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**GROUP OF SPECIALISTS ON CHILD-FRIENDLY JUSTICE
(CJ-S-CH)**

**FINAL DRAFT
[RECOMMENDATION CONTAINING]
GUIDELINES OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE ON
CHILD-FRIENDLY JUSTICE**

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**Final Draft [Recommendation containing] Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers
of the Council of Europe on child-friendly justice**

PREAMBLE

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

- (a) Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between the member states, in particular by promoting the adoption of common rules in legal matters;
- (b) Considering the necessity of ensuring the effective implementation of existing binding universal and European standards protecting and promoting children's rights, including in particular:
 - the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees;
 - the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
 - the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
 - the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child;
 - the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
 - the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950, ETS No. 5) (hereafter the ECHR);
 - the European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights (1996, ETS No. 160);
 - the revised European Social Charter (1996, ETS No. 163);
 - the Council of Europe Convention on Contact concerning Children (2003, ETS No. 192);
 - the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (2007, ETS No. 201);
 - the European Convention on the Adoption of Children (Revised) (2008, ETS No. 202).
- (c) Considering that, as guaranteed under the ECHR and in line with the case law of the European Court of Human Rights, the right of any person to have access to justice and to a fair trial – in all its components (including in particular the right to be informed, the right to be heard, the right to a legal defence, and the right to be represented) - is necessary in a democratic society and equally applies to children;
- (d) Recalling relevant case law of the European Court of Human Rights, decisions, reports or other documents of other Council of Europe institutions and bodies including recommendations of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) as well as statements and opinions of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, and various recommendations of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe;
- (e) Noting various recommendations of the Committee of Ministers to member states in the area of children's rights, including Recommendation (2003)5 on measures of detention of asylum seekers, Recommendation (2003)20 concerning new ways of dealing with juvenile delinquency and the role of juvenile justice, Recommendation (2005)5 on the rights of children living in residential institutions, Recommendation (2008)11 on the European Rules for Juvenile Offenders subject to sanctions or measures, and Recommendation (2009)10 on Policy Guidelines on integrated national strategies for the protection of children from violence;
- (f) Recalling the Resolution n°2 on Child-friendly Justice, adopted at the 28th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers of Justice (Lanzarote, October 2007);
- (g) Considering the importance of safeguarding children's rights by other United Nations instruments such as:

- the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (“The Beijing Rules”, 1985),
 - the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (“The Havana Rules”, 1990),
 - the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (“The Riyadh guidelines”, 1990) ,
 - the United Nations Guidelines on Justice in matters involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime (ECOSOC Res 2005/20, 2005),
 - Guidance note of the United Nations Secretary General: UN approach to justice for children (2008),
 - the United Nations Guidelines for the Appropriate Use and Conditions of Alternative Care for Children (2009),
 - Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions for Protection and Promotion of Human Rights (“The Paris Principles”).
- (h) Recalling the need to guarantee the effective implementation of existing binding norms concerning children's rights, without preventing member states from introducing or applying higher standards or more favourable measures;
- (i) Referring to the Council of Europe Programme “Building a Europe for and with children”;
- (j) Acknowledging the progress made in member states towards implementing child-friendly justice;
- (k) Noting, nonetheless, existing obstacles for children within the justice system such as, among others, the non-existing, partial or conditional legal right to access to justice, the diversity in and complexity of procedures, possible discrimination on various grounds;
- (l) Recalling the need to prevent children from possible secondary victimisation by the judicial system in procedures involving or affecting them;
- (m) Calling upon the member states to speedily ratify, if not yet done so, all Council of Europe conventions concerning children’s rights;
- (n) Inviting member states to investigate the lacunae and problems and identify areas where child-friendly justice principles and practices could be introduced;
- (o) Calling upon member states to take all necessary steps to enforce the right of children to participate in procedures involving or affecting them;
- (p) Acknowledging the views and opinions of consulted children throughout the member states of the Council of Europe;
- (q) Encouraging, through education and support, the parents or legal representatives of children to exercise their own parental responsibilities in a positive way, including assisting children to access justice;
- (r) Ensuring that competent authorities exercise all the obligations making up for the absence of parental care for children living in institutions for residential care or detention, including the right to have access to justice;

