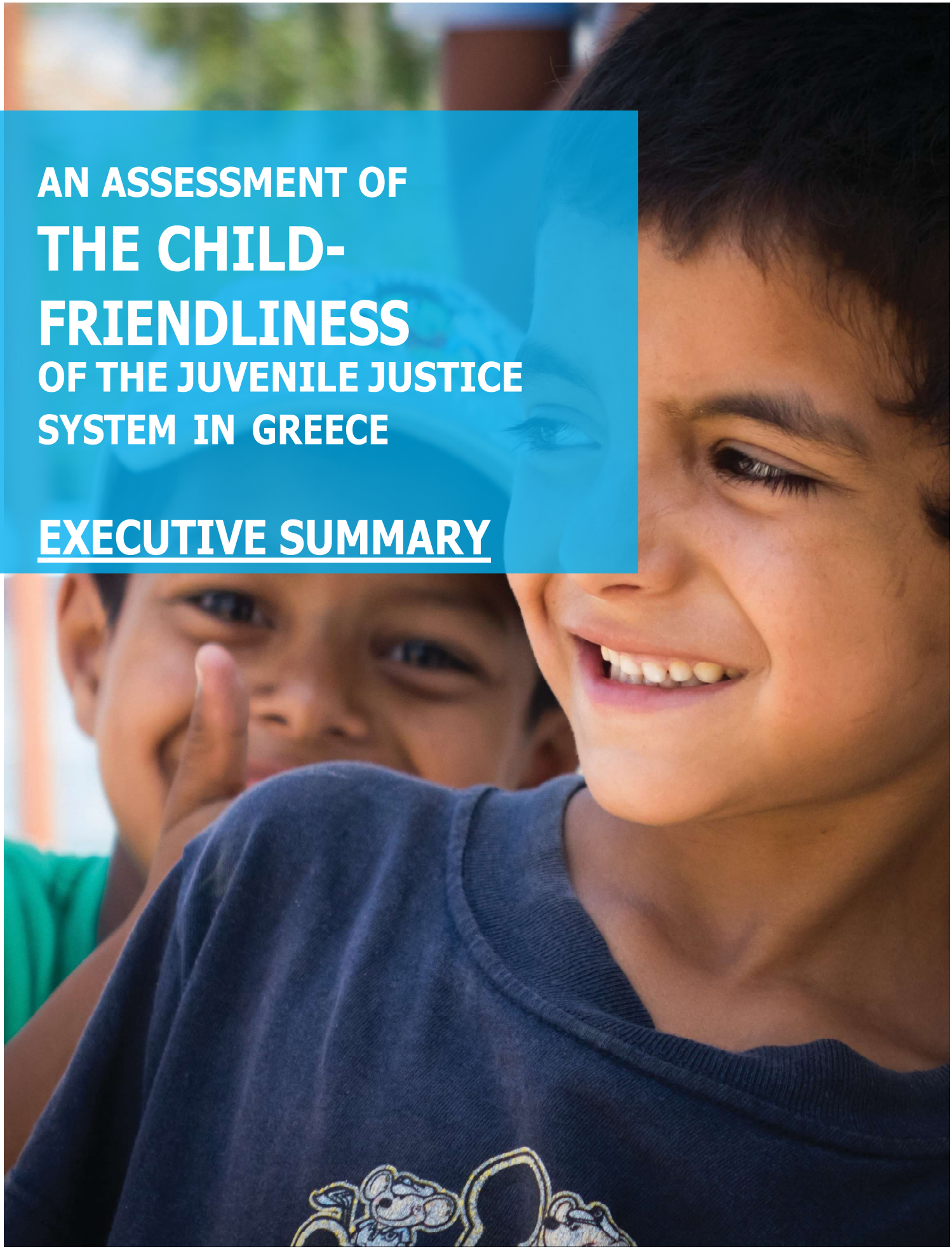

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CHILD-FRIENDLINESS OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM IN GREECE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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A. Background

The Assessment of the Child-Friendliness of the Juvenile Justice System in Greece (the Assessment onwards) was led by the UNICEF Country Office in Greece and the Ministry of Justice and it was carried out by Coram International with the support of Terre des hommes Hellas. The Assessment was overseen by a Reference Group comprising of experts on child justice appointed by the Ministry of Justice, the Deputy Ombudswoman for Children's Rights and the Ministry of Citizen's Protection.

