

Protect children on the move



Research Report:
**Transnational Research on Central
and South Eastern European
Migrant Children in Greece**



Title: Transnational Research on Central and South Eastern European Children in Greece

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RESEARCH REPORT

TRANSNATIONAL RESEARCH ON CENTRAL AND SOUTH EASTERN EUROPEAN MIGRANT CHILDREN IN GREECE

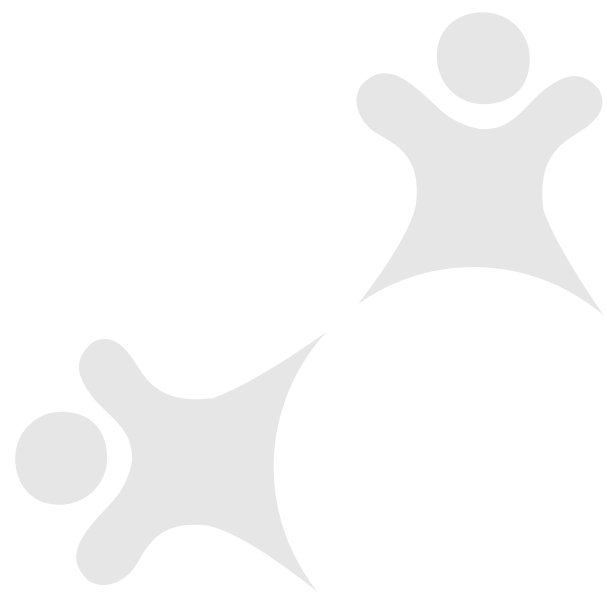


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Acronyms

ARSIS	Association for the Social Support of Youth
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
C/SEE	Central and South East Europe
EU	European Union
EKKA	National Centre for Social Solidarity
GCR	Greek Council for Refugees
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ILO	International Labour Organisation
KESATHEA	Central Scientific Council for the Prevention of and Response to Victimization and Criminality of Juveniles
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OPSC	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography
Trafficking Protocol	United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children
Tdh	Terre des Hommes
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Acknowledgements

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Children on the move (including *inter alia* accompanied and unaccompanied migrant children, refugee children, displaced children and trafficked children) face high risks of poverty, exploitation, social exclusion and violence and of ending up in conflict with the law. There is no doubt that children on the move are one of the most vulnerable groups in Europe today.

Greece started receiving large flows of immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe in the late 80s. Over the last few years, the country has also become a major European entry point for undocumented migrants and asylum seekers from Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Despite a fairly comprehensive national legal and policy framework, legislation and practice is predominantly designed to respond to the needs of third country unaccompanied foreign minors and children victims of trafficking. More often than not, legislation and practice do not accommodate the needs of accompanied children on the move or their families, including accompanied children from within the EU.

This report is part of a wider initiative which seeks to identify migration patterns and vulnerability factors that put children on the move from and within Central and South East Europe (C/SEE) at risk. In Greece, the research focused on Albanian, Romanian and Bulgarian children carrying out economic activities on the streets of Athens and Thessaloniki. The methodology used included a literature review, direct outreach to these children and their caregivers for observations and interviews with Government and civil society stakeholders.

Albanian, Bulgarian and Romanian children working on the streets in Greece appear to be migrating with their families for economic reasons and are mostly begging, selling small items, playing music and collecting scrap metal. There is a higher percentage of girls than boys amongst this population. In general, these are vulnerable families who migrate with their children and engage in street work as a survival strategy. Nevertheless, during the course of the research, a few suspected cases of trafficking by organized networks did arise.

2 main groups of children on the move who engaged in economic activities on the streets emerged:

- Children who spend the very large majority of their time living and working in Greece, and who return to their country of origin occasionally for short periods. These children were found to be mostly Albanian.
- Children who spend more limited periods of time in Greece (usually several months) and travel to different cities and countries depending on economic opportunities. These children were found to be mostly Bulgarian (in greater numbers in Thessaloniki) and Romanian (in greater numbers in Athens).

Children of all three origins interviewed were all living with their families in rented rooms or apartments and in most situations accompanied by adults or other older children from

their family while working. None of the children were found to be living on the streets. Children identified in Athens appeared to be more concerned by their personal safety than those identified in Thessaloniki. Furthermore, their isolation from government or NGO services makes them more vulnerable than children in Thessaloniki. Many, particularly among children of Albanian origin, who were born in Greece, consider Greece to be their home.

Although current policies appear to be inadequate because of the lack of recognition of migration patterns and the absence of transnational collaboration, **it is feasible and essential for governments and NGOs to provide services to mitigate the negative impact** migration can have on Albanian, Romanian and Bulgarian children. The sooner this is done the better as such movements are likely to develop in the future.

The main recommendations presented in the report include adopting a holistic child and family centred approach and developing policies and projects on regional levels that include mobile, child-friendly and reactive services. Services should include prevention programmes both in origin and destination countries, which link children and families to existing services and support their integration into society, notably schools and the labour market. Not only will these services be beneficial to children, their families, communities and society as a whole, but the very provision of services will enable more information to be collected on the ever changing situation of mobile populations. The services themselves will also benefit from the experience and opinion of children and families on the move and thus be able to respond to their changing needs whilst also serving as preventative interventions to ensure their full protection.

The development of a European case management system (with a cultural sensitivity towards the Romani culture but with no clear focus on them) able to track children on the move and their families, to assess situations and to provide support in a coordinated manner in different locations has also become a must, with a responsible authority appointed in each country.

2. INTRODUCTION

This report is part of a wider initiative, the **Mario Project**, which seeks to identify migration patterns and vulnerability factors that put children on the move from and within Central and South East Europe (C/SEE) at risk at the same time as analysing the adequacy and effectiveness of available responses provided by authorities in countries of origin and destination. The Mario Project builds on a solid partnership established in 2009 when major child protection NGOs in Europe joined forces to provide more effective intervention and advocacy for C/SEE migrant children at risk of exploitation and trafficking. The project seeks – through transnational outreach research, advocacy, trainings and direct support to professionals and empowerment of C/SEE at-risk migrant children – to find multilateral solutions to the problems that children face prior, during or after migration and that require coordinated protection schemes for individual children.

It is within this framework that the Mario project partners initiated a series of research projects looking into the situation of C/SEE migrant children carrying out economic activities on the streets of major urban areas in six countries (Belgium, Italy, Greece, the Netherlands, Kosovo and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). An initial mapping conducted by Mario project partners in the destination countries confirmed the presence of Romanian and Bulgarian children on the streets of certain cities in Belgium, Greece, Italy and the Netherlands as well as Albanian children in Greece, Kosovo and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The main objectives of the research are:

- To identify emerging C/SEE children's migration patterns.
- To offer an in-depth understanding of the vulnerability factors that affect C/SEE migrant children during their migration path and once they have settled in.
- To analyse the adequacy and effectiveness of government responses to the protection needs of C/SEE migrant children.
- To support Mario partners' advocacy efforts with evidence-based recommendations on the improvement of the transnational protection of C/SEE migrant children.

This report is therefore one of several reports in different countries across Europe. This report focuses on Greece and in particular on the situation of children on the move conducting economic activities on the streets of Thessaloniki and Athens, the two largest cities in the country. The report is a synthesis of the findings from a desk based review, outreach work with children, their caregivers and key community observers and consultations with stakeholders conducted during the period May-August 2014.

Greece is classified as a wealthy country, ranking 29th out of 187 countries on the Human Development Index. In comparison, Albania ranks 95th, while Bulgaria and Romania respectively rank 58th and 54th on the same index. It is because of this and its central location between Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East that Greece is one of the most important transit and destination countries for migrants to Western Europe, with, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), around 8.9% of the total 11.1 million inhabitants composed of regular migrants residing in the country.

The scale and patterns of **migration** flows to and within Europe have varied greatly over time and between different European countries. With economic, social and political

2. INTRODUCTION

development in Greece and elsewhere come changes in migration patterns from both origin and destination countries. The collapse of regimes in the formerly communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe in 1989 helped transform what was at one time sporadic **immigration** to Greece into a constant flow. As a result, a large number of immigrants from Greece's neighbouring countries, mainly Albania, Bulgaria and Romania, arrived in Greece in the 1990s, mostly as illegal immigrants seeking employment – despite the country being one of the less-developed nations in Europe at that time. Over the last few years, irregular migration to Greece has evolved and seen a rapid increase. Tough immigration policies in Spain and Italy and agreements with their neighbouring African countries to combat irregular migration have changed the direction of African migration flows towards Greece. At the same time, flows from Asia and the Middle East – mainly Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Bangladesh – to Greece also appear to have increased. Evidence now points to the fact that the vast majority of illegal immigration to the European Union flows through the country's porous borders. In 2010, 90% of all apprehensions for unauthorized entry into the European Union took place in Greece, compared to 75 percent in 2009 and 50 percent in 2008¹.

In terms of numbers, **Albanians** form the largest foreign community residing in Greece. They are estimated to represent between 60–65% of the total number of immigrants in Greece, while **Bulgarians** represent about 10% and **Romanians** approximately 3% of the total number of immigrants in Greece.

Based on a 2008 research report aimed at recording the geographical disbursement of **Roma communities** in Greece, the total population reached around 12,000 families or 50,000 individuals, indicating an 8–10% increase compared to the previous decade. The largest populations (over 1,000 families) were found to be located in 4 regions: East Macedonia / Thrace, Thessaly, Western Greece and Central Macedonia.²

Since the start of the **Greek debt crisis** in 2009, incomes have fallen and unemployment has risen. The draconian austerity measures that have consequently been introduced have put enormous pressure on health, social and education services.

This situation has inevitably had a significant **impact on children and families, especially on those most vulnerable**. Increasingly, parents are seeking support from NGOs (material support, allowances, repayment of debts, counselling, employment support and legal representation) in order to support their families. In the most extreme cases, they have resorted to leaving their babies and/or children temporarily in an institution or NGO structure, during particularly harsh times when they cannot provide for them. This is evidenced by the high number of abandoned babies in Athens' Alexandra Hospital.³

Another indirect consequence of the crisis has been a rise in xenophobic feeling with the extremist right wing political party 'Golden Dawn' gaining widespread popular support – providing social support programs including the distribution of clothes and food to Greek nationals only. In Athens, child migrants face the risk of being exposed to a worrying increase in racially motivated attacks. In December 2011 and January 2012, Human Rights Watch interviewed migrants as well as asylum seekers, including 4 children, who

1 <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/greece-illegal-immigration-midst-crisis> – as consulted on 28 August 2014

2 IMPACT Report: Improving and Monitoring Protection Systems Against Child Trafficking, National Report Greece – Defence for Children International, 2014, Page 28

3 Ibid, Page 121

spoke of the existence of virtual 'no go areas' in Athens especially after dark due to the fear of attacks.⁴

There is no hard data regarding **child labour** in Greece as in most cases it concerns undocumented work, so estimates are based on information compiled from different sources. The European statistics authority, Eurostat, reports that 11.4% of the student population dropped out of school in 2012, meaning that some 70,000 children left secondary school before completing their education. According to UNICEF in Greece, "it is estimated that around 70% of children that drop-out of school do so in order to work. In view of this, estimates of between 70,000–100,000 child labourers throughout the country seem highly likely".⁵

Greece is mostly a transit and destination country for **human trafficking**. Victims are transported to Greece and through Greece towards Italy and other EU countries. In 2012, the government prosecuted 177 defendants for human trafficking, a decrease from 220 in 2011 and 246 in 2010⁶. The scale of child trafficking remains unknown although cases of trafficked children from the Balkans are reported⁷. Research conducted by the NGO ARSIS showed a lower incidence of child trafficking for the purposes of exploitation through begging by third parties among Albanian children after 2004, with a higher proportion after that year of children accompanied and/or exploited by their own parents, who were usually unemployed⁸.

Unaccompanied children from third countries are counted and usually receive services, as is the case for children that are trafficked. Estimates also exist for children involved in labour, notably hazardous labour and those that drop out of school. But children who are not trafficked, do not come from a third country, or are not counted under child labour statistics are **invisible** if they do not come into contact with services or authorities for one reason or another. This is particularly true for children from within the EU or from countries with historical migration patterns to Greece who frequently fall in the gaps between these categories and the cracks in the architecture of legal and social protection. Moreover, due to their 'irregular' and often invisible status in destination countries, they and their families face higher risks of poverty, exploitation, social exclusion and violence and of ending up in conflict with the law. There is no doubt that irregular migrant children and their families are one of the most vulnerable groups in Europe today. They are vulnerable not only because they are children, but also because they are migrants and more importantly because they are or their families are 'irregular' migrants⁹.

4 IMPACT Report: Improving and Monitoring Protection Systems Against Child Trafficking, National Report Greece – Defence for Children International – 2014 – Page 29

5 In an interview to ekathimerini.com on 01 July 2013 – as consulted on 28 august 2014 on http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/_w_articles_wsite6_1_01/07/2013_506822

6 2013 Trafficking In Persons Report, US Department of State, Page 181

7 Ibid, Page 180

8 *Report for the Study on typology and Policy responses to Child Begging in the EU*, EC, 2013, Page 171

9 PICUM, Children first and foremost. A guide to realizing the rights of children and families in an irregular migration situation, EC, 2013, Page 5.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Definitions

For the purposes of the Mario 'Protect children on the move' project, the following definitions will apply.

A **child** is a person under the age of 18 years.

A "**child on the move**" shall be understood as including the following categories of children:

- migrant children (internal or across borders; regular or irregular; accompanied or not, EU or non-EU)
- asylum seeking and refugee children
- internally displaced children or children outside a protective environment.
- trafficked children. A trafficked child is defined in accordance with the definition provided by Article 3 of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in persons which defines trafficking in persons as "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs." Furthermore, Article 3, paragraph (c) states that "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered "trafficking in persons" even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article".

The child should already have moved, may also be a returned migrant, is moving or/and is susceptible to impending migration.

The present research focuses exclusively on Albanian, Bulgarian and Romanian children on the move who are carrying out economic activities on the streets or accompanying a person carrying out economic activities on the streets. Economic activities include any activity where the child is receiving money or items in exchange for services or through begging.

Street Outreach is, for the present research, defined as the process of engaging with children on the move, their caregivers as well as the wider community in public locations (on the streets but also in other public locations) at times and locations where they are most easily accessible.

A **caregiver** is someone taking responsibility for a child (whether legally or not) and for the purposes of this report, in most cases, is synonymous with a parent.

3.2. Guiding Principles and ethical considerations

The consultants ensured **child protection procedures** were in place as per the Tdh Child protection policy. At a minimum, every social worker confirmed having read, understood and signed the Code of Conduct of the organisation he/she is working for. If such a policy did not exist the person read, signed and committed to complying with the Tdh Code of Conduct. All social workers were briefed on reaction and reporting protocols and in their implementation.

In line with the UNCRC and the Tdh Child Protection Policy, research teams were asked to pay particular attention to using a **child-friendly and non-judgmental approach**, ensuring maximum child participation during street outreach, parties and analysis of findings/recommendations of research, reporting suspected cases of abuse/exploitation (as per the reaction protocol agreed on the first day), performing interviews and group discussions on a strictly voluntary and informed basis, ensuring confidentiality of information provided by children, youth and caregivers and being responsive and adapting to the various changes in the local environment/context. Research team members were asked to ensure that **the best interests of the child remained of paramount importance throughout the entire research process**.

Confidentiality and anonymity of information collected during the research has been ensured and all children and caregivers were informed of this before full interviews took place. Children and parents/caregivers were asked to select a favourite colour and name of someone famous or someone that was important to them that the researchers would use as a 'code' under which their information was recorded. The setting of these codes in itself acted a conversation opener and icebreaker, making the rest of the conversation more light-hearted and less formal. Efforts have been made to ensure that any data collected on hard or soft copies is stored as safely as possible.

No audio recordings were made and no photos of children were taken. A few pictures of their surroundings and equipment for economic activities were taken with their permission and have been included in the report to give the reader a better picture of conditions in which the children live and work.

3.3. Desk research

Desk research was carried out primarily by the Mario implementing partner in Greece, ARSIS, together with the consultants assigned to the research. Desk research included:

- Documentation in English and in other languages on children on the move and related issues (street children, trafficking in persons, child labour, etc.)
- Documentation in English and in other relevant languages on existing child protection systems and services.

Documentation included published documents but also internal reports from member organisations of the Mario project (please see bibliography in **Appendix A** for full details).

3.4. Outreach methodology

The research methodology used builds upon the **Mario Project Methodological Guidelines for Research and Child Consultation** developed in 2013 by Dr. Brian Milne on behalf of the Mario Project. The existing guidelines were adapted primarily due to time constraints and lack of pre-existing children's boards.

The research took place in two very different cities where social workers had varying degrees of existing contact with the target children. The methodology and tools were adapted to the different environments in which the research teams worked but any significant changes were made in collaboration with the consultants during the first few days of outreach activities. From the outset, it was understood that some aspects of the methodology might not be applicable in both cities.

This research report is part of a series of transnational researches that have been undertaken in Greece, Italy, Kosovo and the Netherlands. The methodology was drawn up collectively by researchers in the different countries. The first research took place in Greece and it was here that the tools were piloted and refined. For instance, the data collection system was adapted following field research in the first city, Thessaloniki. One question – part of the full interview schedule for children (asking children when did they first come to this city) – was initially not part of the schedule in Thessaloniki but was subsequently included in the schedule for Athens.

Outreach was conducted over a 7-day period in Athens and 6 days in Thessaloniki. The first day in Thessaloniki was predominantly for training and briefing of the research team on the logic of the proposed methodology, providing an opportunity to discuss any potential issues and challenges that might arise through its implementation (including cultural aspects and local customs). This time was also used to ensure that guidelines for observation visits, interviews and group discussions were understood and agreed upon. The research team was also trained on child-friendly communication skills and on how to use the tools.