- (s) Considering that all concerned professionals working in contact with children in justice systems should receive appropriate support and training as well as practical guidance in order to guarantee and implement adequately the rights of children, in particular while assessing children's best interests in all types of procedures involving or affecting them;
- (t) Noting that the guidelines aim to contribute to the identification of practical remedies to existing shortcomings in law and in practice;
- (u) Calling upon member states to ensure the implementation of these guidelines by means of legislative and policy reforms;

Adopts the following guidelines to serve as a practical tool for member states in adapting their judicial and non-judicial systems to the specific rights, interests and needs of children and invites member states to ensure that they are translated and widely disseminated among all authorities responsible for or otherwise involved with children's rights in justice.

I. DEFINITIONS, SCOPE AND PURPOSE

(1) For the purposes of these guidelines on child friendly justice (hereafter “the guidelines”):

a. A ‘child’ means any person under the age of 18 years.

b. ‘Child-friendly justice’ refers to justice systems which guarantee the respect and the effective implementation of all children's rights at the highest attainable level, bearing in mind the principles listed below and giving due consideration to the child’s level of maturity and understanding and the circumstances of the case; It is, in particular, justice that is accessible, age appropriate, speedy, adapted to and focused on the needs and rights of the child, respecting the rights of the child including the rights to due process, to participate in and to understand the proceedings, to privacy and to integrity and dignity.

c. A ‘parent’ refers to the person(s) with parental responsibility, according to national law. In case the parent(s) is/are absent or no longer holding parental responsibility, this can be a guardian or an appointed legal representative.

(2) The guidelines deal with the issue of the place and role, the views, rights and needs of the child in judicial proceedings as well as in alternatives to such proceedings.

(3) The guidelines shall apply to all ways in which children are likely to be, for whichever reason and in whichever capacity, brought into contact with all competent bodies and services involved in implementing criminal, civil or administrative law.

(4) The guidelines aim to ensure that, in any such proceedings, all rights of children, among which the right to information, to representation, to participation and to protection, are fully respected with due consideration to the child’s level of maturity and understanding as well as to the circumstances of the case.

II. FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

(1) The guidelines build on the existing principles enshrined in the instruments referred to in the Preamble as well as the case law of the European Court of Human Rights.

(2) These principles are further developed in the following sections and shall apply to all chapters of these guidelines.

A. Participation

(1) Member states shall respect and implement the right of all children to be informed about their rights, to be given appropriate ways to access justice and to be consulted and heard in proceedings involving or affecting them. This includes giving due weight to the child’s views bearing in mind their maturity and any communication difficulties they may have in order to make this participation meaningful.

(2) Children shall be considered and treated as full holders of rights and should be entitled to exercise all their rights in a manner that recognises their evolving capacities.

B. Best interests of the child

- (1) Member states shall guarantee the effective implementation of the right of children to have their best interests be a primary consideration in all matters involving or affecting them.
- (2) In assessing the best interests of the involved or affected children,
 - a. their views and opinions shall be given due weight;
 - b. all other rights of the child, such as the right to dignity, liberty and equal treatment shall be respected at all times;
 - c. a comprehensive approach shall be adopted by all relevant authorities so as to take due account of all interests at stake, including psychological and physical well-being and legal, social and economic interests of the child.
- (3) The best interests of all children involved in the same procedure or case shall be separately assessed and balanced with a view to reconciling possible conflicting interests of the children.
- (4) While the judicial authorities have the ultimate competence and responsibility for making the final decisions, member states shall make, where necessary, concerted efforts to establish multidisciplinary approaches with the objective of assessing the best interests of children in procedures involving them.