B. Scope

The Assessment reviews the child-friendliness of the criminal justice system for children in Greece and consolidates the findings from a Desk Review on Juvenile Justice and Child Victims and Witnesses and 49 qualitative interviews of stakeholders in the criminal child justice system, including the police; prosecutors; defense lawyers; members of the judiciary; juvenile probation officers; House of the Child; NGOs; governmental employees; parents and children.

On the basis of this material, the strengths and gaps in the existing Greek criminal child justice system are analysed and compared with international and European standards, concluding with a set of recommendations for improving the national policy and normative framework for justice for children.

C. Methodology

This review used a mixed-methods approach to data collection. It drew upon a range of data sources and data collection methods to ensure the reliability of results, promote impartiality, reduce bias, and ensure that the study was based on the most comprehensive and relevant information possible. The data collection methods included a secondary data review of national laws, policies, action plans, existing reports on access to justice for children in Greece, qualitative interviews to understand the extent to which the child justice system is child friendly in practice and, to the extent possible, collection of quantitative data and analysis to determine the extent to which children come into contact with the justice system. Quantitative data was used to provide greater detail about the involvement of children in the justice system.

A Desk Review was undertaken and a synthesis of laws and data relating to the child justice system (juvenile justice); how children are handled by the justice system; policies and strategic plans; stakeholder engagement and services available. Key informant interviews were held with key stakeholders. In addition to key interviews, two in-depth case studies were conducted, with children, their parents and juvenile probation officers concerned in the case, as well as one case with a young adult who had committed a crime when his was underaged and another case with a mother of a child who had committed a crime and had reported the crime. As a result of COVID-19, it was not possible to hold focus group interviews. Neither was it possible to interview children in detention facilities.

D. Key findings

With regard to **data for children in contact with the law**, including child victims, fully disaggregated data are not available; data infrastructure and resources remain weak; there does not appear to be formal inter-agency sharing or an exchange of information mechanism and neither, as yet, is there an information and communication technology (ICT) system in place that ensures the full integration of the police, prosecution, court and social welfare database systems.

In terms of **child justice policies and strategies**, the lack of a comprehensive juvenile justice policy has

contributed to a lack of either purposeful multi- or cross-sectoral working to address offending by children, and a limited development of services for children in contact with the justice system. It has also meant that the gender balance of offending has not been addressed.

Interviewees said:
"*The current situation in child justice in Greece reflects the lack of a stable long-term policy on children's rights and on children's social care, not just in terms of children involved in criminal proceedings but also in terms of how to look after children."*

As far **as the laws related to children in conflict with the law are concerned,** there is no Juvenile Justice Law as such. Rather, the laws relating to children in conflict with the law are to be found primarily, but not exclusively in the Penal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code and in Law 4689/2020, which incorporates EU Directive 2016/800. The fact that the laws relating to juvenile justice are spread across numerous instruments makes the law more difficult to access and more difficult for lay persons to understand.

The **Juvenile Courts** operate under each First Instance Court District, though there is no uniformity in how often the courts operate in the different districts. For instance, in Thessaloniki, the three-member court meets each month, dealing with four to five serious cases involving a child defendant in a day, while in Chania there were only two juvenile court days in 2021, dealing with fifty cases. In another region it was noted that it was not unusual for the juvenile court to have 20 or 30 cases before it in one day, and for the three-judge courts to hear more than 10 cases in a day.

When it comes to the **Police**, there is little evidence available on the extent to which police officers in specialized departments who deal with juvenile crime have received specialised training. Participants in the research indicated that the police allocated to the Department on the Protection of Minors do not, as a rule, receive specialist training before placement.

Public Prosecutors play a central role in the Greek justice system and are actively involved in the cases of child offenders and child victims. According to the official website of the National School for Judicial Officials, the curriculum for prosecutors includes 12 hours on the responsibilities of the prosecutor for minors and 6 hours on children's rights and child friendly justice. Any training on working with children at the present time is minimal and prosecutors are expected to gain experience from practicing in the field. Many prosecutors assigned to work on children's cases fulfil their allotted time of two years and move on to other forms of cases. This leads to high turnover, a lack of follow-up on children's cases and a potential loss of institutional experience in the prosecutors' department as a result.