Outreach included **observations** of the target group, as well as snapshot interviews and full interviews with target children, their caregivers and key community observers. Outreach took place on the streets and in other public places (metro, train stations, parks, etc.). It also included visits to the places where children lived. The research team conducted **interviews** in four places of residence in Thessaloniki and in the courtyard of one family house in Athens. Observations, snapshot interviews and full interviews took place during the same outreach sessions – the choice of tool depending on the opportunities that arose from interactions with the children. **Parties** were also planned as a way to get to know the children better and to have the opportunity to conduct **open group discussions** on various aspects of the children's lives in an environment where they (and their parents or caregivers if they wanted to attend) felt at ease. Parties were planned to include fun activities for the children (games, magazines, music, dancing, snacks), also giving them a break from street life. In Athens, one party took place in Thisio with fifteen children attending. The children found some of the activities proposed quite challenging, especially the use of drawings (e.g. "River of Life", "city mapping" or "flower of friends") as a discussion method. Nevertheless, the team believes the activity was fun for the children and beneficial for the research. In Thessaloniki, one party took place during a mobile school session held by ARSIS that was specifically organised for this purpose – though only four children attended. During this party one of the mothers stormed in, very angry and shouting at the team and children about her

3. METHODOLOGY

children participating. Once the team had explained the circumstances she calmed down and even stayed to speak with the research team and to watch the children participate in activities with the team.

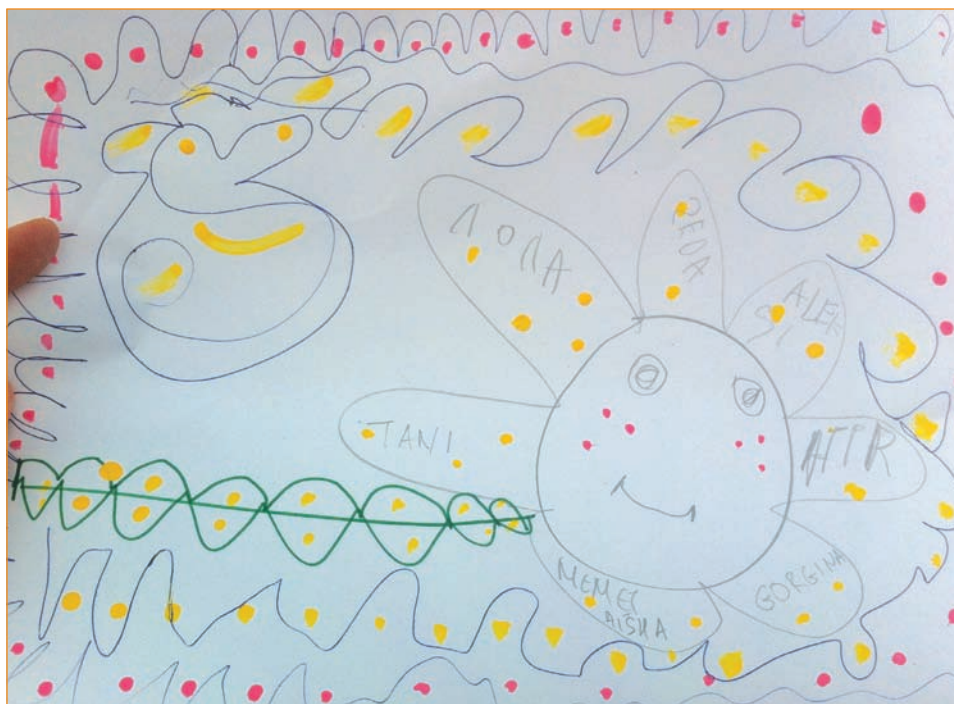


Photo 1: 'Flower of Friends' activity

An activity framework presenting activities and corresponding guidelines and tools was developed as a common frame of reference for the research teams (see **appendix D**). The guidelines and research tools referred to in the framework can be found in **appendix E**.

Timings of outreach sessions varied depending on the expected working hours of children on the move and from recommendations given by conversations with stakeholders and key community informants. Research team members were extremely flexible and worked very hard during outreach sessions. In Athens, outreach sessions varied starting sometimes at 10am and ending in the evening at 8:30pm (with coffee and lunch breaks in between), sometimes starting later around 11am and finishing at 12:30pm or later (one evening the team worked as late as 1:30am) depending on which areas were being visited (if the team were conducting outreach in the evening or night-time, they took longer breaks in the afternoon before returning to the streets). In Thessaloniki, outreach started at 9 or 10am or sometimes later (if the team were going to stay out late), ending anytime between 8pm and 1am in the morning.

Observation of children

Before trying to engage with children that were working on the streets, in most cases, the research team observed them from a distance so as to understand what they were doing and to get an idea of their relationship with their caregivers as well as with the public around them. It was only after this initial observation that the research team then greeted the children and their caregivers in order to gather more information from them.

In the majority of encounters (seventy six out of one hundred and thirty seven), the research team was not able to interact further with the target children and their caregivers

because they were busy working and did not wish to be distracted. The information that was collected through observations and interactions with the children and their caregivers included:

- Country of origin: which was defined based on the language spoken
- Gender: which was defined based on the appearance. In case of young infants, this was based on the information provided by the caregiver
- Approximate age: the team used three age brackets: 0 to 5 years old, 6 to 12 years old and 13 to 17 years old
- The work that the child was undertaking at the time of observation

Any child for whom these four pieces of information could be collected was considered as “identified”.

Child protection procedures:

All members of the research team were familiar with either Tdh's or Save the Children's child protection procedures. The research team agreed during the preparation day in Thessaloniki that the ARSIS social workers would be manage situations where children were found to be in need of immediate protection since they were knowledgeable of local mechanisms and services.

Interviews with Children

Interviews were conducted with a total of **sixty-one children** (female = thirty-nine). In thirty-two cases they were snapshot interviews that are very informal and only lasted for a couple minutes. These were not the same children with whom full interviews were conducted.

In twenty-nine cases, full interviews were conducted following a more detailed and structured set of questions. For full interviews, children interviewed ranged from 6 to 17 years of age. Nineteen females and ten males were interviewed. Twenty-one children were of Albanian origin (fourteen female and seven male), six of Bulgarian origin (four female and two male) and two of Romanian origin (one female and one male).

Interviews with Parents/Caregivers

Twelve interviews took place with parents or children’s caregivers (five of Albanian origin, one of Bulgarian origin, six of Romanian origin). All of these interviews were full interviews. All were conducted with female caregivers, six in Athens and six in Thessaloniki. Their ages ranged from 25 to 45 years old.

Interviews with key community observers

Twenty-one short interviews were conducted with key community observers (more conversations were had but they were not all recorded). In Athens, this included four men and two women and in Thessaloniki, seven men and eight women. Key community observers included waiters, fruit sellers, hairdressers, supermarket cashiers, people sitting in cafes and a lady in bakery among others.

Interviews with stakeholders

Interviews with stakeholders involved in child protection services (either government or civil society) were managed by the Mario Project Coordinator in Greece within the NGO ARSIS. It was hoped that these would take place before street outreach began so that stakeholders could provide advice on where best to observe and meet the children. Unfortunately, because of limited time, this was not possible and interviews took place primarily once the street outreach had been completed (see **appendix E, tool 4**, for full questionnaire with stakeholders). One interview took place on the phone, four interviews took place through the use of a written questionnaire and one interview took place through a written questionnaire and a phone call. Stakeholders were asked a series of twenty-two questions about the services they provide and their thoughts and opinions on topics concerning children on the move. A total of eight stakeholders were interviewed, three in Athens and five in Thessaloniki. Not all stakeholders answered all questions so quantitative analysis of their answers is not possible.

Table of interviews conducted

City	Children Full interviews		Children Snapshot interviews		Parents/ Caregivers Full Interviews		Parents/ Caregivers Snapshot interviews		Key Community Observers		StakeHolders		Totals
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Athens	4	7	12	9	0	6	0	0	4	2	3	0	Athens: 47
Thessaloniki	6	12	0	11	0	6	0	0	7	8	1	4	Thessaloniki: 55
	10	19	12	20	0	12	0	0	11	10	4	4	M: 37 F: 65
Total	29		32		12		0		21		8		102

3.5. Knowledge Management system

Qualitative and quantitative information gathered during interviews and interactions with key stakeholders, children, caregivers and key informants was managed in a variety of ways.

For children, an observation and snapshot interview grid was filled in on an on-going basis by research team members. Each team had a printed copy of the grid which was filed in during the day and compiled into a spreadsheet at the end of the day. At the end of the research period, the consultants compiled all grids into a single document. Guiding questions for snapshot interviews were memorized by team members but also available on their notebooks. Care was taken not to write down too much information in front of the children so as not to put them off. Instead, information was input into grids once the interaction had finished. If children agreed to a full interview, researchers used printed questionnaires to record information by hand. Questionnaires were stuck inside child-friendly notebooks so not to put the children off. The information recorded in these questionnaires was transferred to a spreadsheet at the end of each day.

As above with children, guiding questions for snapshot interviews with **parents and caregivers** were memorized by team members but also available on the grid. Care was taken not to write down too much information in front of the parents/caregivers. Instead, information was input into grids once the interaction had finished. If parents/caregivers agreed to a longer interview (full interview), researchers used printed questionnaires to record information by hand. The information contained in these questionnaires was transferred to a spreadsheet at the end of each day.

For key community informants, notes were taken either in handwritten form or directly onto spreadsheets for short interviews with key community informants. The information was transferred to a spreadsheet at the end of each day.

At the end of each day of outreach, the research team shared feedback on methodology, lessons learnt, and other issues that came up during the day. Team leaders were responsible for entering this information into **research diaries** – in the form of a basic online google doc.

For **stakeholder interviews**, hand written or typed notes were kept and in some instances audio recordings were made too. In the event that the stakeholder was not available or preferred to write down the answers, he or she was asked to fill in the question electronically and return via email.

3.6. Challenges and limitations

Given the limited time period allocated to the research, research teams had limited time to provide feedback on the methodology and tools designed by the consultants (they only had two days over a weekend). Furthermore, there was not enough time to test the methodology and tools with the target groups and necessary changes had to be made on an ad hoc basis.

Another result of time limitations and the fact that the research was mostly undertaken during the busy summer holiday period was that only eight stakeholders (including two staff members from the partner organisation ARSIS) were interviewed.

Furthermore, given the size of the city of Athens, the research team did not have enough time to cover the whole city including its outskirts, instead focusing on central Athens, Pirea and Glyfada only.

Furthermore, although part of the original methodology, given the timing of the write-up of this research which coincided with the busy August holiday period, it was unrealistic to organise a feedback session with stakeholders to get their input on the research findings and recommendations.

Safety of the research team and of the children and communities involved in the research also played its part in limiting the scope of the research: in certain areas of the cities the research team did not feel at ease to conduct longer outreach sessions and spend time talking with the children. If on-going outreach services are provided to all children on the move throughout Europe (see recommendations), this issue of data collection will be easily solved and children who are at risk of exploitation and trafficking will be identified much earlier.

3. METHODOLOGY

Child participation in the research was limited. The research team did try to identify children from the target group who could participate in research activities but this was not deemed possible due to the children's existing commitments and work schedule.

Several quotes from Children are included in this report. Given that they were expressing themselves in a variety of different languages (Greek, Romanian, Albanian, Bulgarian), the quotes have been translated from these languages into English. Furthermore, during informal discussions with the children, the research team did not always take notes in order to ensure that the children felt comfortable and were not inhibited to talk to the team. Notes were made by the research team after their interaction with the children had ended.

With the understanding that stakeholder opinions may be subjective (hereby meaning children, parents/caregivers, key community informants, other civil society and government stakeholders), the consultants have attempted to present information as collected as far as possible with triangulation of information taking place in analysis sections and conclusions and recommendations.

Key community observers did give the research team valuable information on where to find children but the information was location specific tending to talk about the children they had seen in the immediate vicinity. In Greece, observers showed mixed feelings about children on the streets with some being sympathetic towards them and other openly discriminatory. In general, information provided by community observers was not deemed particularly useful in the assessment of protection levels and effectiveness of services.

Finally, as noted in the conclusions and recommendations, the collection of data from vulnerable groups such as children on the move is difficult, notably in the absence of pre-existing relations with individuals in those groups or the communities in which they live. The period available for field data collection (seven days in Athens and six days in Thessaloniki) did not allow for the building of relations based on trust with the target children and their caregivers. The lack of existing relationships of trust and understanding with this group, especially in Athens, limited the amount of information that was gathered (i.e. quantitative information), especially in situations where the target children are likely to engage in illegal activities.

4. LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Greece, Albania, Bulgaria and Romania have rather comprehensive frameworks to provide for and protect children. Several documents¹⁰ provide in-depth information concerning these frameworks and this report by no means attempts to provide as much detail as they have done. This section is therefore intended to give the reader a brief overview of the international frameworks that are relevant to the topic of this research and that the four concerned countries have in common. It also intends to provide basic information on the Greek national legal and policy framework to put issues addressed elsewhere in the document in context.

4.1. International and European Frameworks

Greece, Romania, Bulgaria and Albania have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which clearly states that the **best interests of the child** must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them and that this particularly applies to budget, policy and law makers.

Albania ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All **Migrant Workers** and Members of their Families. Greece, Bulgaria and Romania did not.

Although Greece has only signed the UN Trafficking Protocol, Romania, Bulgaria and Albania have ratified it. All four countries have also ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings in April 2014. Both provide provisions to prevent trafficking in human beings, to protect victims of trafficking, to prosecute traffickers and promote coordination of national action plans and international cooperation.

Greece, Romania, Bulgaria and Albania have ratified the ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of **Child Labour** (Convention No. 182) and thus committed to take immediate action to prohibit and eliminate the worst forms of child labour. Definition of those worst forms of child labour includes work which, by its nature or by the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

Greece, Romania, Bulgaria and Albania ratified the UNCRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (OPSC).

¹⁰ Notably:

- the Considerations of State Reports by the UN Committee on the Rights of the wChild;
- IMPACT Report: Improving and Monitoring Protection Systems Against Child Trafficking, Transnational Analysis – Defence for Children International – 2014
- IMPACT Report: Improving and Monitoring Protection Systems Against Child Trafficking, National Report Greece – Defence for Children International – 2014
- Report for the Study on Typology and Policy Responses to Children Begging in the EU – European Union – 2012
- Protecting Migrant Children in a Freedom of Movement Area – Terre des Hommes, 2011

While social policy is not an area over which the EU has full competence, it is worth mentioning the EU **Social Investment Package** (SIP) which stresses the importance of targeting social investment towards children.

4.2. The Greek National Framework

There is no specific child rights act or bill or other specific child law in Greece. Child Rights are dealt with through a sectoral approach, with Greek legislation including provisions for the protection of children through specific laws on health, education, housing, employment, etc.

Furthermore, there is no centralized agency with sustainable resources that has been designated to provide care and assistance to children or to supervise the various child protection and child development services provided by the State and to coordinate a variety of public and private services. The National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA) has taken on that role as part of its larger mandate to ensure the coordination of the network that provides social support services, care and solidarity to individuals, families, groups and populations experiencing crisis situations or who are in need of emergency social aid.

Laws and policies

“Best Interests of the Child” principle

In Family Law, the protection of the best interests of the child is described as the fundamental principle based on which parents and courts should take all decisions related to children (Article 1511). The Family Law is part of the Civil Code and it ensures the best interests of the child across the provisions related to parental responsibility, custody, guardianship and inheritance issues.

Laws on immigration and residency provide that the best interests of the child shall be taken into consideration in decisions concerning the issuing, duration and renewal of residence permits¹¹.

Provision of social and welfare services to all registered persons

In 2003, Law 3106/2003 on the Reorganisation of the National System of Social Care and Other Regulations was introduced, amending law 2646/1998, and reaffirmed the right of access to social care and welfare services, including accommodation, adequate nutrition and fundamental health services, provided by the National Health System to everyone who legally resides in Greece. Consequently, as long as foreign nationals and their children have **proof of legal residence**, they are eligible to the welfare services offered, including health, education, day care centres, infant care centres and so on. However, based on this specific criterion, some vulnerable groups of children such as unaccompanied children, undocumented children living on the streets or third country nationals who have their asylum application rejected are excluded from the official care sector¹².

¹¹ IMPACT Report: Improving and Monitoring Protection Systems Against Child Trafficking, Transnational Analysis – Defence for Children International – 2014, Page 38.

¹² IMPACT Report: Improving and Monitoring Protection Systems Against Child Trafficking, National Report Greece – Defence for Children International – 2014, Page 39.

In its 2nd and 3rd Periodic Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Greece mentioned that *foreign children have access to **medical care services** irrespective of their legal status.*¹³

Access to Education

Children of immigrants have the right to attend **public schools**, including those whose parents live in Greece illegally. Nevertheless, in September 2003, the Greek Minister of Interior issued a circular banning children of immigrants without a valid residency permit from enrolling in public school. The Minister withdrew the circular after strong protests from the Department of Children's Rights within the Ombudsperson's Office. The latter argued that the Greek authorities, pursuant to legal obligations arising from the Constitution and the ratification of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, must provide every child with access to basic education, regardless of the legal status of the parents.

Law 2413/1996 on Greek Education Abroad, Intercultural Education and Other Provisions foresaw the possibility of establishing **intercultural schools**, which would contribute to the integration of migrant children into the Greek society. These schools apply curricula from mainstream public schools adapted to foreign young people's "social, cultural or educational specificities". This system has led to the opening of 26 schools in 6 districts out of 52 nationwide. Although these schools are designed to be based on the concept of intercultural interaction and exchange, they have become institutions where the majority of students are migrant children and they merely serve as places where these children learn the Greek language¹⁴. Thus, in a country where the number of migrants has seen a drastic increase over the last few decades, with no particular geographical focus for these communities, intercultural schools are failing to answer the true educational needs of migrant children. It is also important to note that no measures have been taken to help children from low-income households access education or prevent them from dropping out.¹⁵ It is worth mentioning that nationwide, compulsory education's (up to the age of 16) completion rates are low, notably in areas popular with tourists.

Roma Minority

A new National Strategic Plan for Roma was adopted for the period 2012–2020 following the previous 2001–2008 plan, with the same objective to address the **marginalisation of Greek Roma and immigrant Roma who are legally resident in the country**, notably in the fields of education. In its introduction the new Plan recognizes that during the previous Plan "the gradual downgrading of the interventions was a result of the absence of strict specifications and shortage of evaluation and monitoring procedures". We can therefore expect that a more strategic implementation of intercultural schools will take place in the coming years.