C. Dignity

- (1) Children shall be treated with care, sensitivity, fairness and respect throughout any procedure or case, with special attention for their personal situation, well-being and specific needs, and with full respect for their physical and psychological integrity. This treatment shall be given to them, in whichever way they have come into contact with judicial or non-judicial proceedings or other interventions and regardless of their legal status and capacity in any procedure or case.
- (2) Children shall not be subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

D. Protection from discrimination

- (1) The rights of children shall be secured without discrimination on any grounds such as sex, race, colour or ethnic background, age, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, socio-economic background, status of their parent(s), association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity or other status.
- (2) Specific protection and assistance need to be granted to more vulnerable children, such as migrant children, refugee and asylum seeking children, unaccompanied children, children with disabilities, homeless and street children, Roma children, and children in residential institutions.

E. Rule of law

- (1) The rule of law principle shall apply fully to children as it does to adults.
- (2) Elements of due process such as the principles of legality and proportionality, the presumption of innocence, the right to a fair trial, the right to legal advice including effective access to a lawyer, the right to access to courts and the right to appeal, shall be guaranteed for children as they are for adults and should not be minimised or denied under the pretext of the child's best interests. This applies to all judicial and non-judicial and administrative proceedings.
- (3) Children shall have the right to access appropriate independent and effective complaints mechanisms.

III. CHILD-FRIENDLY JUSTICE BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS

A. General elements of child-friendly justice

1. Information and advice

- (1) From their first involvement with the justice system or other competent authorities (such as the police, immigration, educational, social or health care services) and throughout that process, children and their parents shall be promptly and adequately informed of *inter alia*:
 - (a) Their rights in particular the specific rights children have with regard to judicial or non-judicial proceedings in which they are or might be involved, as well as the instruments available to remedy possible violations of their rights including the opportunity to have recourse to either a judicial or non-judicial proceeding or other interventions. This may include information on the likely duration of proceedings, possible access to appeals and independent complaints mechanisms;
 - (b) The system and processes involved taking into consideration the particular place the child will have and the role he/she may play in it and the different procedural steps;
 - (c) The existing support mechanisms for the child when participating in the judicial or non-judicial process;
 - (d) The appropriateness and possible consequences of a given in-court or out-of-court proceedings;
 - (e) Where applicable, the charges or the follow-up given to their complaint;
 - (f) The time and place of court proceedings and other relevant events (such as hearings);
 - (g) The general progress and outcome of the proceedings or intervention;
 - (h) The availability of protective measures;
 - (i) The existing mechanisms for review of decisions affecting the child;
 - (j) The existing opportunities to obtain reparation from the offender or from the state through the justice process, through alternative civil proceedings or through other processes;
 - (k) The availability of the services (health, psychological, social, interpretation and translation, and other) or organisations which can provide support as well as the means of accessing such services along with emergency financial support, where applicable;
 - (l) Any special arrangements available in order to protect their best interests if they are resident in another state.
- (2) The information and advice shall be provided to children in a manner adapted to their age and maturity, in a language which they can understand and which is gender- and culture-sensitive.
- (3) As a rule, both the child and parents or legal representatives should directly receive the information. Provision of the information to the parents shall not be an alternative to communicating the information to a child.
- (4) Child-friendly materials containing relevant legal information should be made available and widely distributed. Member states are encouraged to establish special information services for children such as specialised websites and helplines.
- (5) Information on any charges against the child must be given promptly and directly after the charges are brought. This information should be given to both the child and the parents in such a way that they understand the exact charge as well as the possible consequences.

