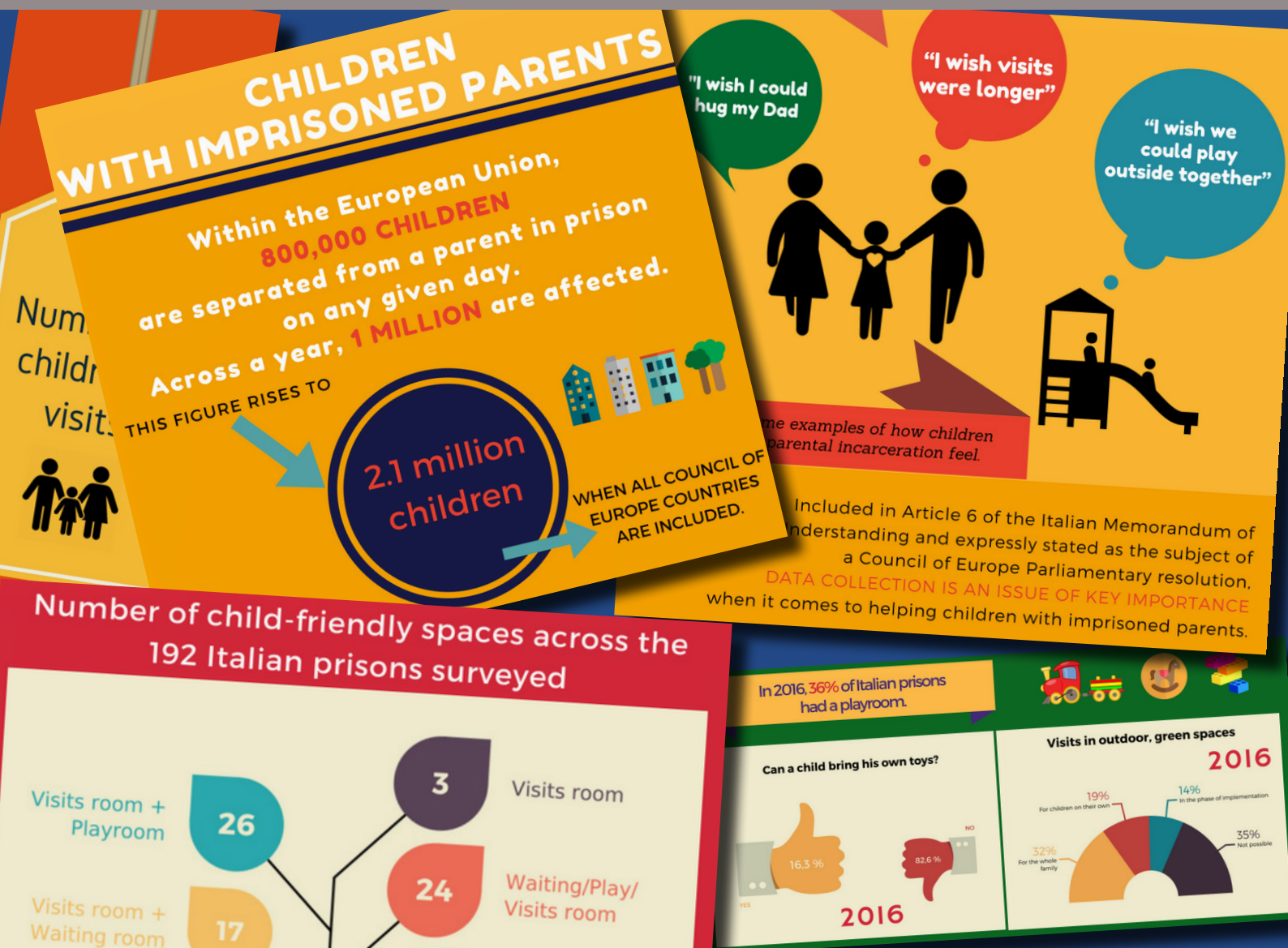




European Journal of Parental Imprisonment

Making children count: Improving data collection for children with imprisoned parents





Children of Prisoners Europe

Making children count: Improving data collection for children with imprisoned parents

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Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE) is a pan-European network of non-profit organisations working on behalf of children separated from an imprisoned parent. The network encourages innovative perspectives and practices to ensure that children with an imprisoned parent fully enjoy their rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, and that action is taken to enable their well-being and development.

The European Journal of Parental Imprisonment is a bi-annual publication that seeks to broaden the study of issues relevant to children affected by parental incarceration and meet a burgeoning interest in the development, implementation and evolution of entitlements, policies and practices that promote their well-being. With a view to fostering new perspectives for children with imprisoned parents, the journal features contributions by eminent scholars and experts in the fields of child rights, child welfare, criminal and social justice, psychology, penal affairs and other disciplines; published articles do not necessarily represent COPE's opinions. Selected articles are editorial screened but not peer-reviewed. The editor is committed to reasoned ideological diversity and welcomes suggestions for special issues and contributions.

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Drawing by Aida, one of five winners in Relais Enfants Parents Romands' 2017 art contest "Laura and Max visit their dad in prison": <http://www.repr.ch>

The views expressed in these articles do not necessarily reflect those of Children of Prisoners Europe, except where indicated.

Within data collection, the language used and ways of collecting data can affect those about whom information is gathered. Language can convey the complexities of a given social reality, highlighting the entire linguistic, social and cultural context which ultimately shapes an individual and positions them in society; exploring language lends understanding of culture and social reality from within, and of the intricate interplay of power and meaning that underpins social practices. COPE's evolving awareness of how the language it uses in advocating for children with a parent in prison shapes and moulds society's perceptions of these children has introduced subtle shifts in the ways in which we communicate messages—how are we representing young people affected by a parent in prison: as passive victims of their particular and challenging circumstances and the parent's legal status, or rather as rights holders with agency and a voice who, despite these challenging circumstances, can shape and mould their world? Is support required to strengthen family ties, reduce recidivism, decrease public spending and better society? Or for safeguarding children's well-being? How does using different language in turn influence how decision-makers perceive children and their parents?

Likewise, there is growing emphasis on the importance of language when referring to data and data collection on parental incarceration, and to how requests for information are framed. Ann Adalist-Estrin, Director of the National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated at Rutgers University, has emphasised the need to constantly reflect on the ultimate purpose of data gathering, bringing it back to its core aim of protecting and supporting children of prisoners and fostering better outcomes—not merely corroborating a given point of view, legitimising one's work or meeting fundraising requirements.¹ To secure the child's integrity and dignity and minimise stress through respectful engagement with children and families, attention needs to be given to how data collection is actually carried out, as well as to how language is used. For those gathering data from families, Adalist-Estrin suggests that asking in order “to give” (e.g., “Is incarceration an issue for your family? We may have resources to help”) is a positive alternative to asking “to get” (e.g., “Is anyone in your family incarcerated?”), and could encourage families to provide data.² In a similar vein, working with prison services and other relevant agencies to obtain data in a co-constructive process, rather than “getting” data in a unilateral one, could offer a valuable way of engaging with stakeholders, as could striking a “realistic balance” between data which are needed and data which can be expected, as Chiara Altafin of the European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratization (EIUC) highlighted at COPE's 2017 conference in describing the approach of the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty towards data collection.³

Efforts to normalise requests for data are key at all stages, from a parent's arrest to resettlement and in all social systems of which the child is a part, whether community, institutional or cultural. Standardising entry checklists in schools for all parents, for example—with three basic questions: does your child have any health difficulties? do they have any disabilities? do they have any adverse childhood experiences⁴—would help normalise the issue.

