Please cite as: EUAA, '4.6.6. Future perspectives for applicant children' in *Asylum Report 2024*, Ιούνιος 2024.

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UNICEF and the Swiss government launched the project “Supporting integration of refugee and migrant children in host EU countries” in April 2023, with six participating countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. The project focuses on supporting children fleeing the war in Ukraine by strengthening national child protection systems.1127 For example, in Bulgaria, the project funds the construction of the third safe zone for unaccompanied minors in the reception centre in Harmanli.1128

Legislative amendments require the minister in Iceland to establish a regulation on the assessment of the interests of a child who has applied for international protection, but a residence permit on humanitarian consideration may still be granted.1129

In Greece, 16 civil society organisations advocated for establishing a legal residence for unaccompanied children whose applications for international protection are rejected while they are still minors. The organisations underlined that these children are often left without documents and are exposed to exploitation.1130 The Spanish CEAR underlined the importance of legislative changes in 2021 which prevented unaccompanied minors turning 18 to fall into a situation of irregularity, but the organisation noted that support services should still be improved, especially to ensure that young adults do not become homeless.1131

The Dutch Education Inspectorate put forward several recommendations on family facilities that are intended for families with young children who have exhausted all legal remedies related to their application for international protection. The inspectorate highlighted that the best interests of the child should be more central throughout their stay and children should always be kept in view to ensure that the necessary information is transferred from one place to another when families need to change locations.1132 COA shared many of the inspectorate’s concerns and observations, but it underlined that it strongly disagreed with the conclusions designating family facilities as ‘structurally unsafe’ as the agency has tried to limit the number of relocations, improve contacts with schools and support a school transfer when relocation is necessary. Due to the pressure on the reception system, other target groups were also accommodated in these types of locations throughout 2023.1133

For unaccompanied children turning 18 with a residence permit, the Dutch Nidos may now offer extended care and these children may stay with their reception family or a small-scale reception facility.1134

- 1127UNICEF. (2023, April 6). *Supporting the integration of refugee and migrant children in host EU countries: UNICEF and Swiss Government launch a new project* . https://www.unicef.org/eca/stories/supporting-integration-refugee-and-migrant-children-host-eu-countries
- 1128State Agency for Refugees at the Council of Ministries | Държавна агенция за бежанците при Министерския Съвет. *Представителят на УНИЦЕФ в България посети РПЦ-Харманли [The representative of UNICEF in Bulgaria visited the ROC-Harmanli]*.

- 1129Lög um breytingu á lögum um útlendinga, nr. 80/2016 (alþjóðleg vernd) [Act amending the Act on Aliens, No 80/2016 (international protection). (27 March 2023). https://www.althingi.is/altext/stjt/2023.014.html
- 1130International Rescue Committee. (2023, March 17). *Children in Greece without documents, children still at risk*.

- 1131Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado (CEAR) | Spanish Commission for Refugees. Input to the Asylum Report 2024.

- 1132Inspectorate of Education, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science | Inspectie van het Onderwijs, Ministerie van Onderwijs, cultuur en Wetenschap. (2023, March 8). *Onvoldoende veiligheid en ontwikkelmogelijkheden voor nieuwkomerskinderen [Insufficient safety and development opportunities for newcomer children]* . https://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/actueel/nieuws/2023/03/08/onvoldoende-veiligheid-en-ontwikkelmogelijkheden-voor-nieuwkomerskinderen
- 1133Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers | Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers. (2023, March 8). *COA deelt zorgen inspectie over gezinslocaties [COA shares inspection concerns about family locations]*.

- 1134Nidos Foundation | Stichting Nidos. (2023). Input to the Asylum Report 2024.

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