Child Labour

Article 3 of the Presidential Decree No. 62/1998 (Measures for the Protection of Children Into Work) does not allow for children under 16 years of age to work. Any young person who is turning 16 and under the age of 18 can work for a maximum of 8 hours per

¹³ Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs – *Second and third periodic report of Greece to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child* – 2009, Page 11, Point 28

¹⁴ IMPACT Report: Improving and Monitoring Protection Systems Against Child Trafficking, National Report Greece – Defence for Children International – 2014, Page 67

¹⁵ Ibid

day and 40 hours per week. Article 4 determines the types of employment which are prohibited to children between 16 and 18, as they are likely to harm their health, safety or offend their morals.

Activities such as **begging and other forms of labour** on the streets are illegal in Greece, including selling flowers, cleaning shoes, or cleaning car windscreens. Nevertheless, none of these are punishable by law, with the exception of begging for which punishments are imposed uniformly on adults and children. Article 409 of the Penal Code punishes anyone who forces a person under his/her care to beg for financial benefit with imprisonment of up to six months or a fine. If this involves a child under the age of eighteen, or an adult above this age with mental or physical disabilities, this is considered as an aggravating circumstance. There is a legal paradox here in the sense that *despite the fact that children are considered as victims of exploitation through begging under Article 409 and Article 323A (of the Penal Code), at the same time they may be punished for begging under Article 407 of the Penal Code*¹⁶.

Article 349 of the Criminal Code punishes those who encourage **prostitution of minors** with imprisonment of up to ten years and a fine ranging between €10,000 and €50,000. The punishment is more severe if the crime involves a minor under the age of fifteen or is committed by parents or step-parents, relatives, guardians, custodians, or teachers.

Juvenile Justice

According to article 126 of the Penal Code, children between 8 and 13 years of age are not considered criminally liable. A child between the age of 8 and 13 is subject only to reformatory or therapeutic measures. If a child at the time (s)he commits a criminal offense is above thirteenth year of age, the court may decide that it is optimal to order the confinement of the minor in a special institution for youth for a specific period of time. Greek legislation however provides for some alternatives to the detention of children in conflict with law, such as non-custodial educational measures or the payment of a sum of money up to 1000 euros in favour of a non-profit organisation.

However, in the field of Juvenile Justice in Greece, in practice, **some groups of children are treated unequally**. As the UN Committee for the Rights of the Child highlights, law enforcement authorities in Greece arbitrarily stop foreign and Roma children in the streets, sometimes detaining them for petty reasons, despite the State party's new legislative measures to provide new welfare structures in order to prevent victimization and criminality of children. The Committee was specifically concerned that despite the provisions of article 126 of the Penal Code, there are cases where Roma children of 9 years old were arrested for petty-theft and their cases were examined without the presence of a lawyer and further prosecuted and tried¹⁷.

Trafficking in Human Beings

The first National Action Plan against Trafficking and Smuggling in Human Beings was introduced by a multi-sectorial committee in 2004. It covers a large number of actions related to trafficking: identification and support of victims, training and education of

¹⁶ Report for the Study on Typology and Policy Responses to Children Begging in the EU – European Union – 2012, Page 172.

¹⁷ IMPACT Report: Improving and Monitoring Protection Systems Against Child Trafficking, National Report Greece – Defence for Children International – 2014, Page 146.

police and judicial officials, raising of public awareness, creation of international networks to combat trafficking, monitoring of the phenomenon, etc. However, despite the progress achieved on a theoretical level, the situation is in practice very different as many of the provisions stated above have not been implemented, leaving victims unprotected and the Greek State without a clear picture both of the extent of the issue within the territory but also of the actions taken by other agencies and organisations.¹⁸

In line with the above, no system has been established to identify Greek children or children from other EU member states who are victims of trafficking. First *Reception Centres* were established to refer third country nationals to the competent authorities in order for a decision to be made about the child's admission to the country, their deportation or their repatriation but no such system exists for children coming from within the EU.

In the paragraph related to Street Children in the 2nd and 3rd Periodic Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child of Greece, the report focuses solely on issues related to trafficking in persons, seeming to establish a close link between street children and trafficking.

On February 27, 2006, Greece signed a bilateral agreement with **Albania** for the protection and support of child victims of trafficking. This is the only agreement that Greece has entered into with another country which relates specifically to children. The National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA) is the responsible authority for the agreement within Greece (see below for more detail).

An important finding from Defence for Children International's IMPACT Report: Improving and Monitoring Protection Systems Against Child Trafficking, National Report Greece, is the extreme fragmentation of laws, policies and regulations concerning children in Greece. The recommendation to develop a unified law pertaining to children has frequently been reiterated by national child rights institutions and the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The IMPACT report also highlights that even though the legislation is not inclusive or effective, practice is to some extent more inclusive and protects children more than the national legislation provides for. As an example, children who should submit certain legal paperwork in order to be enrolled at pre-school, are enrolled even when they cannot provide the paperwork. This is possible due to the flexibility of professionals, who despite their lack of training, specialisations and supervision, decide to "skip" the official procedures as they find a child's education much more important. Obviously the fact that such practices exist supports the foundations of the UNCRC and the principle of the best interests of the child but at the same time it highlights the limitations in terms of integration that the law places upon some children of foreign nationality. "This is an indication of the lack in supervision and monitoring but also raises fears that the child's best interests might depend on the willingness and good intentions of individual professionals and not on official procedures and protocols".¹⁹

¹⁸ IMPACT Report: Improving and Monitoring Protection Systems Against Child Trafficking, National Report Greece – Defence for Children International – 2014, Page 136.

¹⁹ Ibid, Page 72

Institutional framework

There is no national coordinating body on child protection. A **National Observatory for the Rights of Children**, established in 2001, is responsible for designing policies and coordinating actions. The activities of the National Observatory concern both national and foreign children, regardless of their status in Greece. However, as noted by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2012, the Observatory is still not fully operational and its coordinating role is not properly defined²⁰.

The main institution which oversees human rights in general is the **Greek Ombudsperson**, established as an independent authority in 1997. The Ombudsperson mediates between citizens, public services and institutions in order to safeguard the rights of citizens. The Ombudsperson's office has a Child Rights Department. The Ombudsperson is mandated to receive and investigate individual complaints. The office investigates also administrative actions or omissions by government departments or public services that violate the rights and entitlements of individuals or legal entities. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child however remains "concerned about whether adequate financial resources will be allocated in the future to support the mandate of the Children's Right Department in the independent authority of the Greek Ombudsman with all its activities"²¹.

EKKA seems to have taken on an increasing role in child protection issues over the last few years. In 2011, it was presented as the National Authority Responsible for Child Protection in Greece in a Government directive²² titled *Coordination of Actions and Services for Child Protection*. In 2001, EKKA set up and now manages The National Child Protection HelpLine (1107). Despite the fact that its establishment was not planned, a new child protection coordination service was introduced within EKKA and has been operating for the last 3 years as the institution believed such a service was necessary. Through this service and its collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, child protection teams, represented by Social Workers, have been created and organized in all municipalities, as foreseen by article 8 of Law 3961/2011. EKKA, along with KESATHEA (The Central Scientific Council for the Prevention of and Response to Victimization and Criminality of Juveniles) assisted the municipalities with defining those child protection representatives. An electronic database containing all child protection representatives is used whenever there is an child protection issue occurring anywhere in the country. EKKA coordinates the procedure and contacts the corresponding municipality²³.

Other national actors involved in ensuring the promotion and protection of the rights of children are the Municipal Child Protection Units (CPUs), the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Greek National Human Rights Committee, the Ministry of Public Order and Citizen's Protection, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior, the Greek Police, the Hellenic Department of UNICEF, the General Secretariat of Youth, public and private care centres and NGO's whose mandate is related to the rights of children.

20 Consideration of the Greece Report by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child– June 2012, Point 11, Page 3

21 Ibid

22 Directive 49540 / 4-5-2011, Government Newspaper 877 / B

23 IMPACT Report: Improving and Monitoring Protection Systems Against Child Trafficking, National Report Greece – Defence for Children International – 2014, Page 118

5. FINDINGS

5.1. Profile of children

A total of **one hundred and thirty-seven children (female = 58%)** and youth engaging in economic activities on the streets of Athens and Thessaloniki were identified over six days in Thessaloniki and seven days in Athens.

As mentioned above (see methodology section), among those one hundred and thirty-seven children:

- Sixty-one participated in an interview (thirty-two participated in snapshot interviews and twenty nine participated in full interviews);
- A further seventy-six were observed by the research team.

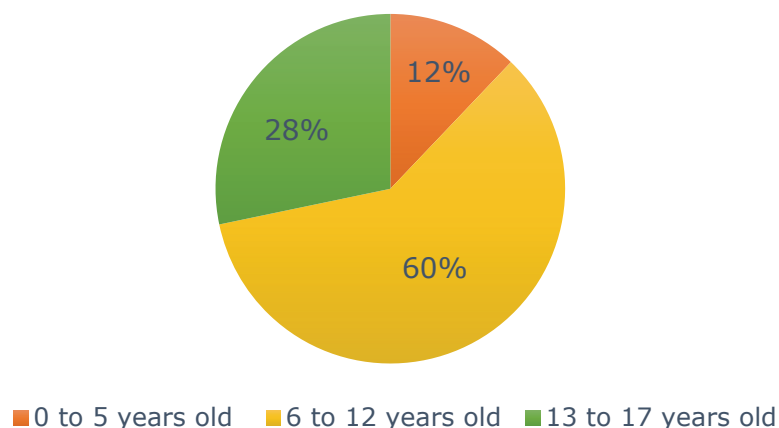
The imbalanced gender ratio identified in Athens is related to the very high female ratio (74%) amongst Albanian children who represent the majority of children identified in Athens. When asked to comment on this imbalance, the Mario project coordinator in Greece explained that in her opinion, boys work further out of the city centre with their fathers to collect and recycle metal and other materials since the profits that children can make through begging and selling small items on the streets has decreased in recent years. Girls in general beg and sell small items on the streets under the supervision of their mothers.

Children of all ages were identified: seventeen were aged 0–5 years old, eighty-one were 6–12 years old and thirty-nine were 13–17 years old.

Age of children by city				
TOTAL children	Thessaloniki	Athens	TOTAL	
0 to 5	8	9	17	12%
6 to 12	31	50	81	59%
13 to 17	22	17	39	28%
	61	76	137	

Children aged from 0 to 5 were found to be underrepresented (an age equal representation would have been 28%) and children aged 6 to 12 were found to be overrepresented (an age equal representation would have been 39%).

Pie chart: Age of children identified in Thessaloniki and Athens (total 137 children)



The over representation of children aged 6 to 13 is not surprising considering that the main activities that were undertaken by the children (selling small items and playing music) are most lucrative when undertaken by this age group.

The underrepresentation of children aged 0 to 5 is probably the result of the fear that authorities will remove the children when seeing young children on the streets. Several caregivers mentioned this as a concern to them.

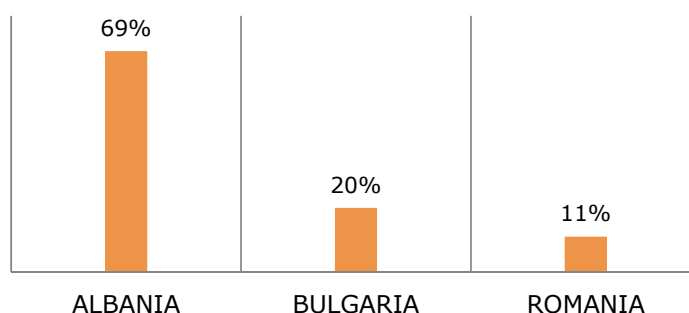
Children’s origin and languages spoken

The majority of children were of **Albanian** origin (ninety-five in total with fifty-eight of these in Athens and thirty-seven in Thessaloniki). Several children of Albanian origin when first meeting the research team said they were Greek.

Bulgarian children were identified mostly in Thessaloniki: among twenty-seven children identified, only four were found in Athens.

Romanian children were found to be mostly in Athens: among fifteen children identified, only one was found in Thessaloniki.

Country of origin of children identified in Thessaloniki and Athens



A summary of the country of origin of the children identified in Thessaloniki and Athens can be found in **appendix C**.

Only 1 Romanian child was found on the streets of Thessaloniki. This came as a surprise to social workers from the NGO ARSIS who had experienced greater number of Romanian families with children (and particularly young children) on the streets in previous years at the same time. Possible explanations for this decrease could be:

- **An economic decision:** the Thessaloniki market for begging and music playing could be already saturated by the Albanian and Bulgarian communities, especially at a time when the Greek people are suffering from the effects of the financial crisis. This was mentioned by one adult Romanian beggar who found Thessaloniki to be unprofitable nowadays compared with previous years.
- **Group travel:** Unlike Albanian families, Romanian families are more mobile and tend to travel together in groups with other families. This means that if the group decides to leave, few Romanians will remain. Although social workers and community observers stated that at this time of the year Romanian families are usually present, it may have been that as a group they decided to travel to another country or delay their travels to Greece.

Languages spoken

Out of the total of one hundred and thirty seven children identified, **38% spoke Greek**, (thirty-seven children in Athens and fifteen in Thessaloniki), twenty-seven spoke Bulgarian (four in Athens and twenty-three in Thessaloniki), seventy-five spoke Albanian (forty-four in Athens and thirty-one in Thessaloniki), fifteen spoke Romanian (fourteen in Athens and one in Thessaloniki).

Among **Albanian** children however, the majority spoke Greek (64% in Athens), and some did say they could not speak Albanian (24% Albanian children in Athens mentioned so). Albanian children in Thessaloniki were found to speak Albanian better than children in Athens who in many cases were able to understand Albanian but did not speak it so well.

Among the **Bulgarian** children identified, 100% spoke Bulgarian and only 18% of them said they could speak Greek.

None of the **Romanian** children identified spoke fluent Greek, all spoke Romanian and most of them also spoke a Romani language.

66% children spoke a **Romani language** or said they could speak a Romani language (forty-nine children in Athens and forty-two in Thessaloniki). Based on the research team's experience, the team believes that a higher percentage could be identified as being of Roma origin. Another indication of origin is that 83% of caregivers (ten out of twelve) and 79% of children (twenty-three out of twenty-nine) who agreed to participate in a full interview said they spoke a Romani language. Ethnicity has however not been a main focus of the research and no specific information on belonging to Roma communities was collected.

Comments on the prevalence of the phenomenon

The NGO ARSIS who was involved in the present research is the only organisation that has been providing outreach services to children working on the streets in Thessaloniki and in the city centre of Athens over the last few years (however, due to a shortage of funding, in Athens the outreach team stopped operating mid-2013). Over a fourteen-

month period from May 2012 to June 2013, the ARSIS outreach team identified one hundred and seventy-five Romanian children (one hundred and fourteen in Athens and sixty-one in Thessaloniki), 230 Bulgarian children (6 in Athens and 224 in Thessaloniki) and 267 Albanian children (184 in Thessaloniki and 63 in Athens).

The **present research identified one hundred and thirty seven children over 13 days outreach in Athens and Thessaloniki**. Given the brevity of the research period, the research team cannot claim that all areas throughout the city were observed at all times of the day. However, the team did undertake outreach in a significant number of areas, constantly asking key community observers living in different neighbourhoods if they had seen or knew of children engaged in street work and using the knowledge of two social workers who had spent the last couple of years on the streets in Thessaloniki in addition to information provided by two volunteers who patrolled the streets for a couple of weeks in Athens prior to the research.

Comparing ARSIS' figures with the figures collected through the present research, we can therefore estimate that about one thousand children of Albanian, Romanian and Bulgarian origin are engaging in economic activities on the streets of Greece on a yearly basis²⁴.

Two community observers mentioned they had the feeling that the number of children who are begging increases during Christmas and Easter celebrations. Although this information could not be verified, we can hypothesise that:

- Some groups come to Greece specifically for these holiday periods.
- Some children in Greece who do not usually beg may engage in this activity during these periods as they are on school holidays and it is a particularly lucrative time to beg.

Overall, the majority of children identified were of Albanian origin. Only a few Bulgarian children were present in Athens and a few Romanian children were present in Thessaloniki. In Athens, a particularly high ratio of Albanian girls to boys was observed by the research team.

5.2. Migration patterns among target group

Why, when, how and who they move with

Out of twenty-nine children who participated in full interviews, twenty-seven answered the question about why they moved to another country or city by saying it was **motivated by money and work**. Out of the two children who gave different answers one simply said the mother had made the decision and another said they had moved because of problems with the father. Ten out of twelve caregivers who participated in full interviews gave the same answers while two did not disclose the reason why they migrated.

Work plays a crucial part in the life of the children who were identified. For instance, when asked which was their favourite city (and why), the main justification for choosing

²⁴ This estimation is based on the fact that over 7 days the research team identified 137 children in the 2 largest cities in Greece whilst Arsis identified about 700 children in the same cities over a 14-month period. Of course not all children who work on the streets will have been identified but it is also likely that some will have been double counted as they travel from one city to the other. Overall, it is difficult to count individual children when working on the streets and estimations are often higher than the reality because the same groups of children are being counted over and over again at different periods of the year and in different locations.

their favourite city was the city where they can make more money or where it is easiest to work.

Bus is the main transportation means that is being used for **transnational travels**. One Bulgarian girl in Thessaloniki mentioned that in the future her family and her would be traveling to Thessaloniki by train as a new connection is going to be made between both countries.

Within Greece, different modes of transportation are used: ship, bus, train and car. Albanian children from Thessaloniki however presented a unique situation as all mentioned traveling by car.

All **Bulgarian** children had travelled by bus except one who said that she (13 years old) had travelled by train from Pleven in Bulgaria.

A further seven children from **Albania** said they travelled by bus and six also used a car or minivan to travel. No children from other countries mentioned using a car or minivan for traveling. Of those saying they used a car or minivan to travel three were from Korca, two were from Elbasan, and one from Devolli. The children from Albania also using the bus were from the same cities as those using a car or minivan. A further seven Albanian children in Athens also said they travel by ship when they move to the islands in Greece.

All children and caregivers from **Romania** mentioned traveling by bus.

The majority of children interviewed came to Greece for the first time more than 5 years ago. Of the children in Athens, one child (female, 13 years old from Albania) said she was born in Athens whilst two (one male 14 years old and 1 female, 13 years old) said they came from Albania when they were very small. Another Albanian girl (11 years old) said she had come first 7 years ago. The Romanian children interviewed had come at different points, one only 1 month ago and one 6 years before.