As for the **Judiciary,** as pointed out by a number of judges interviewed for this review: "*There is no such thing as specialisation". "From time to time there are various seminars that are organized and in which one can participate, if interested. It is up to the Judge to take care of and obtain the necessary knowledge and to handle it based on his/her character. Everyone does the best they can."* There has recently, however, been a change. Law 4871/2021 "Reforms in the legal framework for the National School of Judicial Officers" has set out compulsory training programmes for all judges of the civil and criminal courts. These consist of four training cycles which judicial officers must complete over a four to eight-year period. Compulsory training in child friendly justice falls within the fourth cycle.

The **Juvenile Probation Officers** are the 'backbone' of the child justice system; nevertheless, their work is severely constrained by human and financial resource related challenges, which have resulted in an acutely understaffed and overburdened service. The main issues underlined in the report is the lack of new recruitments; the lack of structured training; the expansion of their mandate to cover more responsibilities; the excessive caseload which leads to limited time dedicated per case; the failed multi-disciplinary approach; the lack of supervision and the lack of technical equipment and overall support, all of which can lead to 'burnout'.

As interviewees said *"In the short-term, they should rethink the probation service across the whole country. We are not talking about Athens and Thessaloniki, it's the rest of the country […] The needs are even higher when it comes to the countryside."*

With regard to the **legal aid system** there was considerable criticism with respect to the relevant amendments contained in Law 4689/2020. Although theoretically, a child has the right to consult lawyer prior to and during interrogation, the unavailability of legal aid lawyers to attend the police station makes this right illusory for those who do not already have a relationship with a lawyer whom they can call. At present, responsibility for legal aid is shared between the Ministry of Justice, the Courts and the Bar Associations throughout the country. Lawyers are paid by the Ministry of Justice for providing free legal aid but are appointed by the Court according to a list drawn up by the local Bar Association. Lawyers offering legal aid services are registered in specific lists, which are available to the courts. There is no specific requirement for specialisation or prior experience in juvenile justice law for lawyers undertaking children's cases through the legal aid system. There are no separate codes or standards for lawyers providing free legal aid and there does not appear to be any supervision or monitoring of the service provided by appointed lawyers. Due to the low remuneration combined with the late reimbursement of the fees, there are not many lawyers willing to take on legal aid cases.

As for the **procedural rights in the police station**, an interviewee noted *" In general, as a police force, we do not deal with this issue [*finding a lawyer*]. This will be done later in the criminal proceedings, when the child leaves the police and goes to the Prosecutor, where they can ask for a lawyer. Mostly they find a lawyer when the case goes to an investigating judge, and when they cannot find a lawyer, the respective investigating judges will appoint one.'*

With regard to **diversion at pretrial stage**, in practice, the prosecutor rarely opts for diversion, a phenomenon even rarer in districts where there is not a specialised public prosecutor for children. Interviewees commented that diversion is not used in a systematic or consistent way, possibly because of the lack of formal diversion programmes or services to which children can be referred, together with a lack of support by child protection services for children in conflict with the law. Prosecutors feel more comfortable referring children to the juvenile probation service knowing that the probation officer will follow up with the child.

CASE STUDY 2: *B, aged 17, who was adopted, met up with his biological siblings and was with them when they stabbed and killed a man at the beginning of 2020. The siblings, who were adults, were convicted of intentional homicide. B was temporarily detained before being seen by a juvenile probation officer and a report being prepared. When the report was prepared, the juvenile probation officer recommended that the child be released on condition that he was monitored by a psychiatrist with whom he had already established a serious and good therapeutic relationship. When the case reached the trial stage, the defence lawyer, with the support of the juvenile probation officer sought an adjournment with the trial postponed until September 2022, more than two and a half years since the offence took place. During this time, B cooperated with the juvenile*

probation officer and the psychiatrist. The probation officer sees the delay as purposeful and achieving the best possible results, as she will be able to tell the court in September 2022 that B's behaviour has been good and 'commensurate with the expectations of society', he has not committed any further offences and has avoided destructive behaviour. In her view 'slowness depending on how it is utilized, can give good results.'

This practice of imposing or agreeing reformative measures between the time of the hearing in front of the investigative judge and the full trial could be termed **'quasi-diversion'**. It is a practice by which reformative measures are introduced almost straight away after the child has been before the investigating judge in order to show that the reformative measures have worked, and reduce the severity of the measures the court might otherwise impose. Delay is encouraged or at least not discouraged to give the child enough time to demonstrate that the measures have worked.