Promoting a cross-cutting systemic approach to data collection for children of prisoners could be strategically valuable. When collecting data on children in institutions (e.g., orphanages, reform schools or institutions for children with substance abuse problems), for example, the UN Global Study could include sub-sections on the number of children in residence who have or have had a parent in prison and whether they were placed in care as a result of the incarceration. Likewise when data gathering on young offenders, to inquire how many have children themselves? Are they in contact with their children and receiving support as a parent? Are their children receiving support? We welcome the forthcoming background report from the 11th European Forum on the Rights of the Child⁵, which addresses the latter, as does the landmark Council of Europe's draft Recommendation on children with imprisoned parents, also upcoming (2018). The title of the article by Jan Kleijssen in this issue is “It's time to act!” As we gear up to take action, we as practitioners and professionals need to be sure that our approach and use of language truly supports and protects children affected by their parent's imprisonment.

1 Ann Adalist-Estrin. *Guiding Principles for Responding to the Needs of Children and Families of the Incarcerated*. Presented to the International Coalition for the Children of Incarcerated Parents. Rotorua, New Zealand, March 2017.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Chiara Altafin. *UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty*. Presented to Children of Prisoners Europe. Naples, Italy, May 2017.

4 Having had childhood exposure to a household member who was incarcerated is one of ten recognised Adverse Childhood Experiences; others include physical, emotional and sexual abuse; physical and emotional neglect; mental illness; mother treated violently; divorce; and substance abuse. See boxed feature in this issue, page 15.

5 11th European Forum on the Rights of the Child, 6-8 November 2017. *Children deprived of their liberty and alternatives to detention: General background paper*. Brussels.

Data collection: Ethical considerations and practical challenges

The data used by Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE) regarding the number of children affected by parental imprisonment are based on extrapolations, stating that 2.1 million children have a parent in prison across Europe on a given day.¹ Extrapolations can highlight the magnitude of a problem but it is robust, reliable data that help stakeholders better understand how to support children with imprisoned parents, using data collection as a tool for pinpointing an identifiable need. Data collection is not easy and there can be many obstacles to good data collection relating to children separated from a parent in prison. These can include issues of trust between prisoners and government officials (prison administrations, child protection services), the question of who should collect the data (does it fall on prisons, prison administrations, NGOs, the judiciary?) and questions of ethics (to what extent should a prisoner be obliged to provide information about their children and what happens if they refuse?).

What is hindering the gathering of reliable data by NGOs and governments? What are the barriers to good data collection? One of the challenges is a lack of trust in the system into which prisoners are placed. Some prisoners fear their children will be taken away from their families if they disclose information about their existence or whereabouts. Prisoners have the right not to disclose certain information requested of them. Under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), “every person has the right to respect for his private and family life and [...] no interference [should] be made by a public authority except in cases where it is within the law of a democratic society.”² The line between the support that could be given to children of prisoners if their parent provided that information and the right the latter has to withhold it represents one of the main ethical challenges: how to respect a prisoner’s privacy without withholding support from their children? One way for governments to span the gap between respecting privacy and requiring prisoners to disclose certain information is by creating a setting that inspires trust, where prisoners

1 Source: Children of Prisoners Europe, using World Prison Brief data on prison populations in Europe. Estimates of 2.1 million children affected are based on stock data from the 47 Council of Member States. Within the European Union (EU-28), approximately 800,000 children are estimated to be affected by parental incarceration on a given day; this rises to over 1 million throughout the year.

2 Council of Europe. (1950). European Convention on Human Rights. Available online: echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf

Alexis Noffke

Children of Prisoners Europe

It is robust, reliable data that help stakeholders better understand how to support children with imprisoned parents, using data collection as a tool for pinpointing an identifiable need.

feel comfortable giving information regarding their families. If a parent decides not to give information about their child, are there steps that can be taken to ensure they can still maintain contact with one another and have physical visits where appropriate? Article 8 of the ECHR is key when it comes to data collection regarding children and their imprisoned

parents as “it not only compels states to protect individuals from interference but it also places them [states] under a positive obligation to take action to secure respect for rights.”³

Children also have a right to privacy as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Article 16. Article 16 ensures the law protects children from “attacks against their way of life, their good name, their families, and their homes”.⁴ This is also touched upon in Article 2.2 of the UNCRC which stipulates that “States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child’s parents, legal guardians, or family members.”⁵ A child’s right to privacy should not be determined by their parent’s actions. That said, how do NGOs, governments and prisons balance a child’s right to privacy with identifying children of prisoners in order to provide the support they need? Where is the line drawn? Who decides? How can we facilitate data collection that doesn’t restrict children? Overly restrictive data collection practices which require children to be registered and/or approved prior to visits—as have recently been implemented in New Zealand⁶—may cause excess strain and cost along with other worries that may dissuade or prevent a child from visiting their parent at all.

As data collection gives us a better understanding of the number of children affected by parental imprisonment and the ways in which they are affected,

3 Philbrick, K., Ayre, L. & Lynn, H. (2014). *Children of imprisoned parents: European perspectives on good practice*. Montrouge: Children of Prisoners Europe, p.15.

4 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Article 16.

5 *Ibid*, 2.2.

6 Children of Prisoners Europe: *Data collection and children affected by parental incarceration*. Available at: <http://childrenofprisoners.eu/2016/10/03/8106/>

we can better advocate for policy change and design initiatives to support children with an imprisoned parent; initiatives that take into account not only those who are struggling with having a parent in prison, but also those who are coping well. Ways to foster contact between children and their parents in prison continue to evolve as we gain a better understanding of the needs and best interests of these children. We can better address the issues faced when we have a clearer picture of who is impacted and how, both through trends and on an individual level.

Progress is being made in Europe. Italy's recently renewed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on children with imprisoned parents, signed by the Minister for Justice, specifically outlines the need to collect data, showing that the government has recognised the importance of accurate data collection and is taking steps to act upon that need. This is a step forward for data collection on children of imprisoned parents in Europe. As more Member States begin to recognise its importance, better data will help both governments and NGOs to support children with imprisoned parents. As we continue to progress an increasing importance will be placed on the ethical questions surrounding data collection. Guidelines need to be created, preferably based on examples of good practice, that will help determine *how* prisoners should disclose information, *to whom* and *how those data will be used*.

