

GUIDE project launches policy recommendations to strengthen guardianship systems for unaccompanied children

Press Release

Palermo, 26.05.2026_ [GUIDE](#) partners release a package of recommendations on **how to better protect unaccompanied children and better support their guardians**, which includes one comprehensive EU-level report and specific national recommendations for Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Poland, and Slovakia, as well as summarising tables with **challenges, stakeholders and proposed solutions**. All available in English and the respective national languages.

The project identified **persistent structural challenges affecting the protection, representation and well-being of unaccompanied children, especially those with disabilities**, across the EU. While EU law recognises guardianship as a core safeguard ensuring access to rights, participation in procedures and continuity of care, implementation remains inconsistent across Member States. Guardianship systems may differ across countries, but all EU Member States share the same responsibility.

The findings highlight common challenges across partner countries (**delays in the appointment of guardians, excessive caseloads, insufficient training opportunities and limited institutional support**) and raise concerns regarding current trends towards **accelerated migration procedures, detention and externalisation policies** putting children in danger.

The reports also underline a broader policy shift following the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, which places **increased emphasis on migration management, border control and security considerations instead of focusing on the protection of children**. Children with disabilities and those experiencing intersecting vulnerabilities are often overlooked and experience even bigger challenges.

At the EU level, the recommendations call for:

- sustainable investment in guardianship systems;
- harmonised training standards and professional support;
- stronger legal clarity and procedural safeguards;
- child-centred and inclusive approaches;
- improved coordination, digitalisation and data management;
- enhanced cooperation and mutual recognition mechanisms across borders.

The recommendations are the result of extensive research, legal analysis and multi-stakeholder consultations conducted throughout the GUIDE Project. They draw on national assessments, [National roundtables](#), [EU-level roundtables](#), and cross-country exchanges involving experts, child protection professionals, guardians, civil society organisations, policymakers and researchers.

Downloads

- **Recommendations**
EU ([English version](#))
Bulgaria ([Bulgarian version](#) / [English version](#))
Greece ([Greek version](#) / [English version](#))
Italy ([Italian version](#) / [English version](#))
Poland ([Polish version](#) / [English version](#))
Slovakia ([Slovakian version](#) / [English version](#))
- **Tables:** [EU](#); [Bulgaria](#); [Greece](#); [Italy](#); [Poland](#); [Slovakia](#)

For further information, contact [Lyzaveta Drannikova](#), Project Officer EASPD, or [Fabiana Adamo](#), Project Manager CESIE ETS.