There are indications that Bulgarian and Romanian children and their caregivers are more present in **summer** in Thessaloniki than in the winter. Five community observers mentioned that they think the families who are begging and selling come in the summer and go back home in the winter. One community observer mentioned that in her neighbourhood she has noticed over the years that Bulgarian families come in the summer and go back home in the winter. Romanian families interviewed did confirm this. One social worker from ARSIS also mentioned that she had the impression that Romanian families were more present in the summer.

Seasonal migration

In Thessaloniki, a young Albanian boy (6–12 years old) who was selling small items with other children and an accompanying adult said that he had only come to Greece in May and was only likely to stay for three months. He said he had been in school in Albania before coming here but did not want to go to school in Greece. He said he is happy with the amount he makes which is around €15 per day.

Another boy of the same age from Bulgaria was begging and selling small items with his cousins in front of a church. He said he worked with his cousins or his mother and comes to Greece for the spring and summer. He did not understand Greek very well and did not appear to be able to speak it. He told the research team that his family were his only support network. He said he had been working on the streets for eight years and that he and his brother earn money for the family. His only support network was his family.

Nearly all children came to Greece with their family, and most came with their parents and siblings although in Athens, one child came just with his grandfather (his parents and four brothers are in Italy), and one came with her mother and three brothers. In Thessaloniki, five of the children came only with their mothers and other siblings.

As mentioned later in more details, the research found that very few of the children who were identified were unaccompanied. The very large majority are living and working with their parents or with other family members. When asked whom they usually travelled with whether internally or internationally, the large majority of children mentioned traveling with family members (92%).

Two main groups of children on the move engaging in economic activities on the streets emerged:

- **Children who spend most of their time living and working in Greece, and who return to their country of origin occasionally for short periods.** These children were mostly Albanian. A number of them were born in Greece and three children mentioned feeling more Greek than Albanian, although they have Albanian nationality. Some are mobile in Greece, but others without residency permits are less mobile due to the insecurity associated with such status.
- **Children who spend more limited periods of time in Greece (usually several months) and travel to different cities and countries depending on economic opportunities.** These children were found to be mostly Bulgarian and Romanian.

Overall, the large majority of children of Albanian, Bulgarian and Romanian origin engaging in economic activities on the streets were found to be accompanied by family members, with whom they travel – mostly by bus – and live. They regularly travel to Greece, if not permanently based in Greece, and the main reason for leaving their origin country is the search for better economic opportunities.

Transnational movements

None of the **Albanian** children that were interviewed mentioned traveling to other countries. In a number of cases, **Albanian** families are prevented from returning home because of their illegal status. Three children out of twenty-one who participated in full interviews stated being in such a situation.

An Albanian boy (6–12 years old) for instance told the team his family had been deported back to Albania in 2005 but had soon returned to Greece. He said he had been to school but did not know how to write. He said he often felt bored when working. He is the youngest of three brothers and his two older brothers now work for themselves. His only support network is his family.

Bulgarian families were found to be traveling more regularly between Greece and Bulgaria. One Bulgarian child also mentioned traveling regularly to Albania to visit relatives.

A family of four Bulgarian siblings begging together in central Thessaloniki said they came to Greece for half of the year with their whole family, returning to Bulgaria for the other six months. Sometimes when they are in Bulgaria they go to school but miss quite a lot of the school year. One of the boys was deaf mute and the father told the team an NGO had tried to help them by registering the boy in a special school in Thessaloniki, but then they returned to Bulgaria and came back too late for the start of the school year. The

children told the team that they beg for food and often take what the market stallholders throw away. They also beg for money but only in the neighbourhood where they live.

Very little information could be collected on the transnational movements of **Romanian children**. Only two Romanian children and five Romanian caregivers agreed to participate in full interviews and they mentioned travelling more regularly to other European countries (France, Spain, Italy, Germany and Portugal were mentioned).

One boy (14 years old) from Romania who said he had only been in Athens for one month also stated that he and his family often moved to different countries including Romania, Italy, Spain, France, Portugal and Germany. When asked where his favourite city was or where he felt at home, the same boy said that nowhere felt like home but Barcelona was his favourite city because it was possible to earn more money there.

Overall, many Bulgarian and Romanian children declared that they return to their country of origin regularly, while Albanian children rarely or never went home. In terms of travel to countries other than their country of origin, Romanians were found to be more mobile than Albanian and Bulgarian children.

Internal movements

Albanian children in Athens appeared to be more mobile within Greece than Albanian children in Thessaloniki. Eight children out of the nine Albanian children who participated in full interviews in Athens mentioned going to other cities in Greece, and mostly to the islands during the summer (they mostly mentioned Crete, but also Zakynthos, Corfu, Kos, Kalymnos and Rhodes). Only two children out of twelve Albanian children who participated in full interviews in **Thessaloniki** mentioned going to other places in Greece. They mentioned travelling to Katerini in the summer, a popular tourist destination 70 km away from Thessaloniki.

Some of the **Bulgarian** children identified in Thessaloniki mentioned traveling to the nearby islands and to Katerini. None mentioned traveling to Athens. Among the five Bulgarian children who agreed to participate in full interviews, four said they only moved between Thessaloniki and Bulgaria and did not travel to other cities in Greece.

Not enough information could be collected to accurately comment on the internal movements of **Romanian** families but considering the high international mobility of this group, it appears likely that they travel to other cities and islands in Greece depending on economic opportunities.

Overall, Albanian children met in Athens appeared to be more mobile within Greece than any other group of children.

Ties with friends and family in countries of origin

In some situations children who were more stable in Greece had less links and ties back home – instead they had developed ties in Greece. In other cases more permanent residency led to better links with the family in the country of origin, mainly through regular phone calls with family members in the country of origin.

Very few children in Athens answered the question about how often they **travelled back home**. Out of those that did, two said they never go (both of Albanian origin) and two

said they did (both of Romanian origin with one mentioning they went back every year and one saying they returned every two years). More children in Thessaloniki said they travelled back home with both Bulgarian children saying they go yearly, one travelling back every six months and the other travelling on an annual basis for one or two months at a time (the same child also said he went to school upon his return and knew his teacher in Bulgaria well). Albanian children in Thessaloniki also said they travelled home on a regular basis with one child saying once every two months, two others said twice per year and three others saying once per year.

Overall, children in Athens appeared to have more regular contacts with their family in their country of origin than children in Thessaloniki. Half the children who participated in full interviews in Athens did mention having regular contacts but only one third of children in Thessaloniki did so.

It is however difficult to draw general conclusions on the links the children still have back home as the situations were found to be extremely different and no general trends could be identified.

5.3. Work patterns of children and caregivers

Occupations, work times and locations

For both cities, out of the total one hundred and thirty-seven children:

- Fifty-three were observed selling small items (39% of children in Athens and 38% in Thessaloniki)
- Thirty-two children were observed begging (26% of children in Athens and 20% in Thessaloniki)
- Thirty-two children were observed playing music (26% of children in Athens and 20% in Thessaloniki)
- Fifteen children were observed scavenging (0% of children in Athens and 24% in Thessaloniki)
- Three children (aged 13–17) were supervising younger children who were begging or selling items
- Five children were found to be accompanying their parents conducting economic activities on the streets.

It should be noted that three children were observed conducting more than one income generating activity. Several children interviewed mentioned carrying out different occupations either at different times of the day or simultaneously.

Children who were playing music, begging and selling small items were seen at busy crossroads and in pedestrian areas. They were seen starting from lunchtime until late in the night: some were even observed at 2am.

All children playing music were playing the accordion. Children selling small items were selling a number of things for €1: tissues, key rings, pens, small toys, lighters, flowers, etc.



Photo 2: Musical instruments used by children playing in public

Children who were scavenging were mostly seen accompanying adults and helping them push carts. They were seen at all times of the day and they mentioned often working early in the morning as soon as the sun rose as there were fewer people out on the streets at that time.

Despite expectations of local social workers supporting the research activities, car cleaning was not observed as an income generating activity. It could be that in view of the timing of the research (at the beginning of the summer season) the children who normally clean cars had migrated to other places such as the islands or seaside towns close to Thessaloniki.

The reason why scavenging was only observed in Thessaloniki and not in Athens could not be clearly identified. It may be that there is less profit to be made compared to other activities or for other reasons including the distance to the place where items can be sold or that there are regular, recurrent police checks because of complaints from the people living in the areas where the scavengers keep what they have found. It could also be that it was simply not observed at the time of the field research given that the research team was unable to cover the expanse of the city.

Similarities between Thessaloniki and Athens

It appears occupations were similar in both cities with the exception of scavenging (mostly collecting scrap metal) that was observed and mentioned only in Thessaloniki and was conducted mostly by Albanian children (in fourteen out of fifteen cases observed). The research team identified some of the locations where the scavengers resell the metal and other items collected but no children could be seen in those locations (it should be noted that observations only lasted for around an hour in these locations so children may have been present at different times).

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*In **Athens**, the occupation of seventy-one out of seventy-six children was noted. Seven of the children's occupations were not noted but two girls, 13–17 years old were believed to be overseeing their younger siblings. A further four children were accompanying adults, two of whom were begging, one of whom was begging and selling old things and one of whom was 'miming'. Another young baby boy was in his pushchair with his father who was collecting scrap iron and metal. Twenty children were begging, twenty-five were selling small items (flowers, lighters, tissues) and twenty-two were playing music. One child playing music was also noted to be stealing and another child was begging and selling at the same time.*

*In **Thessaloniki**, the occupation of fifty-nine out of sixty-one children was noted. Two of the children's occupations were not noted but one girl, 13–17 years old was believed to be overseeing her younger sister and another female of 13–17 years old seemed afraid when the research team spoke to her (she was looking for her adult supervisor). Twelve children were begging, fifteen were scavenging, twenty-three were selling small items and twelve were playing music. Three children were begging and selling things at the same time. Of those just begging, four were observed to be begging for both food and money. Four children were scavenging for iron and other metal objects whilst a further five were young children, mostly babies, accompanying their mothers in the same job.*

In regards to age, children of all ages were found working or accompanying their caregivers or older siblings who were working.

Most children over 13 years old were playing music (and particularly girls) and supervising/protecting younger children, while children aged 6 to 12 were mostly begging and selling small items.

One boy said, "*I am a good seller, I am 14 years old and I am still able to sell like a small child*".

The majority of newborn and young children (0–5 years old) were observed with an adult caretaker who was begging. Seventeen **children under 6 years old** were identified on the streets. All of them were accompanied by a female adult caretaker. The relationship between the child and the adult could not be explored in details but all adults who were asked said they were the mothers of the child. Within this specific group of women with young children, there was a clear split: about half were Romanian women begging with the child while the other half were Albanian women collecting metal in seven cases (and selling flowers in one case).

The **youngest** girl who was found selling small items was 4 years old and her 16 year-old sister supervised her. From information gathered from the children, it appeared that they usually stop begging or selling small items when they turn 13 or 14 (when they begin to look more like adults). And indeed the majority of children who were identified begging or selling small items were aged between 6 and 12 years old.

"I just started working on the streets. All my older sisters worked before me, but now they have grown up they do not earn enough so that is why I am working" – 7 year-old girl

In terms of gender, no significant patterns were found in the occupation of children which seem to be equally undertaken by male and female children.

Note: The research team recognizes that populations working on the streets constantly adapt to new economic opportunities and to changes in policies. The type of occupations that were observed during the thirteen days research period should therefore be expected to vary at any given time.

Children of all **origins** were found to be working very long hours, in most cases work being the central occupation in life. Children going to school clearly mentioned that their work was making attendance and concentration at school difficult.

When looking at the distribution of activities performed by the children on the basis of their origin, some patterns could be observed:

- **Albanian** children are the only children scavenging (in Thessaloniki only). Again in Thessaloniki, no Albanian children were seen playing music while fifteen were seen in Athens. Very few Albanian children were found begging. One community observer mentioned that Albanian children used to beg some years ago but had changed to selling small items.
- **Bulgarian** children were mostly playing music, but also begging. Only three of them (out of twenty-seven) were seen selling small items.
- **Romanian** children in Athens were mostly seen begging or accompanying adults who were begging (eleven out of fifteen children). Three were seen playing music.

Earnings and management of finances

The highest and lowest daily earnings appeared in Thessaloniki ranging from €5 to €70 whereas in Athens the spread was between €5–€50.

In **Athens**, the highest earnings amounted to €50 (also given as the average rate) as expressed by an Albanian boy of 14 years of age. Most other Albanians in Athens reported quite low daily earnings of between €5–€6. Another Albanian girl (13 years old) reported earning an average of €20 per day but said that she can earn more on the islands and before the crisis she sometimes earned up to €400 per day²⁵. Both Romanian children who agreed to participate in a full interview earned more on a daily basis than Albanian children with daily averages of €22.5 and €25 for a 14 year old boy and 9 year old girl respectively. Both Romanians played the accordion to earn a living but so did some of the lower-earning Albanians. The Romanian boys however, were not attending school as opposed to their Albanian counterparts and were therefore spending longer hours on the streets.

The highest earnings expressed in **Thessaloniki** were reported by a 14 year-old Bulgarian male at €70 per day but the same child also reported a low of a minimum of €7 per day. The second highest daily earnings were reported by a Bulgarian girl (10 years old) who reported maximum earnings of €60 and minimum earnings of €40. The third highest earnings were a maximum of €50 per day reported by a 10 year-old boy from Albania. The child reporting the lowest earnings of an average of €5 per day (female, 7 years old) was born in Thessaloniki although her parents are from Elbasan in Albania. All other children reported earnings between €10–€20 per day. One child (10 year-old female from

²⁵ Report for the Study on Typology and Policy Responses to Children Begging in the EU, European Union, Page 176.

Albania) reported that her mother knew how much they earned. There were no obvious gender differences in earnings.

The majority of **children gave the money to their parents**. In Athens, ten children said they gave their earnings to one or both of their parents, with 2 children saying they managed the money themselves. Two children said they keep some of the money for themselves before giving the rest to their parents. Money is spent on rent, bills and other basic needs that their mothers or parents decide on. In Thessaloniki, all children said they gave the money to their parents with all saying the money was spent on basic needs including rent with two exceptions: one child mentioned the family had a laptop but no internet connection (14 year-old male from Bulgaria) and the other (9 year-old male from Albania) said it was spent on ice-cream. During the party in Thessaloniki, two children mentioned that they sometimes hide from the supervision of their mother to buy candies or other small things.

*“Our **children make the biggest income** in our family. The income that I and my husband (who collects iron) make is not enough for living, therefore our children have to work also” – Albanian mother, 37 years old.*

Two children in Thessaloniki reported that their mothers **shouted** at them if they did not earn enough, with a further two reporting that their mothers **beat them** if they did not earn enough in one day (three out of the four children who were beaten or got shouted at were from Albania whilst one was from Bulgaria (three were female aged 7, 8 and 14 whilst the Bulgarian child was male aged 11 years old). Another child (female, 13 years old from Albania) said her mother puts a lot of pressure on her to earn money, whilst another said the family had no money to meet basic needs if she did not earn enough (female, 17 years old from Bulgaria). In Athens, the picture is very similar. Four siblings from Albania who earned an average of €5-€6 per day said their parents shouted at them and beat them if they did not earn enough. The Romanian boy said they had no food to eat if his earnings were not high enough but the Romanian girl said that nothing happened.

Average daily earnings in Greece ranged from €5-€70 with most children averaging between €10-€20 per day and giving the money to their parents. These amounts appear to be smaller than those reported in 2006 where the average amount a child can earn in around three-four days of begging was estimated to be around 300 euros.²⁶

²⁶ Begging for Change – Research on forced child begging in Albania / Greece, India and Senegal, Anti-Slavery International 2009, Emily Delap, Page 8.

Children accompanied during work

At the time of the research, the large majority of children (89%) were accompanied by another child/other children or by an adult. Very few were working on their own and only adolescents were in such a situation.

55% of children were accompanied by an adult and 72% were accompanied by one or more children.

The adults that could be identified were family members and sometimes young adults (siblings or people living in the same residence or family acquaintances) who had been involved in street work when they were children themselves. Mothers were the majority of caregivers supervising and protecting children. They clearly had a supervision role as children, while talking with the research team, very often mentioned that they would have to go because their mothers would be upset if they spent too much time not earning an income. One day a group of six Albanian children had engaged in a discussion with the research team and one older girl stood slightly apart, she looked shy. After a few minutes she joined the discussion. Then a few minutes later her phone rang and she immediately asked all children to get back to work. During the party that took place in Thessaloniki a Bulgarian mother arrived, shouting and screaming at the research team saying that the team distracted the children from working. After a few difficult minutes she calmed down and spent nearly one hour with the team and her children, revealing that overall she was quite stressed and explaining that when she did not see her children for half an hour she panicked.

From observations, the relationship between the mothers and children should not only be described as negative. Some children were also seen having fun with their caregivers and when asked whether they felt safe on the streets some replied yes because they knew their family was close by and could intervene if anything happened. Although every child's situation is different, the role of adults that were staying with the children while they were working was in most cases observed to be both **supervisory and protective**.

A total of one hundred and eleven out of one hundred and thirty-seven children (81% of them) were seen **with other children**. In Athens, sixty-one of the children were seen to be with other children, whilst eleven were not. Of those, twenty-two were thought to be with siblings. In Thessaloniki, fifty of the children were with other children, whilst eleven of them appeared to be alone. Out of these, at least 25 were thought to be siblings.

Occupation of caregivers

The majority of caregivers were watching over the children. Some were also conducting the same activities as children themselves, mostly collecting scrap metal and selling flowers whilst the children begged or sold items.

In Thessaloniki, Albanian and Bulgarian mothers were mostly seen supervising and protecting children who were begging and selling small items. Mothers and fathers were also seen scavenging (collecting iron and other metals) with the children or on their own. Only one Romanian caretaker was identified and she was begging with a newborn child.

In Athens, caregivers were found to be supervising and protecting children begging and selling small items. They also mentioned begging themselves and selling flowers and were seen doing so. Almost all children playing music were not accompanied by adults.

A young Bulgarian mother begging with her baby boy in front of a church said she had been in Greece for more than one year and earns more in Greece than in Bulgaria but even then it is not enough. In total, there were three mothers begging with their babies in the same location.