This issue of the European Journal of Parental Imprisonment explores the challenges and ethical considerations surrounding data collection, and how data can be used responsibly to better inform policy.

What can prison administrations do to foster the relationship between imprisoned parent and child? Who should be involved in providing support? What are the difficulties surrounding gaining accurate information on children with an imprisoned parent? These are the questions that Jan Kleijssen, director of the Information Society and Action against Crime Directorate of the Council of Europe, discusses while exploring the roles of the various parties involved: prison administrations, prisons and civil society organisations such as NGOs.

The United Nations Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty was commissioned partially due to the lack of comprehensive data on the topic. The primary goal of the study is to collect reliable data from governments in cooperation with UN agencies, civil society, academia and other stakeholders to allow for an assessment of the scope of issues relating to children deprived of liberty. Some of the challenges include the lack of available relevant data from certain

countries, as well as striking a balance between what data needs to be collected and what can realistically be expected of governments. Support from outside groups such as civil society organisations not only can help provide the necessary data, but will also increase awareness of the current gaps in data relating to children deprived of liberty. Overcoming challenges like these will allow the study to develop a better understanding of the magnitude of the issues surrounding children deprived of liberty.

Fraser Bryans and Vikki Elliot of the European Organisation of Prison and Correctional Services (EuroPris) discuss the importance and success of the European Prison Information System (EPIS) whose aim is to provide a platform for the collection and dissemination of diverse prison-related data and information and to support good practice initiatives. They also discuss a sub-component of EPIS, the Knowledge Management System, (KMS), which provides a virtual exchange platform for EuroPris and its members. Questions posed thus far include topics such as family days in prison; prison visits and communication with family members; community involvement and staff training in relation to children of prisoners. The authors also explore the potential for EPIS to promote the implementation of the European Union adopted Framework Decision 2008/909/JHA dealing with the transfer of sentenced foreign national prisoners for social rehabilitation purposes.

Research coordinators of the Models of Child Health Appraised (MOCHA) project, Denise Alexander and Michael Rigby look at how children's primary care is handled across thirty EU and EEA countries and the difficulties faced by children within the healthcare system, namely that policies for improving health are normally focused on specific health problems and do not take a holistic approach to healthy growth, development and good mental health. The authors find that one reason for children in general being overlooked is that data relating to children's health are not collected or analysed on a scale similar to adults, leaving a gap in understanding the impact of special circumstances on children and their health. The authors point out that groups with special circumstances (such as children with an imprisoned parent) tend to be yet further overlooked.

By considering the ethical challenges to data collection and finding ways to overcome them, we can advocate effectively, mitigate potential negative impacts of data lacks and create guidelines which respect the privacy and best interests of children with an incarcerated parent while providing for their needs and effecting positive policy change on their behalf.

Children with imprisoned parents: It's time to act!

Jan Kleijssen

Director

Information Society and Action against Crime Directorate

Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law

Council of Europe

The Council of Europe has 47 Member States with a population of over 800 million, including 150 million children. These children are Europe's future but their rights and interests are still too often ignored. In 2005, the Third Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Council of Europe adopted a Declaration and an Action Plan which deal with, among other issues, the promotion and protection of the rights of the child and the co-ordination of child-related activities within the Organisation. This resulted in the establishment in 2006 of a special programme "Building a Europe for and with children" and the adoption of a Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child. The Strategy lists among its priorities for the period 2016-2021 work related to vulnerable children including children with imprisoned parents.¹

Two Council of Europe Conferences of Directors of Prison and Probation Services (2015 and 2016) discussed the issue of children with parents in prison (their estimated number in Europe is 2.1 million²) and what prison and probation services can do to improve their contact to and relationships with their imprisoned parent. This topic, powerfully presented and illustrated by Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE) representatives at both conferences, was met with great interest and understanding from participants, who indicated their desire to have guidance in this respect from the Council of Europe.

Consequently, at the beginning of 2017, work started on a Recommendation concerning children of imprisoned parents. It is expected to be adopted by the Committee of Ministers at the beginning of 2018. It will recommend standards, policies and practices to be put

¹ In 2016, thanks in part to advocacy by COPE network member the Children's Ombudsman's Office Croatia, supported by COPE, children affected by parental incarceration were included, for the first time, as a group of vulnerable, marginalised children in the new Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021), expanding the criminal justice frame previously used. Under "Protecting Children in the Context of Deprivation of Liberty", the Council of Europe stated it "will consider addressing the situation of children whose parents are detained".

² This estimation is a COPE network extrapolation using World Prison Brief figures and based on a 1999 study undertaken by the French institute for statistics, INSEE, which determined a parenting rate of 1.3 children per male prisoner. More accurate statistics—crucial in advocacy work for this group of children—are thus far lacking.

in place in order to preserve and protect the child-parent relationship when in the child's best interests—this being key for their emotional, psychological, physical and material well-being.

Having a parent in prison, living with a parent in prison (in the case of infants) or visiting a parent in prison can have numerous stressful, even adverse effects on children.

In addition, these children often face stigmatisation and discrimination in the outside community, which may lead to them engaging in criminal or anti-social behaviour. Often, these children come from socially deprived families and the imprisonment of a parent may not only have negative consequences psychologically but also financially. They therefore need attention, support and care from the relevant agencies, which include not only the prison and probation services, but also social, healthcare and welfare services, schools and local authorities.

The best way to help any child lead a normal, emotionally stable life is to preserve [...] positive relations with his or her parents. In order to achieve public support and understanding, accurate and up-to-date information needs to be provided to the media and examples of good practices widely promoted.

Improving child-imprisoned parent relations also helps in maintaining and improving family relations, a crucial element for the successful reintegration of prisoners after their release and in helping them desist from crime in the future. Investing in this field also contributes to fostering trust in the authorities and in the justice system in particular, both from the child's and the prisoner's perspective.

The adoption of a Committee of Ministers Recommendation on the subject will help set standards and principles of working with such children and their families. Key to its success is that, once adopted, the Recommendation reaches all relevant authorities and agencies at national and local levels and is implemented by them. Without the active support and involvement of the main stakeholders, backed with the necessary human and financial resources, the efforts at the level of the Council of Europe cannot bring a real change in practice. COPE and its network members are essential partners in this respect.

The Council of Europe is grateful to the COPE experts who are currently contributing to the drafting of the Recommendation and who bring their substantial knowledge and expertise in this area. The draft Recommendation is based on the principle of the child's best interests and illustrates the effect police

arrest, court decisions and judgements, penal sanctions and measures and imprisonment may have on a child, from the child's perspective. Special attention is paid to the selection and training of staff working with and for children and their imprisoned parents; to creating child-friendly environments and approaches during visits and other forms of contact; to being pro-active not only in ensuring the minimum number of visits allowed, but also in organising visits at moments that are important to the child, or in granting prison leave for the same reason; to allowing longer visits in case of greater distances by cumulating visits; to financially supporting families and imprisoned parents in order to allow them to effectively exercise their right to contact with their families. The importance of preserving child-parent contact even in cases of disciplinary sanctions and in high security prisons is specifically underlined, as otherwise children will be punished in addition to their parent for a crime they have not committed.