2. Protection of privacy

- (1) The privacy and personal data of children who are or have been involved in judicial or non-judicial proceedings and other interventions shall be fully protected. This generally implies that no information or personal data may be made available or published, particularly in the media, which could reveal or indirectly enable the disclosure of the child's identity, including image, detailed descriptions of the child or the child's family, names or addresses, audio and video records, etc.
- (2) Member states should prevent violations of the privacy rights as mentioned under (1) by the media through legislative measures or monitoring self-regulation by the media.
- (3) Member states should stipulate limited access to all records or documents containing personal and sensitive data of children, in particular in proceedings involving them. If the transfer of personal and sensitive data is necessary, while taking into account the best interests of the child, member states should regulate this transfer in line with relevant data protection legislation.
- (4) Whenever children are being heard or giving evidence in judicial or non-judicial proceedings or other interventions, where appropriate, this should preferably take place *in camera*. As a rule, only those directly involved should be present, provided that they do not obstruct the evidence of the child.
- (5) Professionals working with and for children shall abide by the strict rules of confidentiality.

3. Safety (Special preventive measures)

- (1) In all judicial and non-judicial proceedings or other interventions, children have the right to be protected from harm, including intimidation, reprisals and secondary victimisation.
- (2) Professionals working with and for children shall, where necessary, be subject to regular and comprehensive vetting, according to national law and the independence of the judiciary, to ensure their suitability to work with children.
- (3) Special precautionary measures should apply to children when the alleged perpetrator is a parent, a member of the family or a primary caregiver.

4. Training of professionals

- (1) All professionals working with and for children should receive necessary interdisciplinary training on the rights and needs of children of different age groups, as well as on proceedings that are adapted to them.
- (2) Professionals having direct contact with children should also be trained in communicating with them at all ages and stages of development as well as with children in situations of particular vulnerability.

5. Multidisciplinary approach

- (1) With full respect of the child's right to privacy, close co-operation between different professionals should be encouraged in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the child as well as an assessment of his/her legal, psychological, social, emotional, physical and cognitive situation.
- (2) A common assessment framework should be established for professionals working with or for children (such as lawyers, psychologists, physicians, police, immigration officials, social workers and mediators) in proceedings or interventions that involve or affect children to provide any necessary support to those taking decisions that will best serve their interests in a given case.

- (3) While implementing a multidisciplinary approach, professional rules on confidentiality shall be respected.

6. Deprivation of liberty

- (1) Any form of deprivation of liberty of children shall be a measure of last resort and be for the shortest appropriate period of time. Further, special efforts must be undertaken to avoid pre-trial detention.
- (2) When deprivation of liberty is imposed, children shall, as a rule, be held separately from adults. When children are detained with adults, this shall be for exceptional reasons and based solely on the best interests of the child. In all circumstances, children shall be detained in premises suited to their needs.
- (3) Given the vulnerability of children deprived of liberty, the importance of family ties and promoting the reintegration into society, competent authorities shall ensure respect and actively support the fulfilment of the rights of the child as set out in universal and European instruments. In addition to other rights, children in particular have the right to:
 - (a) maintain regular and meaningful contact with parents, family and friends through visits and correspondence, except when restrictions are required in the interests of justice and the interests of the child. Restrictions on this right should never be used as a punishment;
 - (b) receive appropriate education, vocational guidance and training, medical care, and enjoy freedom of thought, conscience and religion and access to leisure, including physical education and sport;
 - (c) access programmes that prepare children in advance for their return to their communities, with full attention given to them in respect of their emotional and physical needs, their family relationships, housing, schooling and employment possibilities and socio-economic status.
- (4) The deprivation of liberty of unaccompanied minors, including those seeking asylum, and separated children shall never be motivated or based solely on the absence of residence status.