As for **the trial,** delay between the hearing before the investigating judge and the trial is seen by many of the participants in the review as a major problem. While the COVID-19 pandemic has clearly contributed to delays, this has exacerbated rather than created the problem. Interviewees noted that even before COVID-19 a child could wait a year before his or her case came up for trial. The primary cause of delay currently appears to be a lack of juvenile court sitting dates, with some areas having only one juvenile court sitting once a month or even less. While some interviewees indicated that that the requirement for a probation report causes delay, others noted that the probation reports were always available on time. However, there do not appear to be provisions setting timelines for the production of reports, nor is there any detail on how often the system requires the reports to be updated.

With regard to **educational and reformative measures**, nearly every participant interviewed for the assessment commented on their inability to use most of the other measures provided for in Article 122 of the Penal Code due to the lack of services. This, in the view of probation officers, makes it almost impossible to address the underlying causes of offending in the manner they would wish.

Interviewees said *"Unfortunately, where we are, in a small city, we do not have such services* [i.e., child and family support services] *to help us. Our hardest cases are juvenile drug users. Just imagine - in our city, we do not have any services to refer them to. Greece has no supportive services anymore across the whole country."*

The Greek laws relating to **the protection of child victims and witnesses** largely meet international standards. However, as with other aspects of legislation, implementation in practice has been a challenge. The lack of training to specialised personnel and the lack of adequate resources to enable implementation remains a challenge. The so called **"Houses of the Child"** although established by Law 4478/2017 and Ministerial Decision 7320/2019 and provided with administrative independence, are not fully operational. Despite the fact that five (5) Houses of the Child have been formally established in five cities (Athens, Piraeus, Thessaloniki, Patras, Iraklion), only the one in Athens is currently fully operational. The rest do not operate as provided in the law, as appropriate infrastructure, staffing and equipment are missing. Interviewees further explained *"There is no strategy nor anything concrete… there is a need to be consistent and have sustained services. We just don't see the consistency and the resources to enable the Houses of the Child to function: this has to change. This all relates to the need for long-term planning."*

Interviewees commented that although the Houses of the Child were given the power to conduct forensic interviews with child victims and witnesses, this is not an exclusive power, meaning that there is nothing to stop

other bodies also undertaking forensic interviews with the same child. Thus, the most commonly mentioned gap in the system for victims as it currently stands is **the tendency for repeated interviews**. This was recognised by nearly all professionals interviewed for the research, including judges, prosecutors and police, who noted that a child may be interviewed 'as many times as required.' One interviewee recounted a case in which the child had been required to provide 27 or 28 interviews, including formal testimonies, forensic interviews, testimonies to the prosecutor.

Closely linked to the challenge of repeated interviewing is that of **delay**. Interviewees recounted instances where children's cases take up to 10 years to conclude. One professional had come across a case in which a child of 4 years old had disclosed to the mother in 2002 that the father had been sexually abusing her, but the proceedings were not concluded until 2013.

A factor recognised as contributing to both repeated interviewing and delay **is the fragmentation between agencies**, meaning that none of the agencies has a holistic view of a child's case.

Participants from the police expressed concern about **the lack of child friendly interview rooms in the police stations**. One department had on their own initiative, painted the walls in different colours, and bought a sofa, some books and toys, in an attempt to render the space friendlier to child victims. These challenges should be mostly addressed with the introduction of the Houses of the Child, but currently, for instance, the House of the Child in Patras is being housed within the probation service because of the lack of premises.

In Greece, when child abuse is perpetrated within the family, there are two judicial proceedings: one is the penal proceedings for punishment of the perpetrator and the other consists of civil proceedings to assign custody of the child and to consider whether the children should have contact with the perpetrating parent. In both civil and criminal proceedings, a person with a legal interest has to initiate proceedings, highlighting the **lack of a link between the penal and civil system**.

As for **refugee, migrant and Roma children**, participants from every discipline in the justice system (from police to probation officers, lawyers, prosecutors, judges and detention facility staff) expressed the view that there are insufficient interpretation services at all stages of proceedings, meaning that children whose native language is not Greek are not appropriately informed about their status, situation and rights, and find it nearly impossible to understand what is being asked of them.