The draft Recommendation also promotes monitoring and regular reporting on the ways in which the rights and interests of children with imprisoned parents are upheld, including when infant children are living in prison with their parent. The text of the Recommendation will be accompanied by an explanatory report, which will contain examples of existing good practices in Europe on how to work with and support such children and their parents in prison. One remarkable example in this respect is the Memorandum of Understanding on children with imprisoned parents (MOU), signed in 2014 between the Italian Ministry of Justice, the National Ombudsman for Childhood and Adolescence and the Italian NGO *Bambinisenzasbarre*³, which lays out the framework for their cooperation in terms of support (in each of their specific capacities) for these children. The fact that the Memorandum was renewed in 2016 is very positive and can serve as a model for other Council of Europe Member States.

It is worth noting that we are facing some challenges in the course of this standard-setting exercise. For example, the number of children with a parent in prison cannot be evaluated with precision—such data are difficult to collect, collate and update regularly due to a variety of reasons: a prisoner's family situation is not always known to the prison authorities and, because of privacy and data protection issues, such information often cannot be collected by them, especially if the prisoner's personal files are dissociated from their police or court files. Prison administrations may not always be able to verify whether the parent has parental rights or not, for example in cases of domestic violence or other serious child-related crime. It is evident that collecting such information and data is crucial, as this helps in decisions regarding contact and visiting rights,

³ <http://www.bambinisenzasbarre.org>

based on the child's best interests and also as it helps tailor prison staff's approach to individual situations. Other agencies may be helpful in this respect, such as child protection and social services, as well as NGOs.

The prison services in our Member States were sent a questionnaire relating to the subject of the draft Recommendation. We received 40 replies from 27 countries, which is very positive. The summary of the replies will be reflected in the explanatory report to the draft Recommendation providing information regarding the current situation in Europe. We intend to repeat this exercise in due course in order to see whether and to what extent the Recommendation has helped to bring about positive changes to existing practices.

It must be underlined that collecting precise data regarding children with imprisoned parents is not an end in itself. What is equally important is collecting precise data and information regarding the measures taken to improve child-parent contact, relations and visits, as well as data regarding the number and types of different actions taken by the stakeholders and the results achieved. The draft Recommendation therefore promotes regular research, revision and evaluation of child-friendly practices and policies. It also recommends setting up multi-disciplinary and multi-agency expert groups where children with imprisoned parents will also have their voice heard on how they experience parental imprisonment and contact with their imprisoned parent.

Prison administrations need support themselves when working to enhance support for children, given that their primary concerns are dealing with prisoners, keeping good order, safety and security in prison and preparing prisoners for release and social reintegration. They should work in collaboration with relevant NGOs, with educational, youth, healthcare and social services, as well as with local communities. Work with children in general and with those with a parent in prison needs to be multi-disciplinary and multi-agency in order to be successful and to protect children's rights and their well-being effectively.

Public trust and understanding also need to be gained and maintained to ensure sustainability of policies and practices. Clearly, the best way to help any child lead a normal, emotionally stable life is to preserve and build upon positive relations with his or her parents so that the child feels loved, cared for and appreciated. In order to achieve public support and understanding for the fact that this also applies to children with imprisoned parents, accurate and up-to-date information needs to be provided to the media and examples of good practices and achievements need to be widely promoted. COPE has a crucial role to play in this respect.

The serious lack of comprehensive, qualitative and quantitative disaggregated data on children deprived of liberty lies at the basis of the United Nations Global Study on the topic, which was commissioned by the UN Secretary-General upon invitation by the UN General Assembly in its Resolution 69/157 of 18 December 2014¹ and which responds to an explicit recommendation of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) pursuant to Article 45 of the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). After three years of collaborative efforts of several stakeholders, the appointment of an Independent Expert to lead this study in October 2016² has paved the way for various meetings aimed at gathering all actors involved in its progresses as well as discussing how to move forward and present a concluding report to the UN General Assembly at its seventy-third session in September 2018, as requested by its Resolution 71/177 of 19 December 2016.³

Significantly, the primary objective of the Global Study is to collect reliable data from governments in cooperation with UN agencies, civil society, academia and other stakeholders, in relation to children deprived of liberty. This will allow an assessment of the magnitude of the phenomenon, including the number of children deprived of liberty (as disaggregated by age, gender and nationality), as well as the reasons invoked, the root-causes, type and length of deprivation of liberty and places of detention. The determination of alternatives to the deprivation of liberty and the documentation of best

practices represent further objectives of the present study, as well as gathering the views and experiences of children to inform relevant recommendations. Moreover, it aims to raise awareness about the high numbers of children deprived of liberty, often in violation of the UNCRC, and so aims to promote a change in stigmatising attitudes and behaviour towards children at risk of arrest or detention as well as children who are deprived of liberty. Additionally, the elaboration of recommendations and strategies for law, policy and practice is sought to safeguard the rights of children concerned, prevent their detention and reduce the number of those deprived of liberty through effective non-custodial alternatives as guided by the best interests of the child.⁴

The specific situation of children living in places of detention with their parents is one of the six key focus areas analysed by the Global Study.⁵ The feasibility of data collection to document the numbers of children deprived of liberty can differ depending on the focus area concerned. A variety of sources and available information based on quantitative and qualitative research methodologies are therefore taken into account in the preparation of the overall study. Sources include but are not limited to: state reports under the UNCRC; information generated by UN conferences; official statistics available from the UN Statistics Division; and other statistical information available within the system, including UNICEF, UNODC, UNHCR, OHCHR and the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children and for Children and Armed Conflict; as well as a questionnaire.

The latter was finalised in the context of a high-level meeting on the methodology of the Global Study, which was hosted by the Venice-based European

1 See Resolution on the Rights of the Child, UN Doc. A/RES/69/157 of 18 December 2014, paragraph 52 (d), which intended the Global Study to be “funded through voluntary contributions and conducted in close cooperation with relevant United Nations agencies and offices, including but not limited to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [OHCHR], the United Nations Children’s Fund [UNICEF], the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children [SRSG-VAC], as well as the Interagency Panel on Juvenile Justice, and in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including Member States, civil society, academia and children”.

2 Manfred Nowak was appointed by the UN High Level Task Force composed of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children and for Children and Armed Conflict, OHCHR, UNODC, UNICEF, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the CRC.

3 Meetings with Member States were held in Geneva and New York in November 2016 and January 2017 for the purpose of asking for political and financial support for the Global Study. Likewise, since 2014, meetings have been held by the NGO coalition and the SRSG-VAC in her role as Chair of the UN High Level Task Force. Similar support has been requested to a number of private foundations.

4 According to the UN GA Res. 69/157, paragraph 52(d), the Global Study is intended “to include good practices and recommendations for action to effectively realize all relevant rights of the child, including supporting the implementation of the United Nations Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Children in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.”

