

## Protecting children in migration in the EU:

- > Towards the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum implementation
  - > Strategically litigating (alternatives to) immigration of migrant children
- Final event of the RELEASE Project

### Online (Teams)

12 February 2026, 11:00-12:15

[Registration link](#)

As of 12 June 2026, the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum will enter into application in EU Member States. Some of the EU Pact instruments may worsen the human rights situation of children, including more systematic detention of migrant children and related human rights violations.

Detention of children for the purposes of immigration has severe consequences for children, affecting their psychosocial development and well-being, interrupting their education, and exposing them to heightened risks of trafficking, exploitation, and abuse. Children should never be detained, and States must instead develop and implement rights-based alternatives to detention for children while their status is pending or are awaiting deportation.

The event will explore the implications of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum for both unaccompanied and accompanied children, and present a guide exploring how strategic litigation can be used to protect migrant children from detention in EU Member States. This event aims to strengthen advocacy, litigation, and collaboration among practitioners, policymakers, and civil society representatives committed to protecting the rights of migrant children. Discussion will focus on the role of EU institutions, Member States, and legal professionals in ending the immigration detention of children.

### AGENDA

#### 11:00-11:10 WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

*Karolína Babická, Senior Legal Adviser, International Commission of Jurists (ICJ)*

*Tineke Strik, Member of the European Parliament, Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance (TBC)*

#### 11:10-11:45 RISKS OF CHILD IMMIGRATION DETENTION UNDER THE EU PACT ON MIGRATION AND ASYLUM

11:10-11:45 **Application of the asylum border procedure to unaccompanied children**

> [Never in the best interests](#) – ICJ paper on detention under the EU Pact, brief overview

> [Analysis of Article 53\(1\) of the Asylum Procedures Regulation](#) – ICJ, Save the Children and Kids in Need of Defense joint legal opinion

> Panel discussion

*Karolína Babická, ICJ*

*Federica Toscano, Senior Advocacy Advisor, Save the Children*

*Isabela Atanasiu, Legal Officer, DG HOME, European Commission*

*Moderator: Laura Duchamp, Legal Researcher, ICJ*

#### 11:45-12:15 STRATEGIC LITIGATION AND COMMUNICATION TO END IMMIGRATION DETENTION OF CHILDREN

11:45-12:05 **Using strategic litigation to end immigration detention of children**

> Video – Interview of a human right lawyer

> [Guide on strategic litigation for lawyers and CSOs: Strategies to end immigration detention of children through international remedies](#) – ICJ Guide, brief overview

> [Case-law database](#)

*Defence for Children International–Belgium (TBC)*

*Laura Duchamp, ICJ*

Alexandros Konstantinou, Attorney at Law, Greek Council for Refugees  
Ewa Ostaszewska-Żuk, Attorney, Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights

12:05-12:15 **Developing child-friendly materials**

> [Videos](#) for children in detention or at risk of detention in Bulgaria

> [Leaflets](#) for children in detention center in the Czech Republic

Valeria Ilareva, Chairperson, Lawyer, Foundation for Access to Rights

Alexandra Matiaško, Lawyer, Forum for Human Rights

Moderator: ICJ/aditus (TBC)

**12:15 Closing**

*Building on [existing work](#), the [RELEASE Project](#) (Protecting Migrant Children against Detention through the EU Charter) promotes the expansion and implementation of viable, rights-based alternatives to detention for *migrant children at risk of being subjected to unlawful detention or whose rights may be violated in alternatives to detention*. Over two years, the Partners—ICJ, Aditus Foundation, DCI-Belgium, Forum for Human Rights, Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Greek Council for Refugees, Foundation for Access to Rights—contributed to fostering a favorable EU environment to protect migrant children from detention in Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Malta, and, Poland. The project facilitated exchanges focusing on litigation venues and strategies, including before the [CJEU](#), the [UN Treaty Bodies](#), the European Committee of Social Rights ([ECSR](#)), and the European Court of Human Rights ([ECtHR](#)). This final event presents some of the project's findings, allowing exchanges and exploring future needs and ways forward to the end detention of migrant children.*



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