caregivers, but not necessarily from other relatives. They may, therefore, include children accompanied by other adult family members.[11]

In the European Union (EU) Asylum Acquis (the accumulated laws on asylum), the terminology used is **unaccompanied minor**, defined as "a minor who arrives on the territory of the Member States unaccompanied by an adult responsible for him or her whether by law or by the practice of the Member State concerned, and for as long as he or she is not effectively taken into the care of such a person; it includes a minor who is left unaccompanied after he or she has entered the territory of the Member States".[12] In addition, countries have adopted their own legal definitions of unaccompanied and separated children, which might differ from those listed above.

While there is no clear distinction between unaccompanied and separated children in most legislation and practice, this division needs careful consideration as it influences protection pathways, including arrangements for accommodation and guardianship. This Analysis uses the term Unaccompanied or Separated Children (UASC), but terms such as 'unaccompanied minor' appear in the context of direct quotes.

What is identification in this context? Identification is the process of establishing which children have been separated from their families or other caregivers, and where they may be found. This can happen when they first arrive, but also at a later stage.[13] It can, for example, be provided by service providers or through community-based mechanisms. Identification aims to ensure that unaccompanied girls and boys are safe from harm and receive appropriate care and assistance until they are either reunited with their families or alternative long-term solutions are arranged. It is important to verify and assess family links for separated children to identify any potential risks to their safety and well-being.

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2. BASIC INFORMATION ON UNACCOMPANIED AND SEPARATED GIRLS

During the preparation of this Analysis, it emerged that statistics disaggregated by sex and age are not always collected or analysed, as in the case of Serbia. This means that unaccompanied and separated girls who have disclosed their situation to authorities have been subsumed under the generic term 'children' and, consequently, their risks and needs remain hidden. Even when data are available, they are not always analysed in full. This partial analysis hampers both a full understanding of the problem and policy-level decision making, as unaccompanied and separated girls have accounted for a much smaller percentage of the UASC who have been registered in Europe. Furthermore, many data-points that would contribute to a better understanding of the risks and needs of girls (marital status, if the children are parents themselves, pregnancies, etc.) are not collected consistently. Data on unaccompanied and separated girls and boys can be obtained through national monitoring systems (e.g. the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies in Italy,[14] or the National Centre for Social Solidarity – E.K.K.A. – in Greece[15]) and from those collected and analysed by Eurostat. While Eurostat data include only those who have applied for international protection – which means that many boys and girls are not represented as they are entitled to other forms of protection (e.g. Permit for minors in Italy) – it remains the main source of comparable data among EU member states.

Box 2. Why data gaps matter – A global Perspective (from *A call to action: Protecting children on the move starts with better data*)

"Reliable, timely and accessible data and evidence are essential for understanding how migration and forcible displacement affect children and their families – and for putting in place policies and programmes to meet their needs. Despite greater efforts over the past decade, we still do not know enough about children on the move: their age and sex; where they come from, where they are going and why they move; whether they move with their families or alone, how they fare along the way, what their vulnerabilities are, what they need, and how migration and asylum policies affect them.

Data gaps make it difficult to get a real sense of the scale and patterns of global migration. In many cases, data are not regularly collected, and quality is often poor. These problems are many times worse when it comes to data on migrant and forcibly displaced children, given the even more significant challenges of measurement. Information comes from a patchwork of sources that provide little comparable global or even regional-level data.

Variations in the laws, definitions, rights and entitlements that apply to children further hamper comparisons between countries. Data are even scarcer on children moving undocumented across borders, those displaced, stateless or migrating internally, children left behind by migrant parents and those who have gone missing or lost their lives during dangerous journeys."
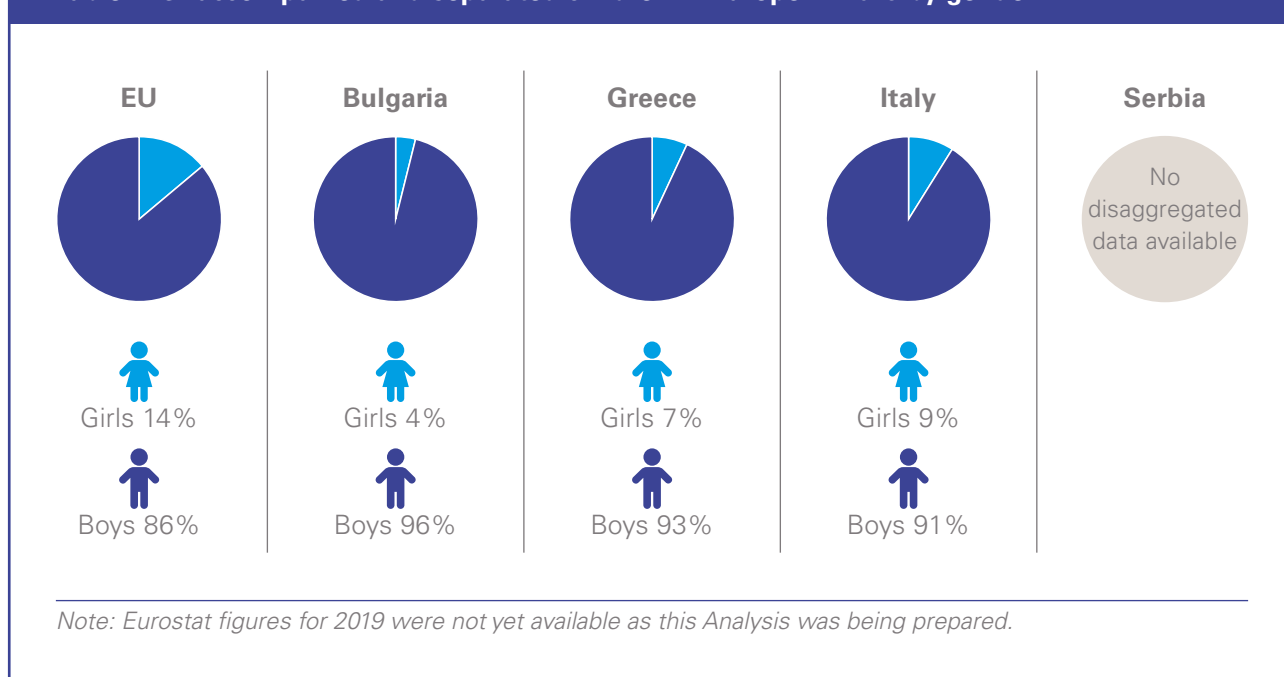
Source: *A call to action: Protecting children on the move starts with better data*[16]

