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## **Closing a protection gap: core standards for guardians of separated children in Europe**

**The goal of this project is:** *closing a protection gap for separated children in Europe by developing core standards with a focus on qualifications of guardians based on the views of separated children in relation to their rights according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and EU directives.*

Separated children have the right to a guardian who will protect their rights and best interests. Not only do separated children have to live in a country they don't know without their parents but, in some countries, they also run the risk of being detained because of their residence status or run the risk of being exploited by traffickers. These children have the right to a guardian who will protect their rights and best interests. From December 2009 until November 2011 organizations from eight European countries will work on the project 'Closing a protection gap: core standards for guardians of separated children'. The type of protection and care you will receive as a separated child from your guardian depends upon the country which you have (often randomly) entered. This project will provide an instrument to improve the qualifications of a guardian to take the special needs and rights of separated children into account. When all guardians have sufficient qualifications to work in the best interest of the child the level of protection children receive in the different European countries will harmonize.

The current differences in the level of protection separated children receive in European countries is not acceptable. All the countries have signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and have the obligation to take into account the special needs of separated children. Proper guardianship systems are also essential to assist in finding the right solution for separated children, whether that be return to their country of origin, transfer to another country (for example for family reunification) or integration into the host country.

### **Sub goals of this project are:**

- To assist guardians in finding the right solution for the child.
- Boost a European Community policy and harmonisation of guardianship in practice.
- Strengthen the attention to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The core standards are based on the participation of separated children and a focus on the rights of the children according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The core standards will be developed through research, including interviews with (former) separated children and guardians in eight countries and mapping of existing legislation on guardianship and research on national and European level. All partners will establish a national advisory council of stake holders in order to enlarge the enforcement of the core standards.

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*Closing a protection gap partners: Defence for Children-ECPAT the Netherlands, Plate-form Mineurs en exil – Service Droit des Jeunes: Belgium, Save the Children-Sweden, Defence for Children-Italy, Save the Children-Denmark, Slovene Philanthropy: Slovenia, Refugee Council Ireland, Bundesfachverband UMF: Germany.*