B. Child-friendly justice before judicial proceedings

- (1) The minimum age of criminal responsibility shall not be too low and shall be determined by law.
- (2) Alternatives to judicial proceedings such as mediation, diversion and alternative dispute resolution should be encouraged whenever these may best serve the child's best interests. The preliminary use of such alternatives should not be used as an obstacle to the child's access to justice.
- (3) Children shall be thoroughly informed and consulted on the opportunity to have recourse to either a court proceeding or alternatives outside court settings. This information should also explain the possible consequences of each option. Based on adequate information, both legal and otherwise, a choice should be available to use either court procedures or alternatives for these proceedings whenever they exist. Children must be given the opportunity to obtain legal advice and other assistance in determining the appropriateness and desirability of the proposed alternatives. In making this decision, the views of the child should be taken into account.
- (4) Alternatives to court proceedings should guarantee an equivalent level of legal safeguards. Respect for children's rights as described in these guidelines and in all relevant legal instruments on the rights of the child should be guaranteed to the same extent in both in-court and out-of-court proceedings.

C. Children and the police

- (1) Police shall respect the personal rights and dignity of all children and have regard to their vulnerability, i.e. take account of their age and level of maturity and any special needs of those who may be under a physical or mental disability or have communication difficulties.
- (2) Whenever a child is apprehended by the police, the child shall be informed in a manner and in language that is appropriate to his or her age and level of understanding of the reason for which he or she has been taken into custody. Children shall be provided with access to a lawyer and be given the opportunity to contact their parents or a person whom they trust.
- (3) Save in exceptional circumstances, the parent shall be informed of the child's presence in the police station, given details of the reason why the child has been taken into custody and be asked to come to the station.
- (4) A child who has been taken into custody shall not be questioned in respect of criminal behaviour, or asked to make or sign a statement concerning such involvement, except in the presence of a lawyer, and preferably one of the child's parents or, if no parent is available, another person whom the child trusts. The parent or this person may be excluded if suspected of involvement in the criminal behaviour or if engaging in conduct which amounts to an obstruction of justice.
- (5) Police shall ensure that no child in their custody is detained together with adults.
- (6) Authorities should ensure that children in police custody are kept in conditions that are safe and appropriate to their needs.
- (7) In member states where this falls under their mandate, prosecutors shall ensure that child-friendly approaches are used throughout the investigation process.

D. Child-friendly justice during judicial proceedings

1. Access to court and to the judicial process

- (1) As bearers of rights, children shall have recourse to remedies to effectively exercise their rights or act upon violations of their rights. The domestic law of the member states should facilitate the possibility of direct and autonomous access to court for children who have sufficient understanding of their rights as well as of the use of remedies to protect these rights, based on adequately given legal advice.
- (2) Any obstacles to access to court, such as the cost of the proceedings, the lack of legal counsel, etc., should be removed.
- (3) In cases of certain specific crimes committed against children, or certain aspects of civil or family law, access to court should be granted for a period of time after the child has reached the age of majority where necessary. Member states are encouraged to review their statutes of limitation.

2. Legal counsel and representation

- (1) Children should have the right to their own legal counsel and representation, in their own name, especially in proceedings where there is, or could be, a conflict of interest between the child and the parents or other involved parties.
- (2) Children should have access to free legal aid.

- (3) Lawyers representing children should be trained in and knowledgeable on children's rights and related issues, receive ongoing and in-depth training and be capable of communicating with children at their level of understanding.
- (4) Children should be considered as fully-fledged clients with their own rights and lawyers representing children should bring forward the opinion of the child.
- (5) Lawyers should provide the child with all necessary information and explanations concerning the possible consequences of the child's views and/or opinions.
- (6) In cases where there are conflicting interests between parents and children, the competent authority should appoint either a guardian *ad litem* or an independent representative to represent the views and interests of the child.
- (7) Adequate representation and the right to be represented independently from the parents should be guaranteed, especially in proceedings where the parents, members of the family or caregivers are the alleged offenders.