The percentage of UASC among all child refugees and migrants differs from one country to the next. In Italy, for example, UASC account for around 75 per cent of the total, and in Greece, 17 per cent.[17] In Italy and Greece, unaccompanied and separated girls accounted respectively for 7.3 per cent[18] and 6.2 per cent[19] of total UASC in 2018, and 5.2 per cent[20] and 7.4 per cent[21] in 2019. According to Eurostat, between 2015 and 2018 the percentage of unaccompanied and separated girls seeking international protection in the EU increased from 8 per cent to 14 per cent of all unaccompanied children.[22]

Overall, unaccompanied girls who seek international protection in Europe tend to be younger than boys seeking that protection, with 34 per cent aged 15

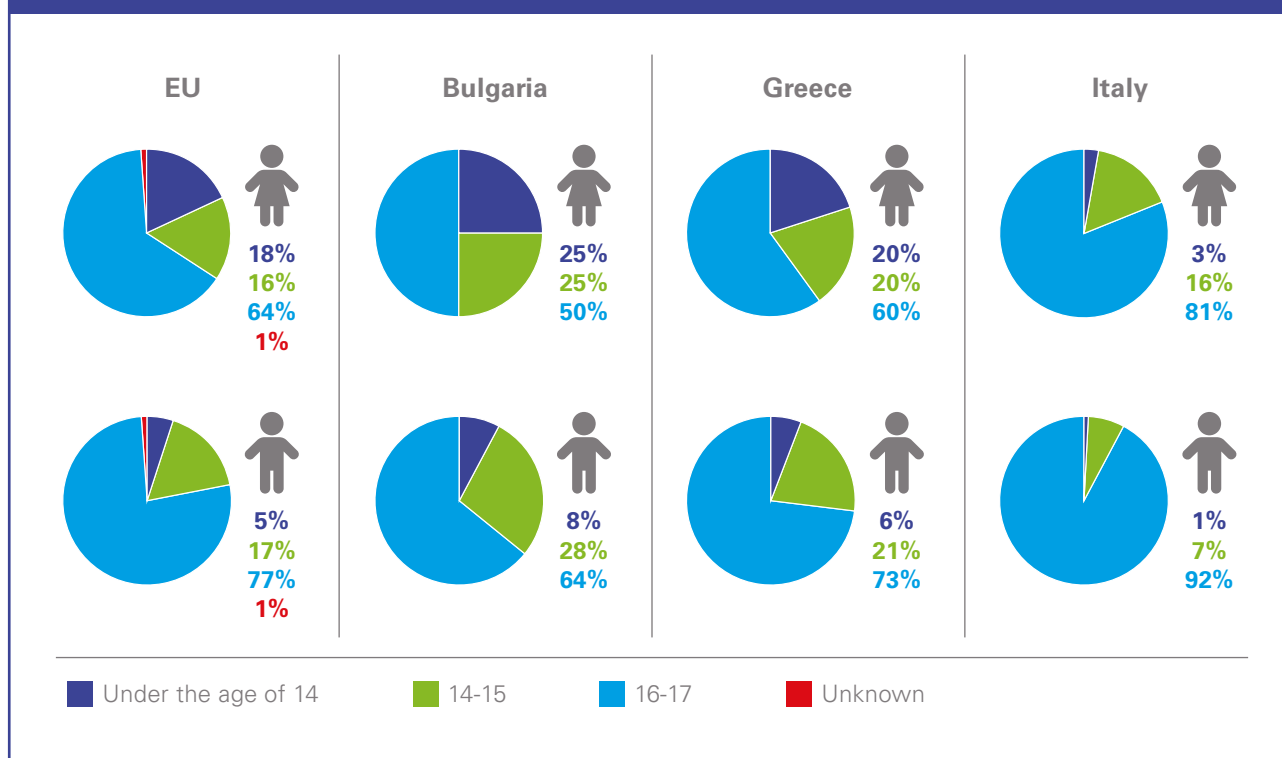## Table 1. Unaccompanied and separated children in Europe in 2018 by gender[23]

EU	Bulgaria	Greece	Italy	Serbia
Girls 14%	Girls 4%	Girls 7%	Girls 9%	No disaggregated data available
Boys 86%	Boys 96%	Boys 93%	Boys 91%	

Note: Eurostat figures for 2019 were not yet available as this Analysis was being prepared.

or younger, compared to 22 per cent of boys.[24] This is critical information, as it highlights the need for services that are age- and gender-appropriate, particularly to cater for younger girls.

Furthermore, migrant girls do not tend to come from the same countries as migrant boys. In 2018, the top three countries of origin among UAS girls in the European Union (EU) were Eritrea, Syria and Somalia, while Afghanistan, Eritrea, and Pakistan topped the list for boys.[25] In Italy, for example, the top countries of origin of unaccompanied and separated girls in 2018 were Nigeria (30.1 per cent), Eritrea (19.2 per cent) and Albania (10.4 per cent), while the top countries of origin for UASC in general (without disaggregating by sex) were Albania (14.4 per cent), Egypt (8.6 per cent) and the Gambia (8.3 per cent).[26]

This illustrates a lack of disaggregated data that can blur critical information. Knowing a girl's country of origin is crucial for an understanding of her specific vulnerabilities and protection concerns, including,

Table 2. Unaccompanied and separated children in Europe in 2018 by age and gender[27]

	EU	Bulgaria	Greece	Italy
Girls	18% / 16% / 64% / 1%	25% / 25% / 50%	20% / 20% / 60%	3% / 16% / 81%
Boys	5% / 17% / 77% / 1%	8% / 28% / 64%	6% / 21% / 73%	1% / 7% / 92%

Legend: ■ Under the age of 14   ■ 14-15   ■ 16-17   ■ Unknown

but not limited to, the reasons she left, her route and the risks related to her migration, and the kind of international protection she might be able to access. For girls coming to Europe via the central Mediterranean route, certain countries of origin are closely related to trafficking issues, including Nigeria[28] and, increasingly, Côte d'Ivoire.[29] Finally, knowing in advance where girls come from can help provide assistance that is culturally appropriate, including cultural mediation and interpretation.