An Albanian mother, collecting scrap metal with her baby told the team that her husband had an accident at work and injured his leg and has been off work for the last ten months staying at his brother's house. She told the team that they sometimes got seasonal agricultural work in a village and it was during this that the accident happened. They used to come to Greece several times a year on 3-month tourist visas, returning to Albania once the visas expired. They have other children in Albania but since the accident they have stayed in Greece and are now living here undocumented. They said they have received some help from a legal NGO but it is not clear what help as she said they were still afraid to ask her husband's boss for compensation. She said that if she brings the baby with her when she is working the police tend to bother her less.

Incidence of trafficking and exploitation

The children that were identified during the research came to Greece with their families. The situation is however different from what could be observed a decade ago. In 2009, the NGO ARSIS, partner of the Mario project in Greece reported an increase in parents begging with their children over the last 5–10 years following the introduction of “*more stringent anti-trafficking laws between Greece and Albania. Parents found that it was no longer “cost-effective” to send their children to Greece with third party traffickers as the risk of them getting caught had increased. Parents also realized that they could gain a more substantial share of the profits from begging if they sent their children out to beg themselves*”²⁷.

In most cases, the reason parents make their children work on the streets is related to poverty and more often than not, parents continue to play the essential role of a caregiver: providing love, care, food and housing for their children. In some cases it appeared that children suffer violence at the hands of their parents if they do not meet their financial targets.

On a few occasions during outreach sessions, the research team became suspicious of potential situations of trafficking and exploitation by adults who did not appear to be the child/children's parent:

- In Thessaloniki for instance, a girl aged 13–17 from Bulgaria who was playing the accordion late at night said that she was under pressure from a man to make money to pay the bills and when she does not earn enough she feels sad and disappointed. Once she referred to this man as her uncle, then another time she referred to him as her father. She said she often returned to Bulgaria and had been to school in Bulgaria but is no longer going to school in Greece.
- In Athens, children found begging and selling small items in the Monastiraki area appeared to be supervised by 2 men and a woman – the children gave the money to the women. Over the course of 5 days when the research team visited this area, the same 3 adults appeared to be supervising around 15 children in total. These children were of Albanian origin and the majority of them were between 6 and 12 years old.

²⁷ Begging for Change – Research on forced child begging in Albania / Greece, India and Senegal, Anti-Slavery International 2009, Emily Delap, Page 8.

Also, one Romanian girl from Athens told the research team she came from a family where two relatives (uncle and grandfather) were convicted by the Greek justice for human trafficking and were currently in detention in Greece. This 9 year-old girl was still working on the streets and not attending school.

In addition, child marriage was mentioned by a 14 year-old Albanian female during the party in Thessaloniki. She said that "Albanian children come to work in Greece as long as they can make money. When girls get too old, usually around 15 years of age, they get married to a boy in Albania and then they go back to live in Albania with the husband's family. I hope I will get married soon".

Commercial sexual exploitation of children was not observed by the research team in Greece. One community observer mentioned that a few years ago when he was working in a peep show (Thessaloniki has a very visible red light district), he saw a girl who he believed was a minor who was involved in prostitution in front of the business but he did not mention where she came from.

Overall, Albanian, Romanian and Bulgarian children of all ages were observed working on the streets; they were found selling small items, playing music, begging and scavenging. The majority of children were accompanied by adult caregivers (mostly their own mothers) while they were working and children gave them the money they earned. The same caregivers also appear to play an important role in the protection of the children. In most cases the children appear to follow their parents who are migrating or have migrated in search of better economic opportunities. In the absence of such opportunities in Greece, allowing or encouraging their children to engage in street-based work appears to be the only way possible to ensure that the basic needs of their families are met.

5.4. Living conditions, security and social inclusion

Living conditions, education and health

In terms of appearance, the children were usually wearing clean **clothes**, particularly Albanian children in Thessaloniki who were dressed like most other children in Greece except for the fact that they were carrying items to sell or musical instruments they were playing. No child mentioned going without food. When snacks were distributed during 'parties' in Thessaloniki and Athens, the children who were present ate them but did **not appear to be particularly hungry**. All children among the twenty-nine children who participated in full interviews said that when in Athens or Thessaloniki, they **slept in the same place every night with their family**, with some mentioning that cousins and, in one case, friends also shared their accommodation. No child mentioned that they lived on their own or just with other children. No children were observed sleeping on the streets or in other public areas.

Albanian families mostly appear to be renting apartments. In Thessaloniki, the research team visited four apartments where Albanian families were living. Although minimally furnished, the apartments looked clean albeit overcrowded. Some had electricity and running water but others did not. These apartments were typically located in the basement of a small building and either had no windows at all or only a few small windows. The apartments visited were on average 40 to 60 square metres with as many as twenty people living in one apartment. One caretaker said the rent was €200 per month and

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another said €250 per month. Based on explanations provided by Bulgarian caregivers, it is possible that Bulgarian families are renting apartments that are in quite similar conditions.

The research team was able to briefly visit one apartment where one Romanian family was living. The place was very crowded with around 5–6 people living in every room. The apartment was part of a building with eight to ten other apartments, most of them inhabited by other Romanian migrant families, most of which appeared to have running water and electricity.

It appears that **Albanian children are more likely to attend school while staying in Greece** than Bulgarian and Romanian children. 57% of the children who agreed to participate in full interviews in both cities said they were currently attending school. All of them were Albanian except one child who was of Bulgarian origin.

No Romanian child mentioned going to school in Greece. Among the two Romanian children who agreed to participate in a full interview, one 14 year-old boy said he had never attended school in Romania and one 9 year-old girl said she had attended school during one school year for about 6 months in Romania. **In Thessaloniki**, when asked if they were currently going to school, eleven children among the eighteen who participated in full interviews said they went to school and worked after school. These were all Albanian children with the exception of one Bulgarian child. Some of the children said they liked school as they had fun with the other children.

From the seven children who did not go to school in Thessaloniki (five Bulgarian and two Albanian), the research team learned that two had never been to school and two had attended school but had dropped out. The situation was less clear for the three other children: one child said he did not want to go to school, one child said he would go to school upon his return to his country of origin (Bulgaria) and one child did not give any details.

Similarly, in Athens, when asked if they were currently going to school, six children among the eleven who agreed to participate in full interviews said they went to school and then worked. Those that told the research team they were going to school were all Albanian except one Bulgarian child.

From the five children who did not go to school in Athens (two Romanians and three Albanians), the research team learned that one child had never attended school and two had attended school but had dropped out. One child said he was attending school back home in Albania and had just come to Greece for a couple months and one child did not give any details.

Although it is difficult to conclude from the numbers above, ARSIS' social workers who participated in the research are of the opinion that Albanian children in Thessaloniki are more likely to attend school than Albanian children in Athens because their families are less mobile and less vulnerable. It is worth mentioning, however, that this may be due to the fact that, ARSIS, who has been supporting vulnerable communities in Thessaloniki since 2002, also supports access to schooling for children from these communities. Community support has included family interventions when children are not attending school and contact with the schools regarding low attendance rate or drop-outs.

It should be noted however that many of the children complained about being tired in school and finding it difficult to concentrate because they had been working. For example, in Thessaloniki, an Albanian boy aged between 13 and 17 years old (selling small items with his younger brother) said he did go to school but next year would have to repeat a year as he was often absent from class because he had to work, or was too tired from working to attend school.

Among the thirty children who participated in full interviews, twenty-five said they had no **health** issues whilst five children said they did. In Athens, two boys aged 14 reported health problems. In Thessaloniki, one girl said that she was born with a serious kidney problem and was due to be hospitalised next week. Two other girls (both Albanian aged 13) said they had health issues – one reported heart problems and the other said she often fainted whilst working on the streets. In Thessaloniki, three children (one male aged 0–5 years old and two females aged 6–12 years old) who were with their father appeared to be in poor health and the research team wondered whether they might be suffering from Tuberculosis²⁸. They considered themselves to be Albanian Greek – their father is Greek and their mother Albanian. When asked what problems they experienced they said they live in a camp and their father is always looking for work. They said they needed help to get a residence permit (even though their parents are married their mother does not have a residence permit) which would give them access to government/public services.

Administrative issues relating to **residence permits** were often mentioned by Albanian children and their caregivers. For instance, two children collecting scrap metal with their parents (one male and one female both aged 6–12 years old) of Albanian origin, although born in Greece, told the team they were unable to travel between Albania and Greece because they were neither registered in Albania nor properly registered in Greece. They said that when their mother was pregnant with them she did not have her own passport, instead giving false details and borrowing a friend's passport to register at the hospital. In another instance, one 14 year-old Albanian girl (also born in Greece) mentioned she could not go back to Albania because of the way the name "Thessaloniki" was written on her passport. If she was to leave Greece she would not be able to re-enter the country. In ARSIS' experience this is probably because Albanian identification documents use Albanian names and not internationally standardized geographical names. So for instance, the place of birth for many Albanian children born in Greece is written in Albanian (Selanik vs. Thessaloniki). As a result Albanian persons who own such documents face problems entering or re-entering Greece.

²⁸ In line with the reaction protocol agreed by the research at the outset of the research (see section 4.1.4 for more details), all sick or injured children were followed up by ARSIS social workers.

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One Albanian lady was begging with her 1 year old baby at the Pavlos bus station in Athens. During a snapshot interview she mentioned she had four children in total but was only begging with the youngest. The others included a 16 year-old girl who was married, a 13 year-old child who was going to school and another child of 4–5 years old. She said she also collected old items and sold them on. She said she had problems with her stomach. She has a residence permit but told the team her husband does not, mentioning that they needed €5,000 to pay for such a permit. She was carrying a large trash bag with 4–5 women's bags inside which she said she had been given. She said she earns around €10 per day at the market and that she has not paid the rent of her house for two months but is not worried about this. She feels at home in Greece, because in Albania her husband and herself do not own any property and if they went they would have nowhere to live. Her parents have a house. A cousin of the woman has suggested going to Germany which she thinks is a good idea.

Overall, Albanian children appeared to stay in one same city and to be better able to access health and education services. This does not mean however that the long hours they are spending working on the streets are not a major issue in terms of the full development and protection of this group of children. Romanian children appear to be excluded from the education system. Although health issues were rarely mentioned by the children, observations and information from stakeholders shows that access to health services is problematic.

Safety and protection networks

When asked about safety, three children in Athens said they did not feel safe working (two of whom were from Romania) and mentioned that they often encountered problems with the police. An Albanian girl (11 years old) specified that she was worried about adults that were working on the streets, particularly African migrants selling bracelets. A group of four siblings from Albania said they felt safe on the streets because people know who they are – but two of them also mentioned that they have been picked up by the police on numerous occasions and told that they are not allowed to beg. Both Romanian children who agreed to participate in full interviews in Athens also mentioned **police harassment** and one (male, 14 years old) said that he had been beaten by the police two days before and they had taken €15 from him.

Other children who said they felt safe working also mentioned keeping quiet when the police came or being brought to the station but released soon after once their parents had arrived to pick them up.

Children in Thessaloniki were more positive about their safety and only two answered they did not feel safe, with one giving 'because I am bored' as a reason and the other stating that she did not want to work. When asked about problems they met, two children said the problems they had were within the family (with one specifying that her mother beat her if she did not earn enough) and a third said that people on the street are sometimes quite rude to her.

*"I am **worried about my little sister** because my parents put pressure on her to sell. I feel powerless because I cannot help her. I tried to speak with our mother but it is useless, she will not change her mind". – (Girl, 13 years old)*

Most children in Thessaloniki did not mention experiencing any problems with the police although one said she was afraid when she sees them (14 year-old female from Albania) and another mentioned that the police only create problems for his mother, leaving himself (male, 10 years old from Albania) and his sister alone. A 13 year-old girl from Bulgaria mentioned that police are often called to their neighbourhood to collect items that scavengers have stored. According to ARSIS social workers it is likely that the neighbours call the police as the piles of collected items make the area look untidy.

In Thessaloniki, when asked **who they could turn to if they had a problem**, four children said nobody could help them but six said their mothers could help, one said their friends and one said their families as a whole. Only one child said she currently needed help at school and the same child (female, 9 years old from Albania) also said that she has friends who need help and her mother needs help to see a doctor during her pregnancy. Five other children mentioned their family needs help with money and one mentioned that her father needs help with furniture for their home. In Athens all children said they could get help from their parents or families with one specifying her mother (11 years old from Albania) and one 14-year old boy from Romania saying his parents in Italy were his only source of support.

When asked about whether they knew of any organisations providing support, **in Athens**, only two children out of eleven who participated in full interviews said they **knew of one organisation providing support**. None of them knew the name of the organisation but one said that they come twice a week and bring them clothes and things to draw with, spending a couple of hours with the children each time. **Ten children in Thessaloniki** (nine of whom were of Albanian origin and one of whom was Bulgarian origin) out of the eighteen who participated in an interview said they knew of an organisation that could help them – all ten children named ARSIS as that organisation. Either their mothers knew how to contact ARSIS by phone or they had attended programmes in the day centre. It should be noted that ARSIS is not the only organisation working with vulnerable children in Thessaloniki but the only one conducting regular outreach on the streets. None of the children knew of any other organisations providing services.

Overall children in Athens seemed more concerned by their safety than those in Thessaloniki. In Athens and Thessaloniki, children did not appear to be aware of existing social services or services provided by NGOs (with the exception of the NGO ARSIS in Thessaloniki). Instead, they tend to turn to their families and friends when in need of support or protection.

Friends and social inclusion

When asked about friends, all of the children in Athens said their only friends were their cousins and friends with whom they worked on the streets. Four Albanian siblings pointed out that the other children at school did not like them so they only had cousins as friends. None of the children in Athens said they had friends of different origins than theirs and all of those that mentioned friends said they were doing the same work as them.

In Thessaloniki, two children said they had friends at school (with one saying she loved her classmates and they loved her – the same child also mentioned that she missed her friends back home in Albania). Only four of the children in Thessaloniki specified that their friends were Greek (all Albanian children) and did not do the same job as them whilst the rest said their friends were of the same origin and did the same work.

When asked **how their friends help each other** only a few children in Thessaloniki answered; they said they protect each other since they and their mothers all know each other. One child said her friends give her advice whilst another said she gets help with her homework from her friends because she is finding it hard.

In Athens, two Albanian sisters (sisters, 6–12 years old) who declared they were currently attending school said the other children (Greek children) teased them and called them “**gypsies**” even though they were dressed very well (they were carrying Adidas carrier bags with brand new clothes in and were proud to show the team the purchase receipts). Both of them were born in Greece and considered themselves as Greek and their parents as Albanian. One 14 year-old Albanian boy who said he was of Roma origin said he is not fond of going to school, he cannot pay attention or take part in school activities. He considers his teachers and classmates as “racists”. He said “I am mad about it”. One 12 year-old Albanian girl who was selling small items in Thessaloniki said she has friends in school but did not dare to tell them that she is working on the streets, although some of the children in school know about her work which makes her feel ashamed. She said when she is working she constantly checks to make sure she does not see children from school she knows and if she does see someone she recognises she hides.

Several Albanian children in Greece mentioned they **consider themselves as Greek** because they were born in Greece but they consider their parents as Albanian. When the research team first met them, they did not immediately tell the truth, with many of them saying that they were from Xanthi, a Greek city with an important Roma community.

The attitude of the public (key community observers) was mixed but some people interviewed were clearly protective and sympathetic towards the children having to work on the street with many mentioning they consider the state was not properly protecting them. In contrast however, some people were verbally aggressive towards the children, often pointing at the ethnic origin of the children (i.e. Roma). An example of this was when a very wealthy looking lady came out of a church on Sunday morning in Thessaloniki and immediately insulted two Greek girls who were begging saying that they were “useless Roma”. The man in charge of cleaning the church had never spoken to the children, although they spoke fluent Greek and he had seen them begging on Sundays for years.

The majority of street-working children appeared quite isolated from mainstream children, mostly having friendships with other children who were also working on the streets. Several children going to school felt they were disadvantaged compared with children who did not have to work. Many children reported being ashamed of having to work on the streets but felt they could not do anything about it. Some children felt discriminated against, notably at school, and the research team witnessed such discrimination amongst the general public. Romanian children appear to be particularly marginalised, as their stays in Greece are shorter than that of Albanian and Bulgarian families, they have less opportunities to learn Greek and are not enrolled in school.

5.5. Comments on the adequacy and effectiveness of policy and services in Greece

Interviews with public and private stakeholders involved in the provision of services with or for children and families from Albania, Romania and Bulgaria as well as a literature review (see bibliography) are the main sources of information for this section of the report.

Adequacy of policy and services

Limited outreach services available

Good practice observed around the world²⁹ has shown that, **to be adequate, child protection policies and services require the input of the children themselves**. Collecting their opinions and experiences can effectively take place only in a setting where an open and informed discussion is possible. Such a conducive environment requires the creation of trust-based relationships between all parties. For such relationships to be established with children on the move and street children, a regular and friendly presence on “the field” of the target children is required (the streets, public places, communities or open centres). That is to say, outreach teams and drop-in-centres are required in order to establish and build this essential contact with children and their caregivers (as in the majority of cases children are accompanied by their parents). Both children and caregivers will then be able to provide input into services to be delivered. Such outreach services (which should not only target children on the move but more generally children in need of support) were found to be established in both Athens and Thessaloniki but only on a limited basis and with limited resources.

In line with what was mentioned above concerning **mobile services** for mobile populations, one stakeholder mentioned that there are only few social workers carrying out street work and statutory social services for street working children are inadequate and understaffed. It is not the intention of the present report to deny the importance and relevance of centre based services but through the interviews with stakeholders great attention was given to the development and maintenance of shelters, which usually provide ‘response services’ (services that that are useful once a child is already in need of protection), while mobile outreach services and family support, are instrumental in preventing or reducing vulnerabilities of children on the move. This great attention to centre based services was not only highlighted by the Committee on the Rights of the Child but also observed through the literature review. The 2012 Report for the Study on Typology and Policy Responses to Children Begging in the EU states that “even when child begging cases are identified, it is not easy or it is impossible to find an appropriate shelter and children return to their begging activity”³⁰.