5 A European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratization (EIUC) research team will prepare a draft chapter on children in places of detention with their parents. The other five key areas of the Global Study concern children deprived of liberty within the administration of justice, children deprived of liberty for migration-related reasons, children deprived of liberty in institutions, children deprived of liberty in the context of armed conflict and children deprived of liberty on national security grounds.

Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratization (EIUC) in March 2017, with a view to submit it to states, UN agencies, NGOs and other stakeholders, including the CRC, the UN Sub-Committee on the Prevention of Torture (SPT), National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), National Preventive Mechanisms (NPMs) and academic institutions. The questionnaire primarily aims to collect quantitative statistical data about the number of children deprived of liberty in the aforementioned key focus areas. In addition, governments are encouraged to indicate examples of best practices and innovative alternative approaches that intend to reduce the number of children deprived of liberty according to child rights principles. In this vein, the provision of copies of relevant laws, policies, studies and reports is also important. The identification of national focal points responsible for coordinating responses to the questionnaire and for liaising with all the stakeholders involved in compiling the requested data (e.g., field offices of relevant UN Agencies, NGOs, NHRIs) represents another essential aspect of the preparation phase.

It is worth emphasising that the prepared questionnaire aims to strike a realistic balance between data that are needed to enable a comprehensive and comparative analysis of children deprived of liberty and data that governments can realistically be expected to collect and make available. To this end, highly detailed questions and disaggregated data beyond age, gender and nationality are avoided. Governments will be requested to make a special effort to collect such data at a particular date in the near future to provide a snapshot of the number of children detained at that specific point in time. Questions are also raised with respect to the total number of children detained annually in each of the past ten years (2007 to 2016) to facilitate a limited trend analysis. Aspects such as detention conditions (e.g., rights to personal integrity, education and health) or the integration of child rights principles form part of the qualitative information gathering and analysis.

Importantly, the prepared questionnaire provides for the definition of certain terms to be used for the purposes of the Global Study, so contributing to determining its overall scope. The definition of “child” is laid out in Article 1 of the UNCRC and refers to “every human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier”. In this regard, data will be collected on all children and

juveniles up to the age of eighteen years, irrespective of how the term “children” is defined under domestic law. This includes both children detained with their family members, as well as unaccompanied⁶ or separated⁷ children. The study’s definition of “deprivation of liberty” relies on Article 4(2) of the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture of 2002, which corresponds to Article 11(b) of the UN Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty of 1990

The serious lack of comprehensive, qualitative and quantitative disaggregated data on children deprived of liberty lies at the basis of the UN Global Study. The specific situation of children living in places of detention with their parents is one of the six key focus areas.

(Havana Rules) and refers to “any form of detention or imprisonment or the placement of a person in a public or private custodial setting which that person is not permitted to leave at will by order of any judicial, administrative or other authority”.⁸ Accordingly, children deprived of liberty by non-state actors (e.g., parents, traffickers or armed rebel groups) will not be covered by the present study, irrespective of states’ obligation to prevent such types of deprivation. However, the places of detention considered do go beyond state-organised prisons and

institutions and include also private custodial settings (such as private prisons, educational institutions, psychiatric hospitals and similar institutions) as long as they are licensed or contracted by the state and/or a state authority ordered the deprivation of liberty concerned. Article 37(b) of the UNCRC is also taken into account.⁹ Irrespective of the terminology or how

6 “Unaccompanied children” (also called unaccompanied minors) are children, as defined in Article 1 of the UNCRC, who have been 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.

7 “Separated children” are children, as defined in Article 1 of the UNCRC, who have been separated from both parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary care-giver, but not necessarily from other relatives.

8 This definition also constitutes the legal basis for visits to places of detention by the UN Sub-Committee for the Prevention of Torture and by National Preventive Mechanisms.

9 In particular, the Global Study takes into consideration the following aspects: the term “arrest” usually refers to the act of deprivation of liberty by the police or other law enforcement officials; the term “detention” refers to the situation of deprivation of liberty, which starts with the arrest and ends with the release of the person concerned; and the term “imprisonment” or “incarceration” is only used for detention after a conviction by a criminal court and sentence to a prison term, usually spent in “prisons” or “correctional institutions”. Police detention is usually referred to as police “custody” in a police lock-up or a police “jail” (for longer periods). Detention in camps (e.g., for prisoners of war) is usually called “internment” or “confinement”. Importantly, the term “institutions” (or “centres”) is intended to mean all public or private settings outside the justice system or the penitentiary administration, where children can be deprived of liberty. Such institutions may include, but are not limited to, orphanages, reform schools, closed remand rooms or other correctional institutions, institutions for children with disabilities, health problems (e.g., facilities dealing with behavioural disorders or psychiatric facilities), drug, alcohol or other addictions, without parental care, or for the protection of victims of abuse including trafficking, where the children are not permitted to leave at will.

situations of deprivation of liberty are interpreted under domestic law, what is instructive for the purposes of the Global Study is the fact that the child is prevented by whatever means (force, physical barriers, threats, sanctions, restraints, medication, etc.) from leaving a particular facility, site or institution at will. Therefore, information is sought with regard to both *de facto* and *de jure* deprivation of a child's liberty.

In its section on children living in places of detention with their parents, the prepared questionnaire deals with various aspects of the situation. In particular, data collection aims to cover the following: the legal basis allowing persons (adults or children) detained in the context of the criminal justice system to have their children stay with them in their place of detention; any age limits for children to be allowed to stay with detained parents (fathers as well as mothers); the possibility for the child to enter prison with a parent and to stay with him/her when the child was not born in prison; the authorities who decide whether a child can stay with a parent in a place of detention and the review process for these decisions; the authority responsible for the child's protection while the child is living in prison facilities; the criteria taken into account in the decision to allow a child to stay with their parent detained in the context of the criminal justice system; and the facilities children stay in when they live with their parents in prison. Attention is also devoted to the following aspects of children's care while living in detention with their parent or parents: education, healthcare, protection, rest, leisure, play and recreational activities, nutrition and developmental and other needs. Data collection also aims to identify the total number of children (aged 0-17) living with parents detained in the context of the criminal justice system on a particular date in time, with data disaggregated by age and nationality (citizens/non-citizens) where possible, as well as the total number of children (aged 0-17) who entered correctional custody (prison) with parents detained in the context of the criminal justice system for each of the last ten years (2007-2016). Information is also sought with regard to any specific sentencing guidelines for parents who are caregivers (e.g., parents eligible for suspended sentences, home detention, electronic monitoring or

other measures aimed at avoiding having children live in places of detention with their detained parents). Further data are gathered in relation to the authority that decides that children who have been living with detained parents shall move out of the place of detention. Finally, information is requested regarding the preparation process and support provided to children and their parents when children are required to move out of the place of detention.

It's time for states to realise this is a major opportunity for our society to shed light on a dark and disturbing picture of children deprived of their liberty, who, without quantitative data, remain overlooked, neglected, forgotten and voiceless.