Overall, findings from the UNICEF 2019 multi-country consultations in Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Serbia highlight the limited national, regional or cross-border mechanisms for age and sex-disaggregated data collection and analysis for UASC. This is particularly worrying, given the estimated numbers of UASC who are unaccounted for and missing – some of whom may well be girls.[30]

For asylum applicants at the European level, "the proportion of females among UAMs [unaccompanied minors] was relatively higher for some countries of origin: this was the case for Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria and Viet Nam, among whom almost half of UAMs were female. In terms of the age of applicants, Iraqis and Syrians had the largest proportion of being younger than 14 years old. Moreover, two out of five female UAMs were younger than 14 years old among Iraqis, and one in three among Afghans or Syrians."

Source: *EASO, Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union 2018.* [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/easo-annual-report-2018%20bc.pdf]

3. DANGEROUS JOURNEYS FOR UNACCOMPANIED AND SEPARATED GIRLS

Girls consulted in Greece and Italy said that their journeys were "dangerous and difficult"; stressing that it is perilous for girls to travel on their own. Our consultations suggested that their travel arrangements were very fluid, with the composition of groups on the move changing to adapt to the route, safety and security conditions, government regulations, the reasons for their displacement, their plans for onward travel, and so on. As a 2018 report by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent notes, "There is significant evidence demonstrating pervasive and chronic sexual and gender-based violence against girls and women on migration routes the world over."[31]

"He sold me for money [then] told me that they would release me on one condition, to embark for Italy for prostitution and repay him" – a young woman in Italy.

The Central Mediterranean route is particularly dangerous for all migrants, but poses specific risks for unaccompanied girls.[32] Girls consulted in Italy reported high levels of abuse and exploitation during their travel through Libya, even when they were not asked specifically about this. A 2018 UN report on their situation in Libya states that, "The overwhelming majority of women and older teenage girls interviewed by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya reported being gang-raped by smugglers or traffickers or witnessing others being taken out of collective accommodations to be abused. Younger women travelling without male relatives are also particularly vulnerable to being forced into prostitution."[33]

Trafficking for exploitation purposes, and specifically for sexual exploitation, has a severe impact on girls, in particular. In some cases, this means that their journeys are shorter because girls who are victims of trafficking have had their trips organized, and may travel by plane as well as by land.[34]

"Boys help the families, but girls need the families," – a girl in Greece.

While some girls – like boys – travel in groups of peers as they move along the Eastern Mediterranean route,[35] it seems many girls leave their home countries alone and join families with whom they have no previous relationship. They then claim to be part of that family whenever they encounter any authority along their route. They might stay with the same family all the way and once they reach Europe, or change families depending on the circumstances. Accompanying families are often seen as a protective mechanism, but can also be linked to violence and exploitation.

Girls also reported travelling with family members, relatives or unrelated adults who are not formally responsible for them, such as brothers, uncles, or spouses. This would also define them as unaccompanied.[36]

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Human trafficking affects women and girls disproportionately. Adult women, and increasingly girls, account for the majority of known trafficking victims worldwide.[37] Trafficking for sexual exploitation is the most reported form, and females make up about 95 per cent of documented victims of such trafficking in Europe.[38]

Overall, "the experiences of trafficking victims vary depending on whether they are girls or boys," according to a 2017 UN report on trafficking along the Eastern Mediterranean route: most girls detected have been trafficked for sexual exploitation, while most boys have been trafficked for forced labour.[39] A 2017 report by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Italy estimates that 80 per cent of girls arriving from Nigeria are potential victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation. Between 2014 and 2017, Italy witnessed a six-fold increase in female victims of trafficking; most were Nigerian girls aged 15–17 years.[40]

In 2019 another report from IOM noted that women and girls from Côte d'Ivoire were increasingly victims of trafficking.[41] There is a persistent lack of clarity about the exact numbers of victims because it is so difficult to identify them. Many trafficking victims lack legal status and are often dealt with by the authorities as immigration offenders/irregular migrants.[42] While Italy, Greece, Bulgaria[43] and Serbia[44] have anti-trafficking systems in place, as well as specific measures to protect victims of trafficking, their implementation remains a challenge.

4. ARRIVING IN EUROPE: CHALLENGES TO THE IDENTIFICATION OF UNACCOMPANIED AND SEPARATED GIRLS

Getting to Europe is not the end of the story for unaccompanied and separated girls. Arrival presents challenges as well as opportunities, depending on whether they can access the specific protection that should – in theory – be in place to help them. Findings from our literature review and consultations with partners and girls all point to weaknesses in the systems that should identify unaccompanied and separated girls. As a result, they only receive the support they need – and even that may take some time – when they report themselves to the relevant authorities as unaccompanied.

During the consultation, some stakeholders either did not consider the possibility that these girls might arrive 'hidden' within other families, or did not see it as a priority, in particular during the all-important initial registration process. They confirmed that they tended to approach groups consisting entirely of young people to check for UASC, rather than groups that look like families. This was also found to be the case in transit countries, where refugees and migrants tend to move as fast as they can, limiting opportunities for interaction with authorities and service providers and, therefore, possible identification.

Unaccompanied girls who arrived in Europe with a family confirmed that there was little or no follow-up by the authorities and service providers as they did not verify family links that were reported as such. It seems that different family members are rarely interviewed separately on arrival to double check that they are who they say they are. This matters, because whoever becomes the main conduit for

information, services, and legal processes is the one considered to be the 'head' of the family.

The girls themselves might be coerced or instructed by traffickers or smugglers to claim that they are over the age of 18[45] through, for example, the use of fake documents that state an older age, or making up stories to avoid being identified as a child. The entire purpose is to keep girls away from the protective mechanisms[46] that are dedicated to unaccompanied children and, in the worst-case scenario, keep them firmly in the hands of traffickers.

One surprising finding was that some stakeholders reported being concerned about young people who declared themselves to be younger than their actual biological age and less concerned about children claiming to be older than they were. This attitude creates an in-built barrier to the identification of children who might be travelling in different ways and with different aims. Given that the failure to recognize a girl as being a child may prevent her benefiting from protection, care and development, it is critical for States to ensure due diligence and sensitivity on age-assessment procedures. Age assessment should be a measure of last resort, conducted only if there is a reasonable doubt and

as part of a best interest assessment. It must be conducted in a scientific, safe, child friendly, gender-sensitive and fair manner, avoiding any risk of violation of physical integrity and ensuring respect for human dignity, in line with international standards. The child must be informed about the process and possible consequences and the benefit of the doubt must be guaranteed, as part of procedural safeguards. Particular care must be taken to ensure an independent guardian has oversight of the procedure to guarantee child's rights are respected, including the gender-appropriateness of the procedures.[47]

"They didn't believe me. They told me I was about 24 because I was married and had a baby. I had a son, but he died ... and when I arrived in Lampedusa they didn't believe my age and then I had my identity card sent to me and they changed it," – a girl in Italy.