Focus on trafficking and unaccompanied minors from third countries

Through interviews with stakeholders it would appear that most are using an issue-based **conceptual framework mainly focussed on trafficking in persons and unaccompanied minors**, as opposed to a broader child rights based approach, when referring to the situation of C/SEE children on the move and when commenting on the responses to address the vulnerabilities of those children. Although the majority of stakeholders interviewed were familiar with the terminology “children on the move”, it appeared that policies and services have only been developed to address the ‘categories’ of child victims of trafficking and unaccompanied minors originating from 3rd countries. One stakeholder also mentioned the specific provision of services to children belonging to the Roma community. Similarly, when stakeholders mentioned various publications and tools (such as guidelines and manuals) that would be relevant to the present research, none mentioned any publications or tools related to children migrating within the EU.

²⁹ Children on the Move – International Organization for Migration, 2013, Page 8

³⁰ Report for the Study on Typology and Policy Responses to Children Begging in the EU, European Union, 2012, Page 176

Again, when asked about child protection standards for particular groups of children falling within the children on the move concept, all stakeholders mentioned the provisions for unaccompanied minors from third countries, for refugees and for children victims of trafficking. And those that were mentioned were emergency or rescue tools to identify and support victims.

Lack of strategic thinking around migration

Since it appears that the issue of C/SEE children accompanied by their families and working on the streets is not systematically considered by the variety of stakeholders concerned, it does not come as a surprise that there is a quasi-absence of strategic thinking on issues around economic migration. This appears to be particularly true in relation to the design of policies to prevent the unsafe migration or the trafficking of children to Greece and to reintegrate those children who have in many cases been working on the streets for many years. So, just as “there is no specific policy response to child begging in Greece”³¹, there is no response to accompanied children on the move engaging in street work, notably those from within the EU. This absence of strategic thinking about migration at a policy level is further demonstrated by a lack of regional strategies – with regional collaboration on individual cases only occurring when repatriation is considered as an option and no or little collaboration taking place in relation to protection and prevention.

Age of children

The age of children requiring protection services was another issue that arose during interviews with stakeholders. Some stakeholders might **not consider adolescent minors as children**, some persons do not hesitate to categorize a case involving a younger child (of around 5–7 years old) as one that requires a child protection response, but the same is not necessarily true for situations involving teenagers of around 16–17 years old.

Limited resources

It is also important to mention that effective services can only take place if the resources for providing long-term services are available. In this regard, Greece is unfortunately in a critical situation and all stakeholders agreed that limited resources, when compared with those available a decade ago, were a major challenge in the effective implementation of services. One of the stakeholders told the research team that, “*It is essential to remember that the current economic crisis from which the country has been suffering over the last few years has reduced social benefits and social services for both native and non-native persons*”. Programmes and services that are still operational, will obviously find it challenging to make long-term plans. Similarly, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in its recent observations on Greece showed its concern over the limited availability of social services for the protection and social reintegration of children in street situations. This included capacity of shelters to accommodate children in need³². Several stakeholders stressed that a number of shelters for different groups of vulnerable children, including children on the move, had stopped operating or operated below capacity because funding gaps had led to a shortage in staff and resources.

³¹ Report for the Study on Typology and Policy Responses to Children Begging in the EU, European Union, 2012, Page 174

³² The Considerations of reports submitted by States Parties under Article 44 of the Convention, Concluding Observations Greece, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2012, Page 15, Point 66

The large majority of stakeholders interviewed agreed that the social protection system was **not easily accessible** to foreign persons. One stakeholder, when mentioning that some services are becoming increasingly difficult to access for groups such as children on the move in an irregular situation, said that even **health** services are becoming less accessible for people without residence permits or other necessary documentation. When asked to describe the **obstacles** that children on the move might face in accessing services, most stakeholders mentioned the absence of relevant language skills among service providers and the fact that children and their families are often undocumented.

One stakeholder, when asked about the obstacles children on the move faced in accessing services, summarised the Greek situation by saying that “services are inadequate, this is the main problem”.

Effectiveness and Inclusiveness of policy and services

Inclusiveness of policies

When asked whether they believed the system was **inclusive**, stakeholders either said that the framework itself was inclusive but its implementation was not or they answered that it was not inclusive. No stakeholder clearly expressed that in their opinion the system was inclusive. The majority of stakeholders agreed that the legal and policy framework is inclusive and comprehensive, but does not practically translate into services being delivered. This is confirmed in other documentation regarding the child protection system in Greece: generally speaking, there seems to be compliance with international (child protection) standards and Greece has signed and ratified a number of International and European instruments and standards. However, as in other areas, problems arise with the implementation of the legal framework.

Services in Greece

From the information collected through interviews with children, it is evident that many of them do not have regular access to **educational** services, mostly as a result of their mobility and the obligation towards their families to earn money on the streets. A number of children who did attend school also mentioned feeling discriminated against in school or feeling ashamed because of having to work on the streets. Albanian children, who were found to be the group that was the less mobile were attending school in Greece more than Bulgarian or Romanian children. Non-formal education options were not mentioned by any of the children except for the few developed by NGOs (such as the ARSIS mobile school in Thessaloniki). Children who do not attend school are less likely to feel connected to “mainstream society” in Greece. Their main social networks will only extend to other children who are in similar situations. The indication given by children and by caretakers that they know very few social services, if any, also raises concerns regarding the capacity of social services to reach out and interact with accompanied migrant children from other EU Members States.

Among the forty-one children and caregivers who agreed to participate in full interviews, sixteen were aware of an organisation that could provide help to children who had problems. The support they knew they could get from organisations was basic: food, clothes and translation services for legal documents. None mentioned that organisations could also provide direct support to access education, training or employment.

None of the stakeholders interviewed were able to provide an estimate of the number of children and families that have received help from social services in their city but several stakeholders mentioned it was likely to be only a handful of all children on the move.

International cooperation

International cooperation and coordination was also found to be limited in addressing the situation of C/SEE children on the move engaged in economic activities on the streets. A Bilateral agreement between **Albania and Greece on Child Trafficking** was mentioned by all stakeholders as the only existing bilateral agreement related to children on the move. Previous research has noted that “the lack of transnational cooperation (in Europe) is often the consequence of the diversity and lack of understanding of national regulations and procedures. A kind of disbelief or mistrust between authorities in different Member States also contributes to the inefficiency of the procedures in place”³³. One stakeholder mentioned that previous bilateral and regional coordination that involved common case management (i.e. sharing of information on children, coordination of support, monitoring of progress, etc.) had been successful in providing the support needed to prevent the exploitation of children and to reintegrate children on the move. This kind of coordination was however only implemented when resources were available (i.e. prior to 2009). Indeed, in recent years, the absence of funding has led to a substantial decrease in this essential international collaboration. In its absence, it is impossible to assess the needs of children both before and after they migrate and therefore impossible to develop the necessary support services.

Overall, although the Greek legal framework was found to be inclusive and comprehensive, policies and services are of little relevance to the needs of the majority of the Albanian, Bulgarian and Romanian children on the move working on the streets of Greece. It would appear that this is primarily due the quasi-absence of strategic thinking around economic migration and to the priority given to policies which focus on the fight against trafficking and asylum. The increasingly visible situation of unaccompanied minors from third countries may also be distracting policy makers from issues relating to vulnerable C/SEE children on the move, who as a result, are not a focus of service delivery. The few services that are available are therefore not able to address the protection and development needs of Bulgarian, Romanian and Albanian children who work on the streets in Greece.

³³ Protecting Migrant Children in a Freedom of Move Area: Transnational Monitoring or Return Procedures involving Romanian and Bulgarian migrant children in Greece and France, Terre des Hommes, 2011, Page 42

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Conclusions

In five days, the research team was able to identify **one hundred thirty seven children on the move from Albania, Bulgaria and Romania (female = 58%)** and who were engaging in economic activities on the streets of Thessaloniki and Athens.

Children from different origins were found to have different migration patterns. Taking aside individual specificities, it appeared that:

- Albanian children were spending the large majority of their time in Greece. In many instances they are actually established in Greece and their mobility is internal.
- Romanian children were found to be a much more mobile population, traveling to different cities in Greece as well as to other European countries.
- Bulgarian children were found to be regularly traveling between Bulgaria and Greece (Thessaloniki mostly), in a more circular movement.

Albanian children were found to be present in both cities covered by this research, while **Bulgarian children were found mostly in Thessaloniki** and **Romanian children were found mostly in Athens.**

The majority of children identified (69% of the total) were of **Albanian** origin owing to the fact that Albanians represent the largest immigrant population in Greece. Albanian children were found to be involved in a number of economic activities, but mostly the sale of small items, playing music (accordion) and begging. They also engaged in economic activities alongside their parents such as collecting scrap metal. In Athens, there was a particularly high number of Albanian girls (74% of the total Albanian children identified), suggesting that boys are employed in other activities. In general, Albanian children identified in Athens appeared to be more vulnerable than those identified in Thessaloniki.

Fifteen **Romanian** children were approached (female = 47%) and the large majority of them was identified in Athens. Identifying only 1 Romanian child in Thessaloniki came as a surprise to the research team when compared with figures collected in 2013 by the NGO ARSIS. Although further research would be required to understand why so few Romanian children were identified it is most likely due to seasonal movements of Romanian families and to the fact that Greece has become a less attractive country since it was hit by the financial crisis.

Twenty-seven **Bulgarian** children were identified (female = 56%), which represented 20% of the total number of children identified. The large majority were identified in Thessaloniki. Bulgarian children engaged in economic activities on the streets were playing music (accordion) and begging. They were found to be traveling regularly between Bulgaria and Greece (only to Thessaloniki in most cases), following a more circular migration pattern than Romanians and Albanians.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Whilst acknowledging that the situation of every child and family is unique, the **movements and levels of vulnerability of children and of their caregivers vary according to their country of origin**. However, some **common characteristics** of children originating from those 3 countries were found:

- **Children accompanied by family members:** in the large majority of cases, children are following their parents; 55% of children were accompanied by an adult family member (in most cases their parents) while they were working, both for purposes of supervision and protection. Children also slept at the same location as their caregivers. The needs of children on the move can therefore not be addressed independently from the situation and needs of their caregivers.
- **Hard working children:** children did not appear to be frequently included in traditional criminal activities (such as stealing or illegal trades) and are engaged in economic activities that require long working hours on the streets (often including late at night and early in the morning) such as collecting scrap iron, selling items, playing music or begging. Besides the daily risks related to a prolonged presence on the streets (violence, traffic accidents, health issues), this situation presents a challenge for children to attend school or to be able to concentrate on their studies, when such an opportunity exists.
- **Greece as a base:** Most children and their caregivers are regularly working in Thessaloniki and/or Athens. These cities are either their permanent base or they travel to it every year for several months. Even families who do not consider Athens or Thessaloniki as their main base adopt regular migration patterns and come to live in and work at the same place for several consecutive years. This is especially characteristic of Albanian and Bulgarian families but less of Romanian families who demonstrated higher mobility rates than other nationalities. – **Children of all ages** were found to be equally represented in the groups originating from the 3 different countries.
- **Children belonging to the Roma community:** Although this research did not focus on Roma communities in particular, it appeared that the majority of children did belong to this community.

The situation observed in Greece in the early 2000s, when Albanian children were trafficked for begging by organised networks seems to have decreased thanks to the efforts of police and social services. Nevertheless, the current situation of children following their parents migrating for economic reasons and engaging in street work as part of family survival strategies places them at risk of trafficking and exploitation by criminal groups and must therefore be addressed.

In order to be properly understood and addressed, the situation of these children needs to be continuously monitored. Such monitoring can only take place through the development of trust-based relationships between service providers and the children and caregivers concerned.

In terms of current responses provided by the Greek Government and civil society to children on the move, the **legal and policy framework** is theoretically comprehensive and the services provided by the Greek Government are likewise purported to be inclusive. However, discussions with children, caregivers and key stakeholders indicate that **on a day-to-day basis, delivery of services to children on the move is often inadequate and ineffective:**

- Children and caregivers do not access public services and have very little knowledge of existing social support schemes.

- Children and their caregivers receive some services from NGOs mainly for administrative support, health care and school registration.

Furthermore, **coordination of existing mechanisms and services between countries of origin and countries of destination** is nearly non-existent, which seriously reduces opportunities to develop prevention and reintegration strategies.

Although the financial crisis cannot be blamed for all gaps in services, the provision of services has certainly suffered since 2009 with drastic cuts in expenditure being imposed countrywide.

The number of children identified during the research, when compared with the number of children met by the ARSIS outreach team in 2013, shows a **rather consistent image of the population of children on the move** who originate from Albania, Bulgaria and Romania in Greece. The number of children on the move originating from those countries and engaged in economic activities on the streets in Greece is probably **around a thousand children on a yearly basis**, with a large number of those children remaining in Greece for several years in row. However, in the short term, the number of **Albanian children that can be seen working on the streets is likely to increase** as those who have been residing in Greece (and who belong to the most vulnerable families who, as a result of the economic crisis, face growing problems related to their papers and employment) are more likely to be pushed to engage in street work and travel around Greece depending on seasonal opportunities.

In view of the above, with political will and effective regional partnerships, the situation of C/SEE children on the move engaging in street work in Greece can be addressed through a rights-based approach. All countries where children on the move spend periods of their life every year – be they countries of origin, transit or destination – should ensure that children and their families can access services addressing issues of social exclusion, poverty and discrimination.

6.2. Recommendations

Those recommendations have been developed based on an empirical analysis that included outreach work and interviews with Albanian, Bulgarian and Romanian children on the move and communities, interviews with key stakeholders from the Greek Government and from civil society representatives and a review of the existing literature related to children on the move in Greece. It also takes into account the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2012 after examining the second and third periodic report submitted by Greece.

Considering that the Greek domestic legal framework is comprehensive and generally in line with international standards and instruments on the protection of children, the present report will focus on recommendations at policy level, emphasising that the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child urged the Greek Government to decriminalize begging activities by children while taking steps to ensure that such a change would not be exploited by adults who may use children to beg.³⁴

³⁴ Concluding Observations Greece – Considerations of the 2nd and 3rd Periodic Report – June 2012 – Page 16, Point 69(c)

Overall recommendations – For Greek, Albanian, Romanian and Bulgarian Governments, the European Union, national and international NGOs

- **Adopt a holistic child and family centred perspective**, always ensuring the best interests of children are a primary concern.
- Focus on **improving the situation of vulnerable families** rather than encouraging the prosecution of parents who engage in economic activities on the streets with their own children; working with children on the move should involve working with their families and communities as a whole.
- Ensure **policies are developed on a regional basis** (vs. a national basis) taking into account the situation in **origin, transit and destination** countries at the same time as ensuring coordination between all services.
- Place an emphasis on **early identification and prevention** and ensure that while early identification is taking place through public institutions (school, hospitals, police stations, etc.), child and family friendly NGOs are also involved in community and street based early identification for children not accessing services.
- Ensure that the **opinions of children and their caregivers** are taken into account when designing services, considering them as individuals with skills and experience rather than as victims that mostly need protection and compassion.

Specific recommendations to the governments of Greece, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania

- Raise **awareness among the authorities and civil society organizations** on the reality and complexity of migration and trafficking paradigms and the consequences of using different terminologies.
- Whenever possible **prioritize the development of mobile and community-based services** (able to adapt to the changing needs and situations of children and engaged in a continuous data collection process) with the involvement of civil society organizations that have developed an approach allowing to create relations of trust and understanding with children on the move and their families.
- **Provide sustainable financial resources to NGOs** who have clear and long term agreements with relevant public stakeholders to develop mobile and community-based services (versus awareness raising and centre based initiatives) which effectively support the most vulnerable families in strategically selected areas and therefore prevent situations where children end up working on the streets.
- **Establish a regional case management system** implemented in collaboration with NGOs who have strong links with the government accompanied by an adequate monitoring and oversight mechanism and ensure sustainable funding.
- **Reinforce the accessibility of family support services in all origin and destination points**, especially to those addressing the economic situation of vulnerable families including access to employment and support for the development of, *inter alia*, small businesses.
- Improve access to **education and health services** for children on the move. Provision of Non Formal Education to children who cannot access the public school system, improved access to the public school system for children of school age and vocational training placements for youth and adults appear to be particularly appropriate.

Specific recommendations to national and international NGOs in Greece, Albania, Bulgaria and Albania

- Develop small but well trained **outreach teams targeting all vulnerable children (including – but not only – children on the move) and their caregivers**. Outreach teams should be equipped with the relevant languages skills, good knowledge of social, educational, employment and health mechanisms at the local level and in the other areas of origin, transit and destination.
- **React in a timely manner in situations where children start to engage in economic activities on the streets**, always taking into account the economic situation of the family and developing sustainable support systems (loans for start-up of small businesses, development of small cooperatives, training leading to marketable skills and subsequent employment) rather than in kind donations or other short term solutions. Document the impact of such initiatives and present it to national and regional stakeholders.
- Develop culturally sensitive **education materials** (i.e. pamphlets, posters) with the participation of key adults in the target communities which explain how to access social welfare and other services. These materials should be accompanied by sessions conducted in communities to ensure that all community members have access to them and understand their content.

Specific recommendations to the European Union

- **Provide financial and political support to the development of a European case management system** (with a cultural sensitivity towards the Romani culture but with no clear focus on them) able to track children and families, to assess situations and to provide support in a coordinated manner in different locations; Such a case management system will include a responsible authority or appointed NGO in each concerned country.
- **Ensure experiences and lessons learned** are shared between relevant European governments and NGOs that have experience in developing such case management systems with a focus on child protection and migration (vs. those focusing on trafficking in persons);

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APPENDIX B.

LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED

Organisation / Position	Name	Location	Data collection method
National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA) – Director	Mr. Theodoros Moustarakis	Athens	Written questionnaire
Greek Council for Refugees (GCR) – Social Worker	Ms. Efi Gelastopoulou	Thessaloniki	Written questionnaire + phone follow up
National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings Issues	Mr. Heracles Moskoff	Athens	Skype interview
PRAKSIS – Head of Thessaloniki branch	Ms. Stefania Pantazi	Thessaloniki	Written questionnaire
Hellenic Police, Department of Combating Organized Crime in Thessaloniki – Head of Unit	Mr. Petros Tanos	Thessaloniki	Written questionnaire
Deputy Ombudsman in charge of children’s rights	Mr. Georgios Moschos	Athens	Written questionnaire
ARSIS – (1) Child Protection Officer and (2) Lawyer	(1) Ms. Valbona Hystuna and (2) Ms. Dimitra Soulele	Thessaloniki	Written questionnaire

APPENDIX C.

