

[UN-backed roadmap shows how to improve situation of separated refugee children in Europe](#)

10 July 2017 – United Nations agencies today issued a set of recommendations for action to improve the situation of refugee and migrant children arriving and staying in Europe without their parents or caregivers.

The [Way Forward](#), put together by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), the UN Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)), and their partner, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), highlights the need to identify children, register them through child-friendly procedures, and build a relationship of trust with them as early as possible.

Refugee and migrant children travelling alone to Europe have taken paths marked by danger, bureaucratic backlogs and uncertainty at every step of the way – even at their destination, said David McLoughlin, UNICEF's Deputy Director for Europe and Central Asia, in a [joint press release](#).

This roadmap plots the way forward for these children to be given the same level of care, trust and protection as national children.

The document provides recommendations developed in a broad consultative process led by the three organizations, with input from 100 practitioners, including guardians, psychologists, social workers and lawyers, as well as relevant authorities from several European states and the European Union, and refugee and migrant children across the continent.

The findings show that although a solid legal framework for child protection exists in many countries, complex, costly, and bureaucratic procedures have meant that all too often the best interests of unaccompanied and separated children are not taken into account, resulting in severe consequences for their well-being and their future.

Ensuring that a well-trained guardian takes immediate responsibility for the child, engaging cultural mediators, and mobilizing members of host communities are critical measures that can help build a trusting relationship and protect children from smugglers, traffickers or family pressure.

Efficient and harmonized processes would help children understand procedures and access protection and solutions in accordance with their best interests, as outlined in the roadmap.

The situation for unaccompanied and separated refugee and migrant children has worsened since the increase of arrivals to Europe back in 2015, with a broadened use of detention and large scale institutional care, limited family reunification opportunities, and rising concerns over deportations.

They deserve better protection and care from Europe... The roadmap shows us how," said Diane Goodman, Deputy Director of UNHCR's Europe Bureau.