Avoiding detection may also be a way for a girl who is married to avoid separation from her husband and placement in separate accommodation, or as a way to continue her journey to join her family.

Box 4. Married girls

There are no general provisions in European law on how to deal with girls on the move who have been married before the age of 18,[48] and there is little information on how many couples in which one or both people are under 18 arrive in Europe.[49] In general, a child under 18 years cannot consent to marriage; however, most national legislation provides for the possibility of marriage before that age.

When children on the move are travelling only with their adult spouse – and are not accompanied by their parents, they should be considered 'unaccompanied'[50] (as shown in the 'tip-sheet' on page 15 and shown in full in Annex 1). Countries should conduct a Best Interest Assessment/ Determination (BIA/BID) and can, based on that, allow children to be treated as married.[51] The decision of whether to remain with an adult spouse should be determined by the child protection authorities, considering the girl's protection and best interests. Reception arrangements for couples where one is a minor should also be connected to BIA/BID processes.

In addition, being married, being pregnant or having children may lead stakeholders to register girls as adults, rather than girls who are, in fact, unaccompanied girls in urgent need of support as under-age wives and mothers. Such inaccurate registration leaves them with a status that may be difficult to unravel without complex administrative processes.[52]

Furthermore, service providers in Greece reported that adult spouses had sometimes been appointed as guardians for their underage spouses. While child marriage in Europe is a complex issue, it is clear that the appointment of a spouse as a guardian contradicts two fundamental principles for guardianship: independence and impartiality.[53]

"I didn't have the information about what would happen to me if I said I was a child," – a girl in Greece.

Our consultations found that even when services exist, unaccompanied girls may be unaware of them or are unsure who to trust.[54] This may be connected to their perception that if they come forward for support, they may be sent back to the dangerous places they have fought so hard to escape.[55]

The girls we consulted in Greece were very clear: they did not have access to information related to the entitlements and services available for children, and preferred to rely on families – where possible – for protection, rather than ask the authorities for help. Some girls noted that when they arrived on the islands in, between they and Greece continued to seek support from the families they had travelled with, rather than registering as unaccompanied, because of the lack of information on other options.

"When we arrived on the island, the family agreed for me to stay with them, and the mother of the family said to the police that she was my sister. I'm a girl travelling on my own, and I feel safer and more secure to say I am with the family." – a girl in Greece.

Reception conditions for refugees and migrants do little to help. They are, often, inadequate for all refugees and migrants, but this is a particular concern in relation to UASC, given their acute vulnerability. UASC may face a persistent lack of dedicated reception facilities and alternative care arrangements, as well as the continued use of detention for UASC.[56]

The risks of GBV related to insecure and risky living conditions in reception centres across Europe have been well documented since 2015.[57] These include a lack of security and privacy, mixed-gender reception facilities, and poor access to critical services – all of which expose girls to GBV.[58, 59, 60] Girls consulted in Italy reported a lack of privacy and mixed facilities as a crucial factor in their decisions about whether or not to continue their journey. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported ongoing threats of violence in reception centres in Greece noting that "on one of the islands, unaccompanied girls had to take turns to lie down due to overcrowding in the container to which they had been assigned. Going to the toilet required a police escort."[61]

"When I saw the conditions of the accommodation on the island, I cried," – a girl in Greece.

Overall, the literature review and the consultation confirmed a lack of resources and tools designed specifically to support the identification of girls on the move. Indeed, several partners and representatives

of state authorities asked for guidance on how to identify them and what to do when there are suspicions that a girl is unaccompanied. However, some important progress has been made in Europe to develop tools and systems to identify UASC, and to make appropriate assessments and referrals for care. For example, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) Tool for Identification of Persons with Special Needs (IPSN) and the UNHCR Protection Monitoring Tool are used in some, but not all, contexts.

The service providers consulted in some countries stressed that even when UAS girls are identified (or suspected) efforts to interview them are hampered by a lack of training, sensitivity and appropriate resources, including trained female interviewers and interpreters.

5. WHAT WORKS TO SUPPORT IDENTIFICATION?

From the moment an unaccompanied and separated girl enters a European country, the state becomes responsible for her protection. There are several opportunities to identify her from her first point of entry into Europe to her initial accommodation, to her transit within and through other countries, and her placement in more permanent reception facilities.

The authorities and service providers consulted stressed the need to be better equipped to identify girls at the first point of entry and throughout transit countries, perhaps through training or tools. Positive

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Box 5. UNICEF's Work with Girls on the Move[62]

UNICEF is meeting the unique needs of children, young people, and families who are seeking asylum in Europe, as well as those on the move, stranded or being pushed back, since the earliest days of the refugee and migrant response. UNICEF uses two inter-linked approaches: life-saving service provision in partnership with institutions and civil society organizations (CSO) and supporting existing national child protection systems. UNICEF has focused on the integration of **GBV prevention and response** into broader child protection programming, with a focus on adolescent girls. UNICEF interventions include update and expansion of effective referral mechanisms for GBV survivors and other at-risk groups, on-going capacity support for frontline workers, provision of integrated technical assistance, and a complementary focus on provision of direct services.

In **Bulgaria**, **Greece**, **Italy** and **Serbia**, UNICEF has focused on providing safe spaces to contribute to the identification and support of unaccompanied and separated girls. Working closely with local CSOs, including migrant women led organizations, safe spaces have been established and strengthened through regional and international **good practice exchange**. UNICEF supports outreach teams in border areas, transit points, and informal settlements to contribute to the safe identification of UAS girls and refer them to the necessary support. Moreover, through numerous avenues, child-friendly information that considers the specific needs of girls on the move are regularly disseminated, including through on-line platforms such as U-Report on the Move. UNICEF also continues to generate knowledge and tools, as well as provides technical support to institutions and organizations on the identification and support to girls. UNICEF provides capacity support that includes training of frontline workers and strengthening of national curricula of social service workforce, as a key strategy to enhance identification of at risk groups. Notably, in collaboration with the Women Refugee Commission (WRC), a focused curriculum for linguistic and cultural mediators and interpreters was developed and being piloted.

processes do exist, such as the training to support the identification of trafficking victims (including girls) in hotspots in Italy by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), or the vulnerability tools used by UNHCR and EASO. However, growing awareness of the specific dynamic of girls was cited as essential to enable identification through identification tools or tip sheets (see page 15 for our tip sheet on 10 signs that a girl is unaccompanied or separated, and Annex 1 for a more detailed version).