CITY / PROVINCE OF ORIGIN OF CHILDREN

Country	City	# Children in Thessaloniki	# Children in Athens
Romania (14 children)	Bucharest	–	1
	Bacau	–	1
	Constanta	–	5
	Foscani	–	2
	Sibiu	1	–
	Suceava	–	1
	TarguMures	–	3
Albania (51 children)	Berat	–	4
	Elbasan	19	1
	Fier	–	12
	Gjirokaster	–	2
	Korca	7	3
	Tirana	–	3
Bulgaria (20 children)	Jambolo	4	–
	Pleven	5	–
	Ruse	5	–
	Sliven	1	–
	Sofia	1	4

APPENDIX D.

RESEARCH ACTIVITY FRAME

Activity	Description of method	Tools
1. MEETINGS WITH STAKEHOLDERS	<p>1.1. Interviews with stakeholders Why?: To collect information and opinions on migrant children engaged in economic activities and on Government, NGO and other responses to them. When?: If possible, stakeholder interviews should take place before street outreach begins Where?: Stakeholder interviews can be conducted in a location which suits both parties Target: 10 to 20 stakeholders interviewed in each destination city.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interview schedules for stakeholders (TOOL 5) - List of stakeholders (Annex 1) <p>A list of stakeholders to be interviewed has to be established for every city target based on Annex 1</p>
2. STREET OUTREACH	<p>2.1. Observation visits Why?: To collect information on the living and working conditions of children on the move When?: Times (day, evening or night) to be decided following consultation with local social workers and based on initial observations Where?: Locations to be determined based on recommendations from social workers and other stakeholders and initial observations Target: A minimum of 6 hours of outreach activity per 24 hour period to ensure as many children as possible are observed NB: If possible, children from the target group will be asked if they are happy to accompany social workers to show locations where other children work and to make approaching other children easier</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Observation & snapshot grid (TOOL 6) - Guidelines for outreach (Annex 2)

Activity	Description of method	Tools
2. STREET OUTREACH	<p>2.2. Snapshot interviews/full interviews with target children Why?: To collect more detailed information on the profile of children and their situations prior to migrating, during migration and at their destination location (including their aspirations, incidence exploitation or trafficking, access to services, family situation and issues of coercion, poverty, their role in decision making, their way of feeling and their wellbeing, discrimination in home and host countries, trajectories of family migration, intentions to return to country of origin or go somewhere else? etc) When?: During outreach sessions and possibly also at the occasion of parties (activity 3.1) Where?: At outreach locations (see above) Target: minimum 10 interviews per city, no maximum (as many as possible) NB: If possible, children from the target group will be asked if they are happy to accompany social workers to show locations where other children work and to make approaching other children easier</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Short list of guiding questions for snapshot interviews – TOOL 1 (there will be no questionnaire as such but social workers will know the questions off by heart). Snapshot interviews can be individual interviews or small group interviews (2–3 children at a time). Results are noted on Observation & snapshot grid (TOOL 6) – Children questionnaires (TOOL 2), to be used after informed consent for a full interview (20–25 min). Full interviews can take place on the street or in café or another place where the child is comfortable. Guiding questions will be stuck inside notebooks. Longer interviews can be conducted on an individual basis or with small groups of children. <p style="text-align: center;">CHILDREN QUESTIONNAIRES HAVE TO BE TRANSLATED IN ALL RELEVANT LANGUAGES</p> <p>NB: Given the anonymity of the research, children’s names will not be recorded. Instead, a unique identifying pseudonym will be used. Children will give informed consent by providing info for the unique identifying pseudonym (e.g. favourite number, favourite animal, favourite colour, etc)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Guidelines for interviews (Annex 3)
	<p>2.3. Snapshot interviews/full interviews with caretakers (parents and other adults supervising children) Why?: To collect more detailed information on the profile of children and their situations prior to migrating, during migration and at their destination location from the view point of caretakers (to also include family situation and issues of coercion, poverty, discrimination in home and host countries, trajectories of family migration, intentions to return to country of origin or go somewhere else?) When?: During outreach sessions Where?: At outreach locations (see above) Target: minimum 5 interviews per city, no maximum (as many as possible)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Short list of Guiding questions for snapshot interviews (TOOL 1) – Caretakers questionnaires (TOOL 3) for full interview (Same tools as for children but with questions specific to caretakers) – Guidelines for interviews (Annex 3)
	<p>2.4. Informal interviews with key community informants (people working or living close to target children) Why?: To collect more detailed information on the profile of children and their situations notably in relation to incidences of abuse/exploitation and access to services When?: During outreach sessions Where?: At outreach locations (see above) Target: minimum 5 interviews per city, no maximum (as many as possible)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Interview schedule for key informants (TOOL 4) – Guidelines for interviews (Annex 3)

Activity	Description of method	Tools
3. PARTIES	<p>3.1. Parties for open group discussions with children and caretakers Why?: To complement and deepen information collected through interactions on the street When?: One or (preferably) 2 parties are to be held during periods of outreach, with one half way through and one at the end of the outreach period (children may be shy to come to the first party but their peers will encourage them to come to the second) Where?: Parties are to be held in an environment where children and caretakers feel comfortable (e.g. park, children’s drop-in centre, etc). Parties will include fun activities (games, magazines, music, dancing, snacks) to put the children and caretakers at ease and more structured activities to facilitate open group discussions. Target per city: – Minimum 1 group discussion with younger children (caretakers allowed to join) – Minimum 1 group discussion with adolescents – Minimum 1 group discussion with caretakers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Guiding questions for children’s open group discussions – Guiding questions for caretakers open group discussions Guidelines for group discussions Group discussion facilitation tools including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – River of Life – Risk Mapping – Flower Map
	<p>3.2. Parties for open group discussions with children and caretakers to provide feedback on research findings Why?: To ensure that research participants are given the opportunity to feedback and input into the outcomes of the research When?: These parties will take place sometime in August once the initial research findings are available. <i>They will only be possible if social workers speaking the relevant languages are still available.</i> Where?: same as above Target per city: – Minimum 1 group discussion with younger children (caretakers allowed to join) – Minimum 1 group discussion with adolescents – Minimum 1 group discussion with caretakers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oral presentation of recommendations Guiding questions for children Guiding questions for caretakers

APPENDIX E.

GUIDELINES AND RESEARCH TOOLS

Guidelines for Street Outreach

Mario Project Transnational Research on C/SEE migrant children

These guidelines have been designed for the Mario Project Transnational Research on C/SEE Migrant Children in situations of vulnerability – May 2014.

These guidelines are designed to be used by the research teams at any point during the research, whether the team members are conducting street observations, informal interviews or open group discussions. They are based upon the principles of the Terre des Hommes Child Protection Policy and complement the guidelines for individual interviews and the guidelines for open group discussions.

Street Outreach in the context of research on migrant children

Street Outreach is, in the present document, defined as the process of engaging with children on the move, their caretakers as well as the wider community in public locations (on the streets but also in other public locations) at times and locations where they are most easily accessible.

The overall objective of Street Outreach is to allow for a better understanding of the phenomenon of children on the move and of the adequacy and effectiveness of the existing child protection systems in responding to their protection needs.

Specific objectives of Street Outreach are to:

- Observe the living and working conditions of children on the move engaged in economic activities on the streets;
- Engage in informal discussions with children on the move, their caretakers and key informants in the wider communities so as to collect information on their situation and on the child protection system;
- Encourage children on the move (and their caretakers) to join “Parties” that will enable Open Group Discussions to be conducted.

Protocols for Street Outreach

Before going on an observation visit, the outreach team must ensure relevant local authorities have been informed of the visit and that security/safety of the team has been planned for.

Location and time of outreach activities are discussed within the team and take place at times when the targeted groups and communities can most easily be accessed.

Composition of teams and sub-teams (if necessary) should be discussed before venturing out onto the streets/into communities to ensure that all relevant languages and both genders are fully represented. **Security and safety issues** should be considered at all times. Team members should never conduct street outreach on their own. Teams should be composed of a minimum of 2 professional staff members.

The research team will, to the extent possible, try to engage children, caretakers or (if relevant) key community observants into the outreach sessions at specific times, so as to benefit from their contacts and knowledge. During outreach, team members should always bear in mind that participation in the research by children, caretakers and key informants is on a voluntary basis only. Children, caretakers and key informants should always be given a clear explanation of the purpose of the outreach and what their role is in relation to the research.

The team expresses and practices the principle of **confidentiality**. No names are being recorded during the research process and the children and caretakers should be informed of this. It should be explained to them that they have the right to opt out of the research/discussion if they so choose. They should also be informed that if they wish to participate, any information they provide will remain anonymous and confidential and will under no circumstances be used against them in issues concerning the law.

At all times, the outreach team members must show **respect** to the target groups and communities (this includes setting phones on silent mode) and must **never** judge or belittle them or their work.

The team must **not be intrusive** (do not wake the children up, disturb them whilst they are busy and working, etc.)

The team follows the established **reaction protocol** in the event that they witness or suspect abuse, exploitation or trafficking of a child.

It is not permitted to take **photographs** of individual children/youth. Group pictures can be taken for the purpose of the research, after seeking approval from the children and their caretakers. Photographing of the community surroundings is acceptable, again, if permission from those around you is sought. All photographs taken should be for research purposes only and are the property of the Mario project. Researchers do not have the right to use these photos for personal use (i.e. posting on facebook is not permitted).

Each team member should be **identifiable as being part of the team** (e.g. team t-shirts or team id cards must be worn where possible). Team members should wear simple, inexpensive clothing that ensures their safety (e.g. long sleeves and trousers and closed shoes). No jewelry or other expensive personal items (watches, phones, etc) should be worn or carried during the research.

Modes of transportation (on foot, bus, bicycle, motorbike, taxi, etc) should be similar to the transportation means used by the local population.

If in any circumstances, the team is not feeling safe, they should stop their activities and leave the area immediately or find refuge in a safe place.

Guidelines for Open Group Discussions

Mario Project Transnational Research on C/SEE migrant children

These guidelines have been designed for the Mario Project Transnational Research on Migrant Children in situations of vulnerability – May 2014.

These guidelines are designed to be used by the research teams during open group discussions but may be useful at other times during the research period. They are based upon the principles of the Terre des Hommes Child Protection Policy and complement the guidelines for street outreach and the guidelines for individual interviews.

Open Group Discussions in the context of children on the move

Open group discussions provide a great opportunity to go deeper into conversations with children on certain topics than is possible on the street and allow them to express their views in a relaxed and informal environment on certain key issues. Issues that arise during street interviews should be used as the focus for open group discussions. A simple analysis of snapshot/longer interview records should be made to see which topics need deeper or further examination within groups.

Parties

Given that interactions on the streets with children and their caretakers may often be brief, it is advised that 'Parties' be held for children to provide a space for such discussions to take place.

Parties should be held in an environment where children and caretakers feel comfortable (certain public areas e.g. park or children's drop-in centre or camp where children are living etc) and should be planned in advance by research teams to include fun activities (games, magazines from the children's home countries, music, dancing, snacks, draws...) to put the children and their caretakers, who should also be invited, at ease. The first time you plan a party, children and caretakers might be wary of attending but a second party should be better attended once word gets out about how much fun it they are!

It is advised that the first party is planned for day 3 of the research and the second party for the last day.

Facilitating discussions during the parties

There should be no more than eight to ten participants in each open group discussion.

The group is invited to sit in a circle on chairs or on a mat / cushions on the ground. Eye contact between all members of the group is the main aim of the seating arrangement.

Participants are not given any gifts or money in exchange for their participation. A snack and drinks will be distributed at the end of the discussion or after 20 mn if the discussion lasts longer than 20 mn.

Before initiating group discussion:

- Short introduction to explain the purpose of the evaluation, present the confidentiality aspects, define basic rules and seek consent of the participants.
- Confidentiality aspects: the researchers will not reveal anything anyone has said using their name but the information they provide will be used to inform the program development. A commitment from the group to keep each other's confidence confidential is sought as well.
- Consultant asks if it is OK that he takes notes, notes are for him to remember discussion and will not be shared with others.

Bear in mind that many children, particularly those on the move, do not have a developed sense of time and should therefore be reminded by peers or researchers about the timing of the party just before it starts. An outreach session before the party is essential.

A series of tools might be useful to aid discussion/expression on the part of the children and caretakers. The tools below are only suggested tools and researchers should feel free to select or add ones that are best suited to the target group. Some of the tools are also suitable for use with caretakers and if the size of the location allows, open group discussions with caretakers can be facilitated by one staff member whilst others facilitate sessions with one or more groups of children.

1. River of Life

Objective: River of life is a visual narrative method that helps people tell stories of the past, present and future. Individuals can use this method to introduce themselves in a fun and descriptive way; a group can use it to understand and reflect on the past and imagine the future; and it can be used to build a shared view compiled of different and perhaps differing perspectives. River of Life focuses on drawing rather than text, making it useful in groups that do not share a language or have difficulties to express feelings and emotions. When used in a group, it is an active method, good for engaging people. The steps below describe how to use this tool as a group activity but please feel free to adapt it your particular circumstances.

Steps

- Break into small groups and ask people to think about the past, present and future of the their movements between cities and countries.
- Ask them to draw images, or find images in magazines that represent key milestones from the past, present and those they would envision for the future. It can be useful to do this in phases, starting with the past. Then invite the present. Finally invite the future. You may wish to stop and have conversations around the image after each phase.
- On a large piece of paper on the wall ask a volunteer to draw the river flowing through the paper.
- Ask the groups to come up and place their images (with glue sticks, tape, etc.) on the paper. Encourage discussion while participants are working at the wall.

After the group has finished putting up images, initiate a discussion about what they see; reflect on past lessons, current situations and visions for the future.

2. Risk Mapping

Objectives:

- To enable girls and boys to identify positive and negative aspects of their local communities
- To enable girls and boys to identify key risks which they would like to change

Steps

- Give a group of children or young people a large piece of paper and pens or pencils. Ask them to collectively build a map of their community/camp highlighting all the important places in their community.
- Ask the children and/or young people to highlight/ draw the places they like and/or feel safe in their community/camp (for example, each child could put a happy face or tick mark by the places they like). Enable group discussion on the issues raised.
- Ask the children to draw/ highlight the dangerous places in their community/camp, places where they don't feel safe / they are scared/ where they face risks or places where accidents happen (for example, each child could place a sad face or cross mark by these places). Enable group discussion on the issues raised.
- Ask children and/or young people to indicate 3 risk areas in their community/camp that they would most like to change (for example, each child could place a star by three things they would like to change). Enable group discussion on the issues raised, for example has their children's group ever tried to address any of these risks? Do they think something practical can be done to address the risks?
- Enable a broader discussion with regards to action that needs to be taken to address and protect girls and boys from different forms of risk and abuse.

3. Flower Map

Objective: To explore children and young people's views on whom they seek and gain support from during times of conflict, difficulty or distress, daily stressors and the kinds of support they do and/or do not receive.

Steps

Enable small groups of girls and/or boys (of a similar age group) to draw the centre of a flower which represents them.

Ask the children/ young people to draw petals to go around the centre of the flower to represent which people they seek support from during times of conflict, difficulty or distress, and the kind of support they receive.

The petals should be drawn bigger for the people they most often seek support from and/or the people who support them most. The name/characteristic of the people (for example, parents, friends, teacher etc) should be written inside. The petals should be drawn smaller for people they occasionally seek support from and/or for people who provide less support – again ensure that the names/characteristics of the people are written inside the petal.

- Enable children to share their flowers explaining which people provide most support to them during difficult times, and the kinds of support provided.
- Enable group discussion on: – the characteristics of people that enable them to be most helpful or supportive (as well as negative characteristics that make it harder for some people to provide support to children and young people) – the kinds of support most sought by children and young people during times of conflict, difficulty

or distress – any kinds of support that are lacking – the role that children and young people play in supporting their peers, siblings etc.

Guidelines for interviews with children, caretakers and key community informants

Mario Project Transnational Research on C/SEE migrant children

These guidelines have been designed for the Mario Project Transnational Research on Migrant Children in situations of vulnerability – May 2014.

These guidelines are based upon the principles of the Terre des Hommes Child Protection Policy and complement the guidelines for outreach and the guidelines for Open Group Discussions.

Interviews will be conducted with the following:

Children

Children on the move who are carrying out an economic activity on the streets or accompanying a person carrying out an economic activity on the streets.

Children can be interviewed from age 6 on.

Adults

Caretakers (parents or other adults looking after the children) of target children and any adult from the same communities as target children.

Key community informants

Defined as any person in a position to have knowledge on the target children as a result of their daily occupation (but not a key stakeholder): bus or taxi drivers, staff from train stations, shop sellers, guards, street cleaners, beggars, etc.

Interviews in the context of migrant children on the move engaged in economic activities on the streets

Children targeted by the research teams have many reasons to be unavailable or reluctant to answer questions. It should therefore be expected that many children will decline answering questions. Given that the children do not know or trust the researchers and they have no real reason for providing teams with information, they may provide false information to the research teams (lying can actually be quite fun!).

The best way for researchers to initiate interviews and ensure quality of the information provided by children is reasonable through a *flexible, friendly and transparent approach*.

Technical aspects for interviews

Snapshot interviews / full interviews

2 types of interviews will be used:

- Snapshot interviews (one or two minutes) – no notes are taken and information is compiled on the “observation & snapshot grid” after the interview
- Full interviews (15–20 min) using a questionnaire

It is likely that in many instances, both types of interviews will be mixed as a snapshot interview might develop into a full interview if the contact between the interviewer and the interviewee is good.

The consultant will practice conducting interviews with the research teams during day 1 of the consultant's visit.

"The first 5 seconds"

A warm, friendly and succinct introduction of the researcher (using first name) and the research team is essential when engaging with children and their caretakers. In the majority of cases, the child/caretaker instinctively decides whether he/she wants to talk to the team or whether he/she would rather be left alone during the first 5 seconds.