One practical barrier to **the provision of interpretation services** for refugee, migrant children or Roma children in court is that of delayed payment. One participant had observed court-appointed interpreters repeatedly not being paid for their services and after 1-4 times of this happening, they stopped answering their phone on requests from the court. Where interpreters are available, they are not always familiar with the requisite legal terms (in Greek and the language in question) to interpret proceedings sufficiently to children.

Probation officers explained that there are **no interpretation services to facilitate their meetings with children,** so they rely on interpretation of a co-national instead, raising questions of confidentiality and possibly conflicts of interest, and causing confusion when (as commonly occurs) this informal interpreter does not understand the concepts and terms related to justice proceedings, even in their simplified form.

A further challenge reported by probation officers is that refugee, migrant and Roma children **do not understand**

the letters they receive from the prosecutor referring them to probation service before trial. This is not obligatory but when deciding on the case the Judge will consider whether or not the child has been cooperating with the service pre-trial. In most instances, migrant children do not attend probation pre-trial because they don't receive or understand the letter and there are no formal procedures for following up on referrals.

E. Conclusion and consolidated recommendations

The issues facing the Greek juvenile justice system lie not so much with the content but rather with the enforcement of the legislation. Greece must, as a matter of EU Law, harmonise its legislation with European Directives and it is acknowledged that these can be expensive to implement. There are, however, a number of structural challenges. These include the number of different legal instruments and their complexity; the pace and regularity of changes to the laws, the lack of functioning institutions, services and specialist units for children in contact with the criminal justice system; the lack of sufficient, dedicated, specialist, trained staff working with children in contact with the law across the country within law enforcement, the judiciary, probation and social services; lack of training provision; and the lack of sufficient 'update' training on the contents and implications of the new laws; non-replication of pilot programmes to implement the laws; redeployment of staff rather than the appointment of new, more qualified staff to work with children in contact with the law, without provision of specialist training to qualify them for their new role and a lack of resources, both human and financial.

It is noted that financial stringencies have impacted on the implementation of new, child-friendly laws, but it is also evident that the system lacks coordination and direction. Further there is a lack of evidence on outcomes for children and to what extent the juvenile justice system is effective in preventing further offending and in reintegrating children post offending. There is a need, to undertake further research on the effectiveness of the current delivery of child justice, especially in relation to outcomes for children. Building on that evidence, a detailed strategy should be developed addressing the organisation and coordination of the juvenile justice system, responsibilities of the various bodies involved, plans for the development of services, a time frame for implementation, the human capacity required and costs of the strategy. Ensuring a child-friendly juvenile justice has costs, but the failure to ensure an effective juvenile justice system has greater, long-term costs both for the child and for society at large.

In light of the above, the following actions are recommended to be considered at policy, legislative and operational level, presented below per main thematic area.

Data

* It is recommended that the government review the CRC Committee's requirements for data on children in contact with the law and UNICEF's publication, 'Gauging the Maturity of an Administrative Data System on Justice for Children, in order to help it move towards a 'mature' system of data collection. This in turn will help the government to understand child justice trends and assist it in developing policy and with planning to meet the needs of this group of children.
* Further research should be undertaken to ascertain what proportion of adults who are subject to a custodial sentence were previously juvenile offenders. This will allow policy makers to gain an understanding of the effectiveness of measures imposed on juveniles.

Policy and strategy

* It is strongly recommended that the Government consider developing a child justice policy and a strategy based on the policy to enhance the operation of the child justice system.
* The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends regular evaluation of the juvenile justice system to determine the extent to which it meets its aims and purposes. It is recommended that there should be a five- year cycle of evaluation.

Laws relating to children in conflict with the law

* In order to make the law relating to children in contact with the criminal justice system more accessible, the Ministry of Justice should consider consolidating existng legislation pertaining to juvenile justice in a new Child Justice Law, or at least producing a manual containing all laws relating to children in contact with the criminal law that is freely available both online and printed form.

Juvenile Court

* It is recommended that the Ministry of Justice review the organisation of juvenile court sittings to ensure that there is a court sitting at least once a month to prevent undue delay in hearing children's cases.
* Juvenile courts should ensure that cases are given sufficient time to enable children to participate effectively in their case, recognising that this will require more juvenile court days.