Girls and service providers reported that the provision of appropriate and consistent information to refugees and migrants is a key opportunity to identify unaccompanied and separated girls. This highlights the importance of including precise information about the protection systems for UASC, explaining clearly both the definitions and ways to access specific support. It also implies the need for great care around the language used, as adolescent girls might not see themselves as 'children', for example. Because the language used is important, everyone involved in the reception and protection system needs a high level of literacy around the entitlements of unaccompanied girls in the country they are in (whether arrival, transit, or destination).

Girls and other stakeholders reported that trust is critical to create the right conditions for girls to come forward and say that they are unaccompanied – or indeed to report other issues they face once they get to Europe. Our consultations highlighted the positive impact of women and girls' safe spaces. These offer a dedicated place where women and girls can rest and receive essential information from trained female staff on their rights and public assistance systems, and join their peers for activities that empower and educate. In addition, they provide entry points for safe and confidential GBV disclosure and access to specialized services. Service providers reported that they were able to address many issues through such spaces programmes – including the identification of unaccompanied girls.

The critical role of linguistic and cultural mediators and interpreters also emerged in consultations;

they are essential for communication and need to be trained on vulnerability issues and to be fully integrated into the work of all relevant institutions and organizations. Cultural mediators and interpreters, as well as professionals from refugees and migrant communities, can make a vital contribution to the identification of unaccompanied girls, given their in-depth understanding of languages, accents, last names, clans and culturally relevant dynamics among other factors.

"Now I am living with other girls, and I will soon start school," – a young woman in Italy.

Some girls consulted were vocal in saying that, once they had overcome initial difficulties in reaching out for specialized assistance, the support they received made a real difference to their lives. For example, girls who had access to specific services were satisfied with their new living conditions, whether in a dedicated shelter or an independent living set-up with their peers. They often attended school and participated eagerly in recreational and occupational activities. In some cases, they had also re-established links with their families and were taking essential steps to build a safer and more independent future. The girls we consulted also stressed that assistance should be tailored to their individual needs to improve their protection and help them achieve their long-term ambitions, including access to education, training and refugee status.

A *women and girls' safe space* is a structured place where women and girls' physical and emotional safety is respected and where women and girls are supported through processes of empowerment to seek, share and obtain information, access services, express themselves, enhance their psychosocial well-being, and more fully realize their rights.

From International Rescue Committee and International Medical Corps toolkit 'Women and girls safe spaces: a toolkit for advancing women's and girls' empowerment in humanitarian action'. https://gbvresponders.org/empowerment/womens-and-girls-safe-spaces/

Box 6. 10 signs that a girl is unaccompanied or separated (see Annex 1 for a more detailed version)

It may not be obvious that a girl is unaccompanied or separated. Never assume that a girl can or will tell you that she is a child. This tip sheet aims to help frontline staff identify her, and refer her immediately to the relevant authorities and/or services for urgent support.

1. **A girl is travelling alone and/or may ask explicitly for help.** If you see a girl travelling alone who appears to be (or you suspect to be) under 18, she may be unaccompanied.

2. **A girl says she is 18 or over but appears younger.** If she fails to provide documents that prove her age and/or you still have doubts, she may be unaccompanied.

3. **A girl does not have valid travel or identity documents or has falsified documents.** If she has no documents or if somebody else is holding them on her behalf and/or is reluctant to share her personal details, she may be unaccompanied.

4. **A girl tells you a story that seems rehearsed, or that is very similar to stories you have heard from other girls.** If her answers to your questions appear well-prepared and she seems vague about her journey and her circumstances, she may be unaccompanied.

5. **A girl says that she is married, shows signs of pregnancy or is acting as a 'parent' for other children.** If a girl who is married is travelling only with her spouse (and without her parents), she should be considered unaccompanied. If you suspect that a child is pregnant or the mother of young children without her parents, she should also be considered as unaccompanied.

6. **A girl is travelling with a group or family that does not seem to reflect the expected age or parent/child profiles.** If a girl is travelling with adult companions and their age does not fit with the family profile you might expect, or if she is travelling with an older man or 'uncle', she may be unaccompanied.

7. **A girl is unable to speak the language or dialect of her companions or caregivers.** If she does not share a language with her companions, they may not be her family and she may be unaccompanied. In this case, ask for support from linguistic and cultural mediators.

8. **A girl's appearance or physical characteristics differ markedly from those of her travelling companions.** If her physical features do not resemble those of her companions, she may be unaccompanied.

9. **A girl lacks personal care or hygiene, especially in comparison with those accompanying her.** If a girl looks uncared for compared with other children who are on the move with parents or in her group, she may be unaccompanied.

10. **A girl looks intimidated and ill at ease around her travel companions and displays signs of emotional distress including trembling, shaking or blushing.** If she appears upset, refuses to talk or tries to keep her distance, etc., she may be unaccompanied.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The following key findings have emerged from UNICEF's analysis.

- Evidence is incomplete on the number and profile of unaccompanied and separated girls as a result of the limited collection and analysis of national and regional data disaggregated by sex and age. Understanding their situation is crucial, and requires information on their numbers, movement patterns, social networks and risks, as well as the functioning of protection systems themselves. Such vital information would inform assistance and services targeted towards unaccompanied girls on migratory routes and their identification upon arrival in a new country.[63]

- Because of the way in which they travel, girls may not be identified immediately as unaccompanied or separated.[64] They are not one homogenous group: some may be pregnant, or travelling with spouses, children or extended family; others may be on their own but moving with groups of unrelated adults; some may have false documents that make them appear older; others might be trafficked.

- Current approaches to identification in our four focus countries present limitations from a cultural and gender-sensitive perspective. In addition, the provision of targeted services that are in line with the best interests of the child is uneven.

