

VOICE Project

Be Seen Be Heard - Empowering Child VOICES in Legal Proceedings

CERV-2024-CHILD

Between January 2025 and December 2026, the [International Commission of Jurists – European Institutions](#) together with partners implements the two-year-long VOICE project (Be Seen Be Heard - Empowering Child VOICES in Legal Proceedings). The project is a dedicated initiative focused on ensuring active and meaningful participation of children in legal proceedings, in line with Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child. By identifying existing gaps in EU Member States and enhancing the knowledge of justice professionals including lawyers, social workers, probation officers, judges and prosecutors and national authorities, the consortium of partners will address specific vulnerabilities, promote child participation at national and local levels, and emphasize inclusivity and systemic change.

The project partners are:

- [Nederlands Juristen Comite Voor Demensenrechten \(NJCM\)](#) – the Netherlands
- [Forum for Human Rights \(FORUM\)](#) – the Czech Republic and Slovakia
- [Aditus Foundation \(Aditus\)](#) – Malta
- [Österreichische Juristenkommission \(ICJ Austria\)](#) – Austria

The project's main objective is **to promote the effective realization of children's right to be heard and participate in judicial proceedings across Austria, the Czech Republic, Malta, the Netherlands, and Slovakia, in alignment with the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child** by:

1. enhancing the expertise of legal practitioners and target groups on the right of children to be heard and to participate in proceedings, with special focus on children with specific vulnerabilities;
2. bolstering the sharing of best practices on the issue and collaboration among the practitioners from the five target countries;
3. and raising awareness about the critical need for a child-centric approach in legal proceedings across the EU and the significance of the right to be heard to and to participate for children in legal proceedings.

The project's final beneficiaries are children, particularly those in situations of (multiple) vulnerabilities and experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination, such as children in alternative care, children facing poverty and social exclusion, children with disabilities and migrant and refugee children.

The main activities include:

- a baseline study report;
- three transnational exchange workshops held in Brussels among experts and practitioners with extensive experience working in the field of legal proceedings and child participation;
- the publication of a Compendium of good practices on child-friendly justice and procedural rights for professionals, policymakers, and organizations in the children's rights field;
- the creation of child-friendly audio-visual version of the Compendium;
- a total of five national roundtables held in Austria, the Czech Republic, Malta, the Netherlands, and Slovakia;
- a dedicated focus group event for children in the Netherlands to provide a platform for children to express their perspectives.

See here the [ICJ Child Protection Policy](#).

ÖJK


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