It is worth highlighting that a technical barrier is challenging the realisation of the Global Study. In fact, in many countries, relevant data are not available. To counter this, the study aims at assisting governments in collecting statistical data on children deprived of liberty, as part of a collective effort (by UN agencies, field offices, civil society, academia and NHRIs). A positive side effect of doing so will be raising awareness about the child data gap among governments, statistical

offices and youth and justice ministries. It is hoped that those Member States who do not yet collect such data will take note of the importance of doing so and will work with civil society institutions accordingly, to prevent children deprived of their liberty from falling into a statistical vacuum in future.

Regrettably, it must be also noted that several governments lack the political will to collect and publish data on the precise number of children deprived of liberty in any one of the six key focus areas. This lack manifested itself in the reluctance of UN Member States to request a Global Study. Indeed, the process was primarily driven by NGOs and expert bodies, such as the CRC. The lack of political will is reflected not only in General Assembly Resolution 69/157 which required that the Global Study be funded through voluntary contributions, but also in the fact that so far only two governments have provided funds in response to intense fundraising activities and the fundraising appeal sent by former UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson on 23 September 2016. Currently, the dramatic financial situation is putting the whole project in jeopardy. It's time for states to realise this is a major opportunity for our society to shed light on a dark and disturbing picture of children deprived of their liberty, who, without quantitative data, remain overlooked, neglected, forgotten and voiceless.



The European Prison Information System (EPIS) and Framework Decision 909 on the transfer of prisoners

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The European Organisation of Prison and Correctional Services (EuroPris) is now some six years young, working together with twenty-four EU Member States. From its start in 2012, a strategic focal point has always been to enhance transparency and to facilitate the sharing of information among its stakeholders. And EuroPris has sought to do this in all aspects of its work by bringing together professionals and subject matter experts to concentrate on key issues faced in prisons and indeed across the wider correctional spectrum. One of the most important aspects of these “coming together” groups is the approach itself; these are not just “talking shops”, but are in fact held together with a clear remit and tasked with practical outputs. This is a notable strength of the EuroPris network and one of the reasons that the organisation is able to effect change through its promotion of professional prison practice.

To further support these strategic aims, the members of EuroPris quickly ratified an initiative to begin the development of a centralised database where a variety of facts and figures could be stored and made accessible to professionals within its network (and to recognised “competent authorities” outside of the network), which was the catalyst for the creation of the European Prison Information System (EPIS)¹. Similar databases have been in existence for some time, and many are likely to be familiar with the impressive World Prison Brief² as a commonly referred to source for basic prison data. EPIS, however, its obvious Eurocentric focus aside, differs from the World Prison Brief by the fact that it is developed by network members with the primary aim of supporting the ongoing initiatives of EuroPris and to provide a service back to its members, hence the “European prison data for European prison agencies” mantra. And although some basic information is available to the public, much is restricted and requires a login to gain access.

It has to be emphasised that data collection is a tricky business, one fraught with difficulties such as the grappling with conflicting, misinterpreted or unrecognised definitions which remains a key obstacle in the collection and reporting of data. On top of this are the challenges surrounding raising the awareness of

and achieving the buy-in of Member States to contribute to the resource, which ultimately is a request for staff support in times where public sector services are stretched. In its short lifespan, EPIS has successfully collected data from approximately twenty European jurisdictions, but much more remains to be done.

The EPIS system is best described as a foundation upon which modules or sub-component databases can be established. EPIS itself is merely the aggregation of “agency profiles”, to which each national prison agency in Europe can contribute. An agency profile comprises some seventy questions across fourteen categories such as “population”, “sentencing”, “healthcare” and “staffing” and has the capacity to incorporate indicators, for example on EC Framework Decision 909 compliance (see page 12). In short, data need a home, and these agency profiles form the root onto which data can be appended, logically and consistently structured, compared, filtered and exported. But of course it has to be reiterated that such a system relies on the input of the National Prison Agencies, so a careful balance must be struck in maintaining a database that is useful yet not too burdensome. This becomes even

more apparent when one considers that the system also seeks to collect data on every prison establishment within an agency, which for some jurisdictions can be quite an undertaking!

A notable success story of EPIS comes from one of its sub-components, which we refer to as the Knowledge Management System, or more commonly as the KMS. Recognising the need for the sharing of more narrative explanations of the many complex variations of the work that is carried out by National Agencies, the KMS is a virtual exchange platform of questions and answers that is facilitated by the EuroPris team. When a request is received by EuroPris to send a question, special attention is given to the wording and suitability of the content and sub-questions (up to ten sub-questions per topic) to ensure that it will be clearly understood by the recipients. The recipients—the National Prison Agencies—are able to respond via this online tool with information that is fed directly into the database. Once the exercise has been concluded, a full report is circulated among respondents and made available via the website. To date, EuroPris has sent over 400 questions covering some ninety topics, which have in turn amassed nearly 1,000 responses. A sample question of relevance to this article is one which asks

As well as interventions and access to services, the location of the prison or release area can play an important role in an individual's resettlement, as social and family relationships can help to reduce an individual's risk of reoffending.

¹ <http://www.europris.org/epis/>

² The World Prison Brief is an online database providing free access to information on prison systems around the world: <http://www.prisonstudies.org/>

the national prison agencies if they have “mother-child units” within their prisons³ and, if the answer is positive, to provide the location and name of the establishment and any special remarks or additional information. This particular query received responses from fourteen jurisdictions. Other queries include “family days in prison”⁴, “prison visits from and communication with family members”, and community involvement and staff training with respect to children of prisoners.

EPIS is still very much a work in progress, but it is well-placed for further development. Feedback from members indicates that there is a need for centralised data on European prisons, for a variety of purposes, despite the ongoing challenges. EuroPris remains committed to the initiative, mindful that a balance must be maintained to ensure a fruitful and symbiotic cooperation with our national agency members.

Transfer of Sentenced Foreign Nationals

Freedom of movement across Europe has greatly advanced the opportunities for citizens and contributed to a common sense of identity between countries. Whilst free movement has brought a number of benefits, there have been consequences in terms of criminal activity and migration. Across Europe, there are a number of people imprisoned from other jurisdictions which can place a strain on the national prison service in terms of capacity, resources and resettlement options.

It is in this context that the European Union adopted Framework Decision 2008/909/JHA (FD909), concerning the application of the principle of mutual recognition to judgments in criminal matters imposing custodial sentences or deprivation of liberty. As some foreign national prisoners may be subject to a deportation order at the end of their sentence, FD909 gives scope for resettlement planning to happen at an earlier stage by providing a mechanism for the transfer of their sentence.

The purpose of FD909 is to enhance the social rehabilitation of sentenced EU-nationals, and whilst there is no specific definition of “social rehabilitation” within the text of the Framework Decision, it is accepted that sentences should meet the needs of the individual during their time in prison and resettlement into the community. As well as interventions and access to services, the location of the prison or release area can

³ Special units where mothers and their children (usually infants) live together in prison. The availability and use of these units depends largely on the national prison service, and often on the prison itself. In some jurisdictions, children may live with their fathers in prison, although this is less common.