Police

* In order to meet international standards, it is recommended that the Ministry of Citizen Protection should review its current pre-service and in-service training for police officers to ensure that all officers receive basic training on dealing with children in conflict with the law and in managing child victims and witnesses. Training should be provided in accordance with international standards, should be inclusive, use interactive approaches and should be regularly evaluated.
* It is recommended that in order to meet international standards, the Ministry for Citizen Protection should ensure that a Department for the Protection of Minors is set up in every police area and staffed with at least 2 - 3 trained officers.
* Police officers should be evaluated before being selected to work in the Department for the Protection of Minors to assess their capacity to apply an appropriate and child friendly approach.
* The Ministry should ensure that all police officers in the Sub-Directorate for the Protection of Minors have received specialised training before or immediately on their transfer to the Sub-Directorate.
* In the absence of a Department for the Protection of Minors, members of the police force should be selected as suitable to work with children and receive training to enanble them to do so.
* Police officers working with children should be subject to regular supervision and should be provided with support, especially in relation to child abuse cases.

Prosecutors

* Specialist prosecutors should be appointed in each area to take on children's cases. They should receive and complete appropriate training before taking on the role.
* The Public Prosecutors Offices should be supported by multidisciplinary child protection teams under a dedicated social service.
* The National School for Judicial Officials should offer, and prosecutors should receive mandatory training on

handling cases involving children as soon as they are appointed as public prosecutors for minors so that they are prepared to manage such cases.

The judiciary

* It is noted that the principles of 'child friendly' justice have been introduced as part of compulsory training programmes for judges, but clearly it will take some time until all judges handling children's cases complete their four cycles of training. It is recommended that training on child friendly justice should be offered as a priority to all judges hearing children's cases.

Juvenile Probation and Social Welfare Service

* Undertake an in-depth review of the juvenile probation service and devise a strategy for its development (or replacement) for the next 10 years;
* Ensure the training provisions contained in the National Action Plan on Child Rights 2021-2023 are relevant, accessible and fully implemented and ensure that juvenile probation officers are provided with the time to undertake the training offered;
* As part of the review undertake an in-depth evaluation of the work of the probation service including with children and carers who received support from the probation service to determine effectiveness, impact and outcomes of probation support;
* Devise a number of short-term measures to support the probation service to deliver quality services to children while the review is being undertaken including the provision of regular training programmes that probation officers can access.
* Put in place a supervision system for juvenile probation officers as a support mechanism for officers.

Legal Aid

* The government should consider making it mandatory for all children who are the subject of criminal proceedings, however minor, to have access to free legal aid;
* The current procedure for making an application for legal aid and the appointment of a legal aid lawyer to a case should be thoroughly reviewed, with a view to eliminating delay and ensuring a quality service.
* The Bar Associations should review the process for putting names forward for the court 'list' of lawyers willing to take legal aid cases to ensure that those whose names are on the list are prepared to accept such cases and have the skill and experience to do so.
* The Bar Associations should monitor lawyers and firms on the list and consider whether, in the light of refusal to take cases without good reason, their name should be removed from the list.
* Lawyers approached to take a case should respond to the court within 2 working days indicating whether or not they will take on the case.
* The Bar Association, in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice should consider setting standards for defence lawyers representing children
* All lawyers taking on children's legal aid cases should be required to complete a training module to be prepared by the Bar Association on how to communicate with children, how to encourage participation and how to provide appropriate standards of service to children.
* The Ministry of Justice should review the payment of legal aid lawyers to ensure that incidental costs, such as photocopying and travel to court are covered and repaid.

Rights of the child at the police station

* Ensure that before a child is questioned at the police station either a parent or, where the parent is not available, an appropriate adult is present. This may require the organisation at local level of an 'appropriate adult' scheme.
* The National Action Plan for the Rights of the Child 2021-2023 provides for a national, free of charge, 24/7 telephone number, that can be called from either a mobile or landline to provide information on child-friendly justice. The date for establishment of the line was January 2022.
* Police should ensure that there are posters and leaflets advertising the phone number and should permit, encourage and enable children (and their parents) to call the number so they are fully informed of their rights prior to any questioning.
* Children should also be provided with age appropriate, and language appropriate leaflets explaining their rights while at the police station. As mentioned above, the use and dissemination of the child friendly guide including child rights information for children that come in contact with police authorities as developed by the Greek Deputy Ombudswoman for Children's Right, the Association of Juvenile Probation Officers and UNICEF Greece Country Office is an initial step towards this direction.