- Identification procedures may require age assessments and interviews by trained personnel, and these should only be conducted where there is a reasonable doubt regarding age.[65] Age assessment is often used to determine whether someone is older than they say: a greater emphasis on its use to identify those who are young than they say or appear would enhance the role of age-assessment as a protective mechanism.

- Different challenges can be found in different places: bottlenecks to identification include the limited capacity of service providers, as well as current knowledge and attitudes. Another challenge is the lack of skilled interpreters and cultural mediators who are fully integrated into the services provided by national systems, coupled with limited tools – or limited uptake – to support this stream of work.

- Some emerging promising practices were identified during our consultations, including useful tools and trainings, the availability of confidential spaces, and well-trained female cultural mediators and interpreters, as well as fully-fledged programming and women and girls' safe spaces.[66]

- While we do not know the exact number of unaccompanied and separated girls, it is thought to be relatively limited. Where we found practices that aimed to address the bottlenecks that hamper their identification, including the greater availability of information, we found some positive impact.

7. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the review of existing literature, country-level consultations in Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Serbia, and the analysis of our key findings, the following actions are recommended to improve identification, assessment and follow-up services for unaccompanied and separated girls.

The starting point for every recommendation is the shared recognition that the identification of unaccompanied and separated girls is a major and – to date – mostly unaddressed challenge across the European refugee response.

The recommendations should, wherever possible, be adapted and contextualized to the country in which the girls are found, and planned in collaboration with state authorities, United Nations agencies, European and other international organizations and service providers to ensure coordinated actions and harmonized responses. They are all in line with, among others, the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (CRMS)[67], in particular standard 9 "*Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)*", and 13 "*unaccompanied and Separated Children*".

Recommendations for European institutions

- Harmonize **identification**, including **age-assessment procedures and the determination of the best interests of the child**, to include specific considerations for unaccompanied girls in line with international good practices and standards.
- Support the national development and regional **harmonization of data collection** and analysis, as well as information management systems, to include gender-specific data and their full analysis and use to inform and guide evidence-based protection mechanisms for UASC.
- Promote **cross-border collaboration** between Member States to prioritize the safety and protection of all children on the move, with the consistent inclusion of unaccompanied and

separated girls.
- Ensure that gender-specific considerations are included and monitored in relevant **funding streams**, and that sufficient funds are allocated to specific actions to support comprehensive programming for unaccompanied and separated girls.
- Continue promoting the sharing of best practices among EU member states, and neighbouring countries on child protection and GBV policies and practices, including children's participation, taking into account gender dynamics.

Recommendations for authorities in Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Serbia

- Ensure that child protection welfare actors take primary responsibility for determining the most suitable age- and gender-appropriate continuum of care for all children on the move.[68]
- Mainstream gender considerations across **policies**, **guidance**, **and capacity building** on unaccompanied and separated children in line with the scope and mandate of each national authority to:
  - strengthen **identification** procedures, including **age assessment** when appropriate, in line with

international standards

- ensure full respect for the **best interest of the child** by considering the specific situation of every girl, whether she is visibly unaccompanied, travelling within another family, or married
- ensure that **independent guardians are appointed** for all unaccompanied and separated boys and girls, whether traveling within other families or married
- ensure that **reception systems** are appropriate to the gender and age of unaccompanied and separated children, and include alternative care solutions.

• Improve **the collection**, **analysis and use of data** on unaccompanied and separated children, including gender-specific considerations such as reported marital status, pregnancy and children.

• Promote the **inter-sectoral and inter-institutional coordination** of police forces, border-management, asylum offices and protection actors to ensure the timely referral of unaccompanied and separated children to specialized, available and accessible social protection institutions.

• Ensure that child-friendly, gender and culturally sensitive **information** is available at the main entry and transit points to inform children and accompanying adults about their rights and responsibilities.

• Support the implementation of **safe and confidential spaces** where girls and boys can receive information and disclose any vulnerability in an appropriate manner.

Recommendations for United Nations agencies

• **Advocate** for gender-responsive refugee and migrant policies and, where necessary, programmes that provide specific support and protection mechanisms for girls.

• Support the development, dissemination and uptake by regional and national authorities of **identification tools and mechanisms**, as well as training materials, to enhance the skills of front-line workers and other specialists on the timely and adequate identification of unaccompanied girls.

• Continue to promote **further research** and learning on the specific needs and concerns of unaccompanied girls beyond identification, including the documentation of best practices and the systematic use of sex- and age-disaggregated data on unaccompanied and separated children.

10 SIGNS THAT A GIRL IS UNACCOMPANIED OR SEPARATED

It may not be obvious that a girl is unaccompanied or separated. Never assume that a girl can or will tell you that she is a child. This tip sheet aims to help frontline staff identify her, and refer her immediately to the relevant authorities for urgent support.

Please keep these 10 signs in mind and reach out to relevant authorities if you suspect a girl is unaccompanied

1. A girl is travelling alone and/or may ask explicitly for help. If you see a girl travelling alone who appears to be (or you suspect to be) under 18, she may be unaccompanied.

2. A girl says she is 18 or over but appears younger. If she fails to provide documents that prove her age and/or you still have doubts, she may be unaccompanied.

3. A girl does not have valid travel or identity documents or has falsified documents. If she has no documents or if somebody else is holding them on her behalf and/or is reluctant to share her personal details, she may be unaccompanied.

4. A girl tells you a story that seems rehearsed, or that is very similar to stories you have heard from other girls. If her answers to your questions appear well-prepared and she seems vague about her journey and her circumstances, she may be unaccompanied.

5. A girl says that she is married, shows signs of pregnancy or is acting as a 'parent' for other children. If a girl who is married is travelling only with her adult spouse, she should be considered unaccompanied. If you suspect that a child is pregnant or the mother of young children, she should also be considered as unaccompanied.

6. A girl is travelling with a group or family that does not seem to reflect the expected age or parent/child profiles. If a girl is travelling with adult companions and their age does not fit the family profile you might expect, or if she is travelling with an older man or 'uncle', she may be unaccompanied.

7. A girl is unable to speak the language or dialect of her companions or caregivers. If she does not share a language with her companions, they may not be her family and she may be unaccompanied. In this case, ask for support from linguistic and cultural mediators.

8. A girl's appearance or physical characteristics differ markedly from those of her caregivers. If her physical features do not resemble those of her companions, she may be unaccompanied.

