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3.1 Cooperation with child protection services

Cooperation with CP services is imperative all throughout the procedure. The CP authorities need to inform the asylum authorities if a child is in a harmful situation and vice versa. Generally, in EU+ States, asylum authorities do not have automatic access to the best-interests assessment conducted by CP authorities. For reasons of confidentiality and strict data regulations, CP and asylum authorities might not share data or information. In some cases, national asylum offices might not even be aware if CP authorities are involved in a child's case and vice versa.

There is a need to ensure that the international protection systems communicate with and are linked to the national CP systems/referral mechanisms. Coordinated protocols and standard operating procedures should be designed with the involvement of CP governmental and non-governmental actors, institutions and service providers to make this link more effective. For asylum-seeking children, the involvement of CP services in referral mechanisms is currently limited and should be reinforced and ensured. All relevant stakeholders at central and local level should at least meet at regular intervals if there is no information sharing system in place. In individual cases, it should be clear which authority is responsible for appointing a guardian/caregiver, delivering guidance, the well-being and the legal status of the child, as there may be protection gaps due to different authorities believing others are responsible for certain aspects of the child's case.

It is recommended that in order to ensure the implementation of the safeguards mentioned in Section 2, the asylum authority should coordinate and cooperate with CP authorities/guardians/other relevant institutions. The purpose is to guarantee that the information required is shared and available, and used for the benefit of each individual child. This should be done in due respect of data protection/ confidentiality. The child should consent to the information being shared.

Ensuring access to other rights

The relevant authorities (reception authorities, line ministries, CP actors) in each EU+ State should further ensure that the child has access to schooling and education according to Article 14 RCD (also Article 28 CRC), access to healthcare according to Article 19 RCD (also Article 24 CRC) and proper accommodation

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