Introduction and conclusion of interviews

Every interview (snapshot interview or full interview – 20 seconds interview or 20 minutes interview) starts with an *introduction*- including a presentation of the researcher(s) and the purpose of the research – and finishes with *simple useful tips / contacts* (to be defined during Day 1 of the research visit).

The introduction and conclusion for interviews will be discussed with every team locally during the 1st day of the visit of the consultant. This is an important part of the Day 1 training.

Individual interviews or small group interviews

Both are possible. Some children like to be interviewed on their own, while others feel reassured doing the interview with a friend or a caretaker.

When children are met in presence of their caretakers, the research team aims first at interviewing the caretaker, and secondly the targeted children.

Whenever caretakers insist on joining the interview of a child (and will not change their mind after a joke) they should not be discouraged (actually they should gradually become the center of the interview) as this might later mean trouble for the child.

It is often reassuring for teenagers to be accompanied by a friend: running small group interviews is absolutely OK as long as the respondents are fine with it. Small group interviews should not include more than 4 persons.

Materials available during interviews

Often having objects or materials available for interviewees to 'play' with will help them feel more at ease during the interview. These can include coloured pens, paper, maps, toys, etc and should be made available by the research teams, notably during longer interviews.

Location of interviews

Interviews should be conducted in a location where the person being interviewed feels comfortable (it can be sitting on the ground, standing against the wall, on a bench, in a cafeteria, etc). As a general rule, it should take place where the interviewer and interviewees can be seen but not heard. In line with the child protection policy, the interview should never take place in a closed room.

For longer interviews informed consent must be obtained

Children and/or their caretakers must be informed in detail about the purpose of the interview and give consent to being interviewed before it begins.

Researchers must explain to the children that they have the right to decide how much and what information they provide. Children should be empowered and feel in control. If a child so wishes and requests that the interview be stopped, interviews should be brought to a stop immediately.

Questionnaires should be filled in full view of the child or caretaker so that the interviewee is able to read what the researcher is writing.

Sensitive issues: Direct questions about sensitive issues such as violence, alcoholism/ drugs, sexual abuse or exploitation should not be asked. Questions on sensitive issues should be indirect and if the personal situation of the interviewee is raised it should be on his/her initiative.

Coding of questionnaires

Given the anonymity of the research, children's names will not be recorded. Instead, a unique identifying pseudonym will be used for full interviews. Children will provide information for the unique identifying pseudonym as following:

- favourite number between 0–9,
- first 3 letters of favourite colour (in any language),
- first 3 letters of favourite star (sports player, singer, actor, etc) or person

Example: 5-YEL-BEY

(Favourite number: 5 /Favourite color: yellow / Favourite star: Beyoncé)

No coding is required on the "observation & snapshot grid" used for snapshot interviews and for observations.

Recordings

It is not permitted to make video recordings of children or caretakers during interviews.

It is also not recommended to make audio recordings of the person interviewed. However, if the researchers consider such recordings essential for a limited (not >3) number of interviews, the following protocol, in presence of 2 researchers, must be employed:

- The interviewee understands that he/she is being recorded, understands the reasons for it and agrees with the recording (in the case of a minor, his/her caretaker goes through same informed consent process). This is repeated and recorded on 2 more occasions: (1) when starting the recording and (2) before finishing the recording.
- If the person has initially agreed to be recorded but changes his/her mind during the recording, the records must be deleted immediately.

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR SNAPSHOT INTERVIEWS (CHILDREN AND/OR CAREGIVERS) (TOOL 1)

Mario Project Transnational Research on C/SEE migrant children

These guiding questions have been designed for the Mario Project Transnational Research on Migrant Children in situations of vulnerability – May 2014.

These guiding questions are to be used following the guidelines for outreach and for interviews.

Questions to be asked during snapshot interviews have to be adapted to the context of the discussion. Below are some questions that can guide researchers (the same questions are to be used for children and caretakers). These do not necessarily have to be used in the order below.

(safety and protection)

- Do you feel safe when you are working here / staying here?
- Are there people **or organisations** that can help you and your friends/family when you have a problem? (Are you sometimes in contact with social workers?)
- What are the main issues/problems you and your friends/family face?

(money)

- Are you making enough money with this job to stay in a decent place? (how much ? do you have other jobs / other income? Do you give a share of the money to someone?)

(personal situation)

- Where do you consider your home is? Here (present city) or in another place? Where exactly?
- Have you been coming (here) for many years? Do you stay here for most of the year?
- How old are you?

(leads for research)

Do you have any advice for me to conduct this research? (are there areas you think I should go to meet with other children or families from country?)

Final points:

Is there anything you would like to ask me?
Useful tips / contacts
Invite to party (and invite friends and family)

QUESTIONNAIRE WITH CHILDREN (TOOL 2)

Mario Project Transnational Research on C/SEE migrant children

COMPULSORY INTRODUCTION FOR RESEARCHERS

My name is [NAME] and I am working for an organisation called (name) which supports children and families from (country), especially those who are moving from one city or from one country to another and those who are working on the streets.

We are making a study to collect opinions of different people on the situation of those children.

If you agree to be in the study, I will ask you some questions and I will write your answers down. I will only write your answers, not your name. This is an anonymous study.

You may feel embarrassed when I ask you some questions, but remember that you do not have to answer any question that you don't want to answer and what you tell me will be kept 100% confidential.

The interview will last 20–25 minutes. You can decide to stop the interview at any time. You can ask questions at any time during the interview.

You will not be given money or anything else to participate in this study.

Do you have any questions now?

May I proceed with the interview? YES NO

IDENTIFYING CODE	number	color	star / person
Date & location of interview 1:	Date & location of interview 2:		
Is this ? <div style="text-align: right; padding-right: 20px;"> place residence place of work other (details) </div> children accompanied by: <div style="text-align: right; padding-right: 20px;"> caretaker other children other </div>	Is this ? <div style="text-align: right; padding-right: 20px;"> place residence place of work other (details) </div> children accompanied by: <div style="text-align: right; padding-right: 20px;"> caretaker other children other </div>		
1. GENERAL INFORMATION			
1.1.	Age:		
1.2.	Sex:		
1.3.	Marital status:		
1.4.	Which languages can you speak?		
1.5.	Do you have health problems (sickness, injury, disability...) that you are worried about or that often require medical attention?		
	Y N Details		
1.6.	Family situation: Researchers and children quickly draw family situation (number of persons, age, gender, current location)		

2. MIGRATION					
2.1.	Where exactly are you from?	country	province	city	village
2.2.	Are the other people that you know here in (city), also coming from this area?	Yes	No	some yes some no	
2.3.	Do you always stay here? (Athens/Thessaloniki)	yes	no		
2.4.	If no, which other cities in Greece or in another country do you go to?				
2.5.	Do you remember when was the first time you came here? How many years ago?				
2.6.	How do you usually travel?	bus	train	minivan/ car	other
	details				
2.7.	Who do you travel with?				
2.8.	In which city do you like staying best?				
	why?				
2.9.	Usually, why do you, or your family decide to move to another country or city?				
2.10.	Are you in regular contact with friends and family in (origin country)?	yes	no	details	
2.11.	How often do you go back to (home country?)				
2.12.	why do you usually go back?				
2.13.	Where do you actually feel most at home?				
3. DAILY LIFE & WORK ACTIVITIES					
3.1.	What do you usually do everyday? Can you speak a little of your life? Are you feeling happy, lonely?				
3.2.	what is the part of the day you like best ?				
	why?				
3.3.	In (city), are you sleeping most of the time at the same place?	yes	no	details of locations and length	
3.4.	Who are you staying with / living with?				
3.5.	Do you go to school?	yes	not anymore	never been to school	
3.6.	if no, last level studied? Where did you study?				
3.7.	if yes, where are you studying, which level?				
3.8.	How do you make money? Which jobs?				
3.9.	When do you usually work? How many hours?				
	Why do you work at that time? (is someone asking you to?)				
3.10.	Do you feel safe when you are working?	yes	no		
3.11.	what are the problems you meet?				

QUESTIONNAIRE WITH CHILDREN (TOOL 2)

3.12.	How does it go with the police? do they let you work?			
3.13.	How much money do you usually earn in one day?	max	min	average
3.14.	What happens if on one day you cannot earn so much money?			
3.15.	May I ask how you manage the money you earn?	manage myself	give parents	give other person details
3.16.	what do you usually use your own money for?			
3.17.	Are you able to save money?	yes	no	
	if yes, tell me a bit about it (what for ? Saving system?)			
3.18.	Do you have friends, can you speak a bit about them?			
3.19.	coming from same origin area?	yes	no	details
3.20.	working same type of jobs?	yes	no	details
3.21.	What are the things that worry you most for yourself, for your family, for your friends?			
4.	PROTECTION NETWORK			
4.1.	Who are the people who can help you when you have a problem or need help?	friends	family	other
4.2.	Do you need some kind of help?	yes	no	details
4.3.	Do you have friends who need some kind of help?	yes	no	details
4.4.	Does someone in your family need some kind of help?	yes	no	details
4.5.	Are you sometimes in contact with staff from organisations that can provide help if needed?	yes	no	Note: if this city, or in other cities or in other countries
	IF YES,			
	Organisation / Institution / service 1	Name:		
4.61.	How do you get in contact with them? Is that convenient?			
4.62.	how are they helping? Is that useful?			
4.63.	In your opinion should they provide their services in a different manner or should they provide other services?			
4.64.	If I was their director, what would you tell me?			
	Organisation / Institution / service 2	Name:		
4.71.	How do you get in contact with them? Is that convenient?			
4.72.	how are they helping? Is that useful?			
4.73.	In your opinion should they provide their services in a different manner or should they provide other services?			

4.74.	If I was their director, what would you tell me?	
	Organisation / Institution / service 3	Name: <input type="text"/>
4.81.	How do you get in contact with them? Is that convenient?	
4.82.	how are they helping? Is that useful?	
4.83.	In your opinion should they provide their services in a different manner or should they provide other services?	
4.84.	If I was their director, what would you tell me?	
5.	FINAL QUESTIONS	
5.1.	I am finished with my questions now. Would you like to discuss any other issue or do you have questions you would like to ask me?	
5.2.	How do you feel about this talk?	
6.	USEFUL TIPS & CONTACTS	
7.	PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT PARTY	
Thank you very much!!!		
OBSERVATIONS ON INTERVIEW (to be filled straight after interview by researcher)		
Comments about the interview / other information that the researcher has collected:		

QUESTIONNAIRE WITH CAREGIVERS (TOOL 3)

Mario Project Transnational Research on C/SEE migrant children

COMPULSORY INTRODUCTION BY RESEARCHERS			
My name is [NAME] and I am working for an organisation called (name) which supports children and families from (country), especially those who are moving from one city or from one country to another and those who are working on the streets.			
We are making a study to collect opinions of different people on the situation of those children.			
If you agree to be in the study, I will ask you some questions and I will write your answers down. I will only write your answers, not your name. This is an anonymous study.			
You may feel embarrassed when I ask you some questions, but remember that you do not have to answer any question that you don't want to answer and what you tell me will be kept 100% confidential.			
The interview will last 20–25 minutes. You can decide to stop the interview at any time. You can ask questions at any time during the interview.			
You will not be given money or anything else to participate in this study.			
Do you have any questions now?			
May I proceed with the interview? YES NO			
IDENTIFYING CODE		number	colour
Date & location of interview 1:		Date & location of interview 2:	
Is this ?		Is this ?	
	place residence place of work other (details)		place residence place of work other (details)
caretaker accompanied by:		caretaker accompanied by:	
own children		own children	
other children		other children	
other adults from same community		other adults from same community	
other		other	
1. GENERAL INFORMATION			
1.1	Age:		
1.2	sex:		
1.3	Marital status:		
1.4	Which languages can you speak ?		
1.5	Do you have health problems (sickness, injury, disability...) that you are worried about or that often require medical attention?		
	Y N Details		

2. MIGRATION					
2.1	Where exactly are you from?	country	province	city	village
2.2	Are the other people that you know here in (city), also coming from this area?	Yes	No	some yes some no	
2.3	Do you always stay here? (Athens/ Thessaloniki)	yes	no		
2.4	If no, which other cities in Greece or in another country do you go to?				
2.5	Do you remember when was the first time you came here? How many years ago?				
2.6	How do you usually travel?	bus	train	minivan/ car	other
	details				
2.7	Who do you travel with?				
2.8	Family situation: Researchers and children quickly draw family situation (number of persons, age, gender, current location)				
2.9	In which city do you like staying best?				
	why?				
2.10	Usually, why do you, or your family decide to move to another country or city?				
2.11	Did your own parents also travel to different cities and countries?	yes	no	details	
2.12	Are you in regular contact with friends and family in (country of origin)?	yes	no	details	
2.13	How often do you go back to (country of origin)?				
2.14	Why do you usually go back?				
2.15	Where do you actually feel most at home?				
3. DAILY LIFE & WORK ACTIVITIES					
3.1	What do you usually do everyday? Can you speak a little of your life? Are you feeling happy, lonely?				
3.2	What is the part of the day you like best?				
	Why?				
3.3	In (city), are you sleeping/living most of the time at the same place?	yes	no	details of locations and length	
3.4	Are you staying with / living with other families?				
	coming from same origin area?	yes	no	details	
	working same type of jobs?	yes	no	details	

QUESTIONNAIRE WITH CAREGIVERS (TOOL 3)

3.5	How do you help each other?			
3.6	What are the things that worry you most for yourself and for your family?			
3.7	Are there other children or young people that you are worried about?			
3.8	How do you make money? Which jobs?			
3.9	When do you usually work? How many hours?			
	Why do you work at that time? (is someone asking you to?)			
3.10	Do you feel safe when you are working?	yes	no	
3.11	what are the problems you meet?			
3.12	How does it go with the police? Do they let you work?			
3.13	How much money do you usually earn in one day?	max	min	average
3.14	Who would you say makes the largest income among the people who are working with you?			
3.15	May I ask how you manage the money you earn?	manage myself	give partner	give other person details
3.16	what do you usually use your own money for?			
3.17	Are you able to save money?	yes	no	
	if yes, tell me a bit about it (what for ? Saving system?)			
3.18	What are the different other jobs you have done in your life?			
	job 1			
	job 2			
	job 3			
	job 4			
	job 5			
4.	PROTECTION NETWORK			
4.1	Who are the people who can help you when you have a problem or need help?	friends	family	other
4.2	Do you need some kind of help?	yes	no	details
4.3	Do the children that you care for need some kind of help?	yes	no	details
4.4	Does someone in your family need some kind of help?	yes	no	details
4.5	Are you sometimes in contact with staff from organisations that can provide help if needed?	yes	no	details

	IF YES,	
4.6	Organisation / Institution / service 1	Name:
	How do you get in contact with them? Is that convenient?	
	how are they helping? Is that useful?	
	In your opinion should they provide their services in a different manner or should they provide other services?	
	If I was their director, what would you tell me?	
4.7	Organisation / Institution / service 2	Name:
	How do you get in contact with them? Is that convenient?	
	how are they helping? Is that useful?	
	In your opinion should they provide their services in a different manner or should they provide other services?	
	If I was their director, what would you tell me?	
4.8	Organisation / Institution / service 3	Name:
	How do you get in contact with them? Is that convenient?	
	how are they helping? Is that useful?	
	In your opinion should they provide their services in a different manner or should they provide other services?	
	If I was their director, what would you tell me?	
5.	FINAL QUESTIONS	
	I am finished with my questions now. Would you like to discuss any other issue or do you have questions you would like to ask me?	
	How do you feel about this talk?	
6.	USEFUL TIPS & CONTACTS	
7.	PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT PARTY	
	Thank you very much!!!	
	OBSERVATIONS ON INTERVIEW (to be filled straight after interview by researcher)	
	Comments about the interview:	

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR KEY COMMUNITY OBSERVANTS (TOOL 4)

Mario Project Transnational Research on C/SEE migrant children

Age

Sex

Occupation

1. What do you know about children working on the street in this area? What is your experience with them?
2. How would you describe their age? Are they mostly girls or boys? How about their national origin?
3. Can you describe their activities in the city?
4. Are their families or other adults involved in their life and activities on the street?
5. Do you see them all year or is it seasonal? Which periods of the year do you see them?
6. What time of the day do you usually see the children?
7. Is it usually the same children you see or do you see many different children?
8. Over one year how many different children do you think you see?
9. In general, what would you say is the interaction of these children with adults in the immediate environment?
10. What would you say are main risks related to their presence and activities on the street?
11. Would you be able to comment on their vulnerabilities?
12. How do you feel about them?
13. What do you know about child protection services?
14. Do you consider the system inclusive?
15. Is it easily accessible? Do you personally know which number to call if you see a child in danger?"
16. Is that effective?
17. In general, what do you think the perspective of authorities is on these children?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CONCERNED STAKEHOLDERS (TOOL 5)

Mario Project Transnational Research on C/SEE migrant children

1. What is the focus of your organization?
2. How does the activity of your organization link with children and families?
3. How about those on the move and street children? Do you know organisations working with those children and their communities?
4. What is the current legal and policy framework on child protection in your country/city?
5. Which institutions are in charge of its implementation?
6. Are there specialised child protection standards for particular groups of children?
7. What is the situation of children on the move in your country/city? What do you consider as children on the move? Are there statistics?
8. Would you say the system is inclusive?
9. What is your opinion on its effectiveness?
10. Would you be able to estimate the number of children and families that have received help from social services in your city/country?
11. Is it easily accessible by non-native families and children?
12. Could you describe the practice of institutions (NGOs, Government services, other...) with children on the move, particularly those that live/work on the streets? What services are in place?
13. What kind of provisions are in place for these families and children?
14. What are legal, administrative and practical obstacles that children on the move may face in accessing services?
15. When does that happen?
16. Do you know if there is documentation on those services?
17. Have you either produced, been involved in producing or use that documentation?
18. Has your organisation allocated a budget for child protection?
19. If so, how much is that?
20. Are there transnational/bilateral agreements on these children that the Government has signed/adopted?
21. What would you say are the socio-economic and political concerns/reactions that affect the government's response towards children and families on the move? How about those that get involved in economic activities on the street?
22. Is there anything else you would like to add to what you have already said? Would you recommend our research team to look into a specific geographic area or to focus on a specific group?



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JOINT ACTION TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM EXPLOITATION IN EUROPE