9. A girl lacks personal care or hygiene, especially in comparison with those accompanying her. If a girl looks uncared for compared with other children who are on the move with parents or in her group, she may be unaccompanied.

10. A girl looks intimidated and ill at ease around her travel companions and displays signs of emotional distress including trembling, shaking or blushing. If she appears upset, refuses to talk or tries to keep her distance, etc., she may be unaccompanied.

What is the purpose of this tip sheet?

The purpose of this tip sheet is to help frontline staff (border officials, security, police, reception staff, etc.) to become familiar with the possible signs that refugee and migrant girls are unaccompanied or separated, and improve identification.

The tip sheet outlines 10 signs that may indicate a girl is unaccompanied or separated. If there is a suspicion that the girl is unaccompanied or separated based on the presence of these signs (or others) then you should refer her to the relevant authorities immediately.

Unaccompanied or Separated Children (UASC)
Unaccompanied children are separated from both parents and other relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so.
Separated children are separated from both parents, or from their previous primary or customary caregiver, but not necessarily other relatives. These may, therefore, include children accompanied by other adult family members.

What is identification?

Identification is the process of establishing which children have been separated from their families or other caregivers, and where they may be found.

- Identification of unaccompanied and separated boys and girls can happen at arrival, but often occurs during displacement through service providers or community-based mechanisms.
- The objectives of identification are to ensure that unaccompanied boys and girls are safe from harm and receive appropriate care and assistance until reunification or alternative long-term solutions are arranged.
- For separated children, (family) links must be verified and assessed, in order to identify potential risks.

Why focus on girls?

Because of their specific travelling dynamics, girls may not immediately be seen as unaccompanied or separated. Unaccompanied and separated girls are a heterogeneous group: some may be pregnant, travelling with spouses, children, extended family, others may be on their own but moving with groups, some may have falsified documents that make them older, many might be trafficked.

What to do if you suspect a girl is unaccompanied or separated:

Write it all down: take details of her name, location and phone number, if possible

Call the relevant authorities/organizations immediately: always keep a note of their contact information

They should have trained staff who can safely follow up with the girl and her companions to determine whether she is unaccompanied or separated.

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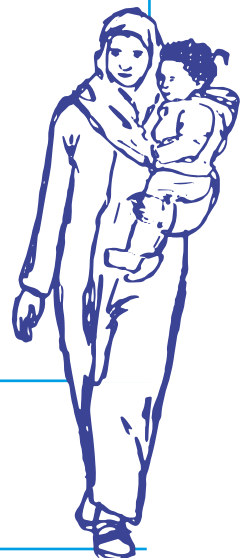
[1] BRIDGE 'Gender update: gender and migration', Issue number: 114, February 2016, available at:
<www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/updates/gender-and-migration>.

[2] UNFPA, UNHCR and WRC, *Initial Assessment Report: Protection risks for women and girls in the European refugee and migrant crisis in Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, New York, 2016.

[3] Females comprise less than half-- 125 million individuals or 48.4 per cent of the total-- of global international migrants. Data available at: <https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/gender>.

[4] Ribul, Marta, 'An Exploration of the Mental Health Impact of Violence on Female Unaccompanied Refugee Minors and the Associated Psychological Needs: A Mixed Methods Study of the Italian Context' (Master's of Global Health Thesis), Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain, 2017, p. 8.

[5] Although arrivals in 2018 were lower compared to the numbers in 2015–2017, the journeys were as dangerous as ever. UNHCR 'Desperate Journeys: Refugees and migrants arriving in Europe and at Europe's borders, January – December 2018', Geneva, 2018. Data available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/67712>.

[6] Arrivals include sea arrivals to Italy, Cyprus and Malta and both sea and land arrivals to Greece and Spain. Data available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean>.

[7] UNICEF and IOM, *Harrowing Journeys, Children and youth on the move across the Mediterranean Sea, at risk of trafficking and exploitation*, New York and Geneva, 2017, p 16. Available at:
<https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Harrowing_Journeys_Children_and_youth_on_the_move _across_the_Mediterranean.pdf>.

[8] UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM, 'Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe, Overview of Trends in January-June 2019', New York and Geneva 2019. Available at:
<https://www.unicef.org/eca/sites/unicef.org.eca/files/2019-
12/Factsheet%20on%20refugee%20and%20migrant%20children%20Jan-June%202019.pdf>.

[9] Eurostat, Asylum and managed migration database, available at:
<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/asylum-and-managed-migration/data/database>.

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<https://www.unicef.org/protection/IAG_UASCs.pdf>.

[11] Ibid.

[12] European Union, 'Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection', Brussels, 2011. Available at: <https://eur-
lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:337:0009:0026:EN:PDF>.

[13] Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, *Field Handbook on Unaccompanied and Separated Children- Inter-agency Working Group on Unaccompanied and Separated Children*, 2017. Available at: <www.iom.int/sites/default/files/HANDBOOK-WEB-2017-0322.pdf>.

[14] <https://www.lavoro.gov.it/temi-e-priorita/immigrazione/focus-on/minori-stranieri/Pagine/Dati-minori-stranieri-non-accompagnati.aspx>.

[15] <http://www.ekka.org.gr/>.

[16] UNICEF, UNHCR, IOM, Eurostat, and OECD, *A Call to Action: Protecting children on the move starts with better data*, New York, 2018. Available at: <https://data.unicef.org/resources/call-action-protecting-children-move-starts-better-data>.

[17] UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM, 'Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe', 2019.

[18] Ibid.

[19] <https://www.unicef.org/eca/sites/unicef.org.eca/files/EKKA%20dashboard%2015-7-2018_0.pdf>.

[20] <https://www.lavoro.gov.it/temi-e-priorita/immigrazione/focus-on/minori-
stranieri/Documents/Report-MSNA-mese-dicembre-2019.pdf>.

[21] <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/73385>.

[22] <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/asylum-and-managed-migration/data/database>.

[23] Ibid.

[24] 'Female UAMs (unaccompanied minors) tended to be relatively younger than males: almost one in five female UAMs were, in fact, younger than 14 years old', <www.easo.europa.eu/easo-annual-report-2018/4101-unaccompanied-minors- ar629>.

[25] Ibid.

[26] https://www.lavoro.gov.it/temi-e-priorita/immigrazione/focus-on/minori-stranieri/Pagine/Dati-minori-stranieri-non-accompagnati.aspx.