⁴ In some states, “family days” are special visits organised to foster quality contact between imprisoned parents and their families (sometimes without the presence of the non-imprisoned parent). These are often longer than the usual visits and recreational activities such as colouring, painting, games and other activities may be organised for the family.

play an important role in an individual’s resettlement, as social and family relationships can help to reduce an individual’s risk of reoffending.

Under FD909, the issuing state (the individual’s current country of imprisonment) should be satisfied that the transfer will facilitate the sentenced person’s social rehabilitation, by taking into account factors such as the individual’s family, linguistic, cultural, social or economic links to the executing state (the country the individual would be transferred to). Therefore, if a foreign national prisoner has strong family connections in the issuing state, the issuing state must demonstrate how the individual’s social rehabilitation would be better achieved in the executing state.

FD909 provides foreign national prisoners with the opportunity to consent to the transfer process which will be taken into consideration when the executing state decides whether to accept the transfer. The location in terms of ease of family contact and visits may impact a prisoner giving consent to the process. However, under FD909, foreign national prisoners can still be transferred, even if they do not consent.

EuroPris established an Expert Group to assist members with the implementation of FD909 in 2012, and to examine lessons that could be learned through the exchange of information. Over the years, the Expert Group has convened in different formations and sought to share the recommendations of best practice among other EuroPris members. There is Ministerial and public interest for foreign national prisoners to be transferred to serve their sentence in their home country, and the topic is a priority area of interest for the European Commission as well as many European countries. In 2015, with thanks to additional funding from the European Commission, the invitation to participate was extended to all twenty-eight EU Member States, regardless of EuroPris membership.

EuroPris recognises the importance of providing information about the transfer process, and has sought to develop resources to enhance understanding in this area, such as prisoner information sheets. These country-specific resources, available on the EuroPris website, contain an overview of the prison system, giving insight to prisoners about how their social rehabilitation needs may be met through transfer. They include summary information on topics such as prison visits, property, healthcare and resettlement support.

Knowledge and understanding of how sentences and prisons operate in other jurisdictions are also important to competent authorities dealing with transfer requests. The EuroPris Knowledge Management System (KMS) supports this by enabling prison administrations to pose questions on policy or operational procedure to other EuroPris members and to get comparable answers back within a short timeframe.

The FD909 Expert Group has also utilised the KMS resource to support data collection efforts. Since 2014, EuroPris has been collating annual statistics on the number of incoming/outgoing transfers between Member States under FD909 as well as a breakdown of the foreign national prisoner population by Member State. Due to the way data is gathered (requests sent and transfers executed within a calendar year), the statistics do not follow individual cases, but give a general indication of the volume of requests and level of transfer activity. The breakdown of foreign national population by EU Member State seeks to provide context to the transfer activity, to understand the rate at which transfers occur in proportion to the foreign national population.

The level of data returns has been increasing year on year, although there are a number of Member States that do not collate central records of the number of certificates sent and received or transfers completed due to the structure of their competent authorities.

For more information on the EuroPris FD909 Expert Group, including links to the prisoner information sheets and reports, visit: <http://www.europris.org/expert-groups/framework-decision-2008909jha-transfer-of-prisoners/>

Health systems' role in supporting children with complex health needs: Fit for purpose?

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Child health services, including primary care, don't just happen. They are part of a complex health system, which includes financing rules; eligibility issues; and questions concerning who gains access and how. Behind this are systems of professional education, accountability and quality assurance. How professions work together and who can undertake what activities also vary between countries. While the care as delivered—such as giving immunisations, examining a child with a temperature and rash or treating a laceration—may be similar anywhere within Europe, getting the child to the right consultation and the ease for the patient of getting treated, vary tremendously. For instance, the United Kingdom service is paid for by taxation, while the Netherlands is insurance based. Germany and Ireland have very different types of primary care doctor for children. Nurses have different degrees of involvement in different countries.

To address this, the Models of Child Health Appraised (MOCHA) project is a large, Horizon 2020-funded EU project that is appraising the models of primary care for children in the thirty EU and EEA countries, running from 2015 until the end of 2018. Researching and appraising models of health may seem to be an activity very distant to supporting, protecting and highlighting the difficulties faced by children whose parents are imprisoned, but there are some parallels in the challenges faced as well as in the target group of individuals that use the services. Above all, it is important to make sure that groups with special circumstances, such as children affected by a parent's imprisonment, get at least the same level of service and access as anyone else for both universal services (such as immunisation) and for individual needs (such as emotional problems).

Children are, in general, almost an invisible population in terms of comprehensive health surveillance and in policy

making. Of course, policies for children's health exist and are created, quality measures are agreed and data about children's health are collected. However, there are often challenges faced in terms of identifying comprehensive trend data that are comparable across nations. Policies for improving children's health tend to be based on specific health problems and not holistic in terms of healthy growth and development and good mental health.

We know that children are profoundly affected by the circumstances they grow up in. If these circumstances are not optimal there is the potential for a detrimental effect on a child's physical and mental health that can last for many years into adulthood and even be passed on to the next generation. This is pertinent to many children—those in poverty, those living in families where there is drug or alcohol abuse, children in care, children who must migrate from one state to another, children escaping war or abuse and, of course, children who have a parent or other family member in prison. Imprisonment may be a result of a previous challenging environment and in turn may have adverse effects by increasing the challenges and stigma placed on the child as they grow up. Any one of these situations can act as a determinant of health and a creator of health needs and can make a child vulnerable. There are many facets to this vulnerability and one challenging situation may lead to another, leaving the child particularly at risk of mental and physical ill-health. In all of these situations the child is the innocent victim: they did not choose their circumstances, but they are deeply affected by them. It is a key role of health systems to ensure equity—that is, that every child gets the same chance not just in terms of health service access, but also in terms of health outcome—and this requires careful design and monitoring.

The MOCHA project is concerned with systems of primary care; how these address children's needs

as the first point of contact with the health service and how health systems contribute to the goal of achieving optimal health for every child. Health systems, although they are often large and complex structures, have the potential to play a vital role in helping marginalised children, such as the children of prisoners. In an ideal world, a strong health system, which places the needs of the children who use it at the heart of what it does, can identify and, where necessary, target their health needs. The structure and processes of an optimal health system can prevent vulnerable children from being forgotten and from “falling between the cracks” when they are in most need of support.