Rights of the child during the pre-trial process

* Greater focus should be placed on pre-trial diversion. Training should be offered to prosecutors on the advantages of diversion as an alternative to judicial proceedings with greater cooperation between prosecutors and juvenile probation officers.
* It would also be beneficial, bearing in mind the criteria contained in General Comment No. 24 on pre-trial diversion, to issue guidelines covering the use of pre-trial diversion and introduce pilot diversion projects with the aim of aiding the reintegration of children, the reduction of re-offending and reducing delay in dealing with children's cases.
* Consideration should be given to permitting an investigating judge to require the prosecutor to provide reasons for not diverting a child and power to refer a child's case back to the prosecutor to consider whether diversion would be appropriate.
* Consider raising the age of pre-trial detention to 16 in line with the recommendation contained in the CRC Committee's General Comment No. 24.
* Introduce regular two-week reviews of pre-trial detention in accordance with the recommendations of CRC Committee General Comment No. 24.

The trial process

* The major issue to be addressed is the delay between the commission of the offence and the conclusion of proceedings. This is a matter for the administration of justice. It is recommended that time limits should be imposed for each stage of the proceedings, and tighter case management procedures introduced.
* It is also recommended that the Ministry of Justice issue guidelines on time-limits for the production of juvenile probation reports, the required content of the report, and how often reports may be requested or should be updated.

Educational and reformatory measures

* Effective and successful implementation of non-custodial measures requires staff numbers in the juvenile probation service to be increased and a need for financial and human investment in programmes and services that are shown by research to reduce offending by children.
* The National Action Plan on the Rights of the Child post- 2023 should provide for the development of a greater

number of community-based services across the country for children in conflict with the law.

* Consider establishing new 'mediator' posts within the juvenile probation service or commission such services from local organisations, to ensure the availability of well-qualified and experienced, independent mediators.

Use of child detention

* In accordance with the UN Committee on the Rights of the child, the Greek State should ensure that detention, including pre-trial detention, is used only as a measure of last resort and with due consideration for the seriousness of the crime, and that greater efforts are made to provide alternatives to detention. The minimum standards for child detention should be met and actions and programmes to address offending by children and allow for their social reintegration should be promoted to reduce recidivism.

Child victims and witnesses

* Law 4478/2017 on the protection of victims is still not fully implemented. No specialised victim support services are in place, there is no proper coordination amongst the actors involved, and there is a lack of systematic training. A first step in improving the protection of child victims and witnesses would be to implement Law 4478/2017 fully.
* There needs to be a clear decision from the Ministry of Justice as to which body has responsibility for conducting forensic interviews of child victims and witnesses.
* It is recommended that the current Protocol on forensic interviews of child victims and witnesses is reviewed to ensure that such interviews are undertaken by law enforcement personnel who have received specialist training on the forensic interviewing of child victims, in the presence of either a child psychologist or social worker.
* To ensure confidentiality and privacy, written statements and audio and visual records of forensic interviews should not be saved on general servers or on computers other than those used exclusively by the Houses of the Child. The Ministry of Justice should ensure that a separate, secure server is available in each region / area to hold forensic interview data, accessible only by designated persons. All testimony from a child victim or witness, whether written or audio or visual should be kept on a secure server used only for the purpose of holding evidence. The police and the prosecutor should be instructed to keep a 'chain of custody' record.
* Houses of the Child should either employ staff from a multi-disciplinary background, or be able to call on a multi-disciplinary group to discuss the support required for individual child victims both during the investigation and trial stage and thereafter. The House of the Child should coordinate the multi-disciplinary group.
* Child protection services appear to be largely missing from the Houses of the Child but play an integral part in supporting and safeguarding a child victim or witness. They should form part of the multi-disciplinary group and play an active role.

Specific challenges faced by migrant children

* Financial support should continue to be made available for translation of information material on children's rights in the criminal justice system, and the procedure that will be followed during a criminal investigation into a range of languages.
* All children should have access to an interpreter at all stages of criminal proceedings when they do not speak or understand Greek. The Ministry of Justice should increase the accessibility of interpretation services, using innovative methods, such as online interpretation where interpreters are not available.

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