[27] <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/asylum-and-managed-migration/data/database>.

[28] IOM 'Human Trafficking through the Central Mediterranean Route', Geneva, 2017. Available at:
<https://italy.iom.int/sites/default/files/news-documents/IOMReport_Trafficking.pdf>.

[29] IOM, 'Vittime di tratta nella rotta del Mediterraneo centrale: Focus sulle donne provenienti dalla Costa d'Avorio, dalla tratta in Tunisia al rischio di re-trafficking in Italia', Geneva, 2019. Available at: <https://italy.iom.int/sites/default/files/news-documents/BriefingOIMVittimediTratta.pdf>.

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<https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/11/181126-AloneUnsafe-Report-EN-web.pdf>.

[32] UNICEF and IOM, *Harrowing Journeys, Children and youth on the move across the Mediterranean Sea*, Geneva, 2017, p 16.

[33] United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSML) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), *Desperate and Dangerous: Report on the human rights situation of migrants and refugees in Libya*, Tunis, 2018.

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<www.unicef.org/eca/media/921/file/REACH report 2017.pdf>.

[35] IOM and UNICEF, 'Data Brief: Migration of children to Europe', Geneva, 30 November 2015. Available at: <www.iom.int/sites/default/files/press_release/file/IOM-UNICEF-Data-Brief-Refugee-and-Migrant-Crisis-in-Europe-30.11.15.pdf>.

[36] <https://easo.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Guidance-on%20reception-%20conditions-%20for-unaccompanied-children.pdf>.

[37] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018, Vienna, 2018.*

[38] European Union, 'Second report on the progress made in the fight against trafficking in human beings (2018) as required under Article 20 of Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims', {SWD(2018) 473 final}, Brussels, December 2018. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-security/20181204_com-2018-777-report_en.pdf>.

[39] UNICEF and IOM, 'Harrowing Journeys: Children and youth on the move across the Mediterranean Sea, Geneva, 2017.

[40] IOM, 'Human Trafficking through the Central Mediterranean Route', Geneva, 2017.

[41] IOM, 'Vittime di tratta nella rotta del Mediterraneo centrale', 2019.

[42] There is no universally accepted definition of irregular migration. IOM defines it as: "movement that takes place outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving country." A migrant in an irregular situation may fall within one or more of the following circumstances: He or she may enter the country irregularly, for instance with false documents or without crossing at an official border crossing point; he or she may reside in the country irregularly, for instance, in violation of the terms of an entry visa/residence permit; or he or she may be employed in the country irregularly, for instance he or she may have the right to reside but not to take up paid employment in the country." For more information: <https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/irregular-migration>.

[43] <https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/member-states_en>

[44] Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), *Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Serbia*, Strasbourg, 2017. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/greta-2017-37-frg-srb-en/16807809fd>

[45] Yonkova, Nusha, et al., *Protecting Victims: An analysis of the anti-trafficking directive from the perspective of a victim of Gender-Based Violence*, Report commissioned by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), DRAFT EIGE/2017/OPER/0, Vilnius, 2017.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Committee on the Rights of the Child, *General Comment N° 6 on the Treatment of Unaccompanied and Separated Children Outside their Country of Origin*, 2005, paragraph 31(i), available at: https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/GC6.pdf; European Asylum Support Office (EASO), *Practical Guide on age assessment, second edition*, 2018, available at: https://www.easo.europa.eu/sites/default/files/easo-practical-guide-on-age-assesment-v3-2018.pdf; FRA, *Age assessment and fingerprinting of children in asylum procedures Minimum age requirements concerning children's rights in the EU*, 2018, available at: https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-minimum-age-asylum-procedures_en.pdf; UNICEF, *Age assessment: a technical note*, 2013, available at: https://www.unicef.org/protection/files/Age_Assessment_Note_final_version_(English).pdf

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[49] Ibid.

[50] European Asylum Support Office (EASO), 'EASO Practical guide on the best interests of the child in asylum procedures', Valletta, 2019. Available at: <www.easo.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Practical-Guide-Best-Interests-Child-EN.pdf>.

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[52] Digidiki, Vasileia andJacqueline Bhabha, *Emergency within an Emergency: The growing epidemic of sexual exploitation and abuse of migrant children in Greece*, The Centre for Health and Human Rights, Harvard, 2018.

[53] https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-guardianship-systems-in-the-eu-summary_en.pdf

[54] International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), (*Alone and Unsafe: Children, migration, and sexual and gender-based violence*, Geneva, 2018.

[55] Ibid.

[56] In Greece, the number of refugee and migrant UASC in first reception and identification centres. (RICs) and protective custody together has increased by close to 60 per cent compared to December 2017. Similar practices have also been observed in Bulgaria and Spain. UNICEF, 'Refugee and Migrant Crisis in Europe Humanitarian Situation Report # 30', Geneva, 2018. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNICEF Refugee and Migrant Crisis in Europe Humanitarian Situation Report, No. 30 as of December 2018.pdf>.

[57] UNFPA, UNHCR, WRC, *Initial Assessment Report: Protection risks for women and girls in the European refugee and migrant crisis*, New York and Geneva, 2015. Available at: <www.unhcr.org/569f8f419.pdf>.

[58] WRC (*EU-Turkey Agreement Failing Refugee Women and Girls*, New York, 2016. Available at: <www.womensrefugeecommission.org/images/zdocs/EU-Turkey-Refugee-Agreement-Failing.pdf>.

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[61] UNHCR, 'Desperate Journeys' Geneva, 2018.

[62] https://www.unicef.org/eca/emergencies/refugee-and-migrant-children-europe

[63] European Migrant Women's Network, 'Info sheet: Meeting needs of migrant girls on the move', Brussels, 2018. Available at: <www.migrantwomennetwork.org/2018/12/04/girlsvoices-meeting-needs-of-migrant-girls-on-the-move/>.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

[66] IRC, UNICEF, UNHCR, *The Way Forward to Strengthened Policies and Practices for Unaccompanied and Separated Children in Europe, New York* and Geneva, 2016. Available at: <www.unicef.org/bulgaria/media/256/file>.

[67] <https://alliancecpha.org/en/CPMS_home>

[68] In line with 'Joint general comment No. 4 (2017) of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and No. 23 (2017) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on State obligations regarding the human rights of children in the context of international migration in countries of origin, transit, destination and return*'.

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