The MOCHA project has a number of research areas, all of which aim to unpick the elements of the health systems in each of the thirty countries. Each research area identifies the beneficial elements of the services, the challenges and gaps in services and the intended and unintended consequences of the policies, structures and actions that allow the services to run. Ultimately, these data will be combined in order to identify what features would be present in an optimal service for children, what gaps there are in current services and how we can adapt what we have to best serve the child population. Our areas of specific interest are:

- Identifying models of primary care: what services exist, how are they organised, what are the key elements and aims of the service? What gaps can we see in terms of care for children? How do popular culture and political priorities affect services and policy for children, even though children do not have a say? How are health services managed and governed?
- The interface between primary and secondary services (between home and hospital, or social care) for children with complex care needs. Some children may have complex medical needs, disabilities, mental health problems or other needs, which are cared for by a number of agencies. How do these work together most effectively (if they do) and what is their relationship with primary care?
- What is the role of school health services in terms of primary care for children? Do school health services meet an important need for children’s healthcare in terms of preventive health, health education and in terms of access and confidentiality for children? Does the health system advise schools of particular health needs (including mental health vulnerabilities) of children? Similarly, what services are provided specifically for adolescents, who are growing in independence and often need to seek help or advice for sensitive problems, needing different, adolescent-friendly means of talking to a health professional?

Imprisonment may well be a result of an existing challenging environment and its effect may be to increase the challenges and stigma placed on the child as he or she grows up. Any one of these situations can act as a determinant of health and make a child vulnerable.

- Measures of the quality of care: How is quality measured, whose values are incorporated, and what data are there that help us ascertain the quality of primary care services for children? This can be in terms of preventive actions, curative actions and in helping a child live with a long-term condition. It is important to encompass mental health as well as physical health.

- How can we harness the vast amounts of information held by large data sets to tell us about primary care services for children? There are registries of data collected about a number of childhood diseases and conditions, from asthma, cancer and ADHD right through to children’s immunisation schedules. Do they identify if children from particularly vulnerable settings and groups are getting equal access and outcomes?

- What type of workforce is in place for children’s primary care in the thirty countries? Are there enough doctors, nurses, other health professionals? Are they trained in the specific needs of children, not just in terms of clinical needs, but also in terms of talking to a child, explaining what is wrong and what needs to be done in a child-friendly way, identifying when a problem needs treatment and how best to address the different needs of children of different ages?

- How is equity of care addressed by health services? Are vulnerable groups recognised and are they addressed by the health services? Does the primary care service actively work to reduce any inequality of care or help to overcome existing determinants of health?

- Which countries use electronic health records? Are they used in such a way as to help keep track of a child’s health needs and preventive actions? Do the electronic health records work to address the specific issues that affect children and can they be used to coordinate care between the health service and other services that the child may use?

A number of challenges have been identified by the MOCHA project as we approach the two-year anniversary of the start and complete our evidence gathering phase. In many services and policies on primary care there is a lack of distinct focus on children, lack of comparable data within and between countries, and gaps in provision for children’s specific needs. In many countries, it seems that children are not placed at the centre of a health system’s activities, even though, in terms of popular culture, news of a child in difficulty or who is treated unequally prompts outcry and political promises of change. Children are forgotten about, they are not researched because it is too difficult and data about children are not collected or analysed. Despite the fact that children make up a fifth of Europe’s

population, focus is so often on adult and elderly health needs and consequently children must, to a great extent, adapt to what is provided.

In terms of our central task, that of appraising models of care, we must first identify what we mean by a good system. When placing the needs of the child at the centre of a health service, a good system becomes one that can adapt to and address the unique needs of any child. A child whose parents are in prison may have a number of health needs that should be addressed. They may have been born into a family of somewhat chaotic structure, they may have parents with mental health problems or struggles with addiction, they may be in poverty, they may not have much social capital or extended family to draw upon for support, and they live in what is in effect a stressed single parent family. Access and planning of follow-up treatments may be more difficult for the parent coping alone, and family income and amenities may well be reduced, including nutrition and recreation which are so important for a child's

healthy development. A good health service should be able to ensure that these children are able to be immunised against childhood diseases, are able to have their development and growth assessed, are able to be supported through illness, feel empowered to seek and obtain help for mental and physical health worries and in the event of chronic disease, and are encouraged to look after their health effectively.

Identifying how a service can be stable enough to be robust, but also flexible enough to meet the needs of children of prisoners, among a myriad of other child population groups, is our task. We are rising to the challenge, and will report at the end of 2018.

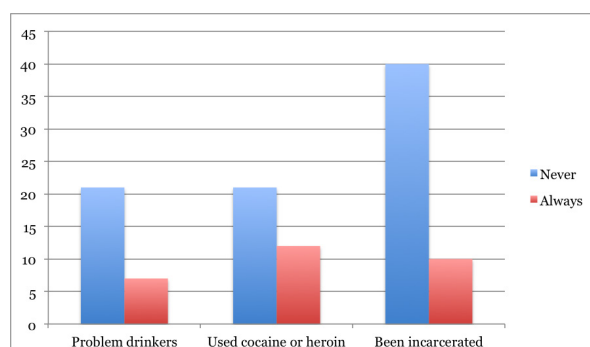
For more information about the MOCHA project, please visit www.childhealthservicemodels.eu and sign up for our newsletter. The MOCHA Project has received funding from the European Commission's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation funding under grant agreement n. 634201.

Parental imprisonment and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

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Imprisonment of a household member is one of ten Adverse Childhood Experiences known to have a significant impact on long-term health and well-being.¹ The more ACEs a child suffers, the more likely this is to impact negatively on outcomes in terms of health, school attainment and later life experiences. Recent research in the UK has highlighted the impact of ACEs.² Health Scotland has picked up on the research and looked at how recognising and responding to ACEs is key to improving life chances.³ The higher the number of ACEs, the greater the likely negative impact on a child's future. Compared to those with no ACEs, children and young people experiencing four or more ACEs are, for example: four times more likely to be a high-risk drinker; six times more likely to have had or caused unintended teenage pregnancy; 14 times more likely to have been a victim of violence over the last 12 months; 15 times more likely to have committed violence against another person in the last 12 months; 16 times more likely to have used crack cocaine or heroin; 20 times more likely to have been incarcerated at any point in their lifetime.⁴

The impact of ACEs can be reduced: children with support from a trusted adult are significantly more resilient. Children experiencing four or more ACEs were asked whether, as a child, they had an adult they trusted and could talk to about their problems.⁵ The graph shows clearly the difference having a "trusted adult" to speak to about problems can have. Even those experiencing four or more ACEs were four times less likely to end up imprisoned if they had an adult they trusted to talk about their problems with.⁶



As a child, was there an adult you trusted and could talk to about your problems? With thanks to Mark A. Bellis

1 Felitti, V.J., et al. (1998). Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction to Many of the Leading Causes of Death in Adults. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 14(4), 245-258. The ten items recognised as key as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are: physical, emotional and sexual abuse; physical and emotional neglect; mental illness; mother treated violently; divorce; substance abuse; incarcerated relative.

2 Public Health Wales NHS Trust (2015). *ACEs and their impact on health-harming behaviours in the Welsh adult population*.

3 Health Scotland (2017). *Tackling the attainment gap by preventing and responding to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)*.

4 *Ibid.*

5 Bellis, M. (no date). *ACEs, Resilience and Equity: Setting course for a healthier Wales*. Presentation. Public Health Wales

6 *Ibid.*

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