3. Right to be heard and to express views

- (1) Judges shall respect the right of children to be heard in all matters that affect them. Means used for this purpose should be adapted to the child's level of understanding and ability to communicate and take into account the circumstances of the case. Children should have a choice of or at least should be consulted on the manner in which they wish to be heard.
- (2) Due weight shall be given to the child's views and opinion in accordance with his or her age and maturity.
- (3) The right to be heard is a right of the child, not a duty on the child. It implies the right to remain silent; children should never be forced to give their views.
- (4) A child shall not be precluded from being heard solely on the basis of age. Whenever a child takes the initiative to be heard in a case that affects him or her, the judge shall not refuse to receive the child and shall listen to his or her views and opinion on matters concerning him or her in the case.
- (5) Children shall be provided with all necessary information on how effectively to use the right to be heard. However, they should be explained that their right to be heard and to have their views taken into consideration may not necessarily determine the final decision.
- (6) Judgments and court rulings affecting children should be duly motivated and explained to them in language that children can understand, particularly those decisions in which the child's views and opinions have not been followed.

4. Avoiding undue delay

- (1) In all proceedings involving children, the principle of immediacy should be applied to provide a speedy response and protect the best interests of the child, while respecting the rule of law.
- (2) In family law cases (for example parentage, custody, parental abduction and adoption cases), courts should exercise exceptional diligence to avoid any risk of adverse consequences on the family relations.
- (3) When necessary, judicial authorities should consider the possibility of taking provisional decisions or making preliminary judgments to be monitored for a certain period of time in order to be reviewed later.

- (4) Judicial authorities should have the possibility to take decisions which are immediately enforceable in cases where this would be in the best interests of the child.

5. Organisation of the proceedings, child-friendly environment and child-friendly language

- (1) In all proceedings, children should be treated with respect for their age, their special needs, their maturity and level of understanding and bearing in mind any communication difficulties they may have. Cases involving children should be dealt with in non-intimidating and child-sensitive settings.
- (2) Before proceedings begin, children should be familiarised with the layout of the court or other facilities and the roles and identities of the officials involved.
- (3) Language appropriate to age and level of understanding should be used.
- (4) When children are heard or interviewed in judicial and non-judicial proceedings and during other interventions, judges and other professionals should interact with them with respect and sensitivity.
- (5) Children should be allowed to be accompanied by their parents, or, where appropriate, an adult of their choice, unless a motivated decision has been made to the contrary in respect of that person.
- (6) Interview methods, such as video or audio-recording or pre-trial hearings *in camera*, should be used and considered as admissible evidence.
- (7) Children should be protected, as far as possible, against images or information that could be harmful to their welfare. In deciding on disclosure of possibly harmful images or information to the child, the judge should seek advice from other professionals, such as psychologists and social workers.
- (8) Court sessions involving children should be adapted to the child's pace and attention span: regular breaks should be foreseen and hearings should not last too long. To facilitate the participation of children to their full cognitive capacity and to support their emotional stability, disruption and distractions during court sessions should be kept to a minimum.
- (9) As far as appropriate, interviewing and waiting rooms shall be arranged for children in a child-friendly environment.
- (10) As far as possible, specialist courts (or court chambers), procedures and institutions should be established for children in conflict with the law. This could include the establishment of specialised units within the police, the judiciary, the court system and the prosecutor's office.

6. Evidence / statements by children

- (1) Interviews of and the gathering of statements from children should always be carried out by trained professionals. Every effort should be made for children to give evidence in the most favourable settings and under the most suitable conditions, having regard to their age, maturity and level of understanding and any communication difficulties the child may have.
- (2) Audiovisual statements from children who are victims or witnesses should be encouraged, while respecting the right of other parties to contest the content of such statements.
- (3) When more than one interview is necessary, they should preferably be carried out by the same person, in order to ensure consistency and coherence of approach in the best interests of the child.

- (4) The number of interviews should be as limited as possible and their length should be adapted to the child's age and attention span.
- (5) Direct contact, confrontation or interaction between a child victim or witness with alleged perpetrators should, as far as possible, be avoided unless at the request of the child victim.
- (6) Children should have the opportunity to give evidence in criminal cases without the presence of the alleged perpetrator.
- (7) The existence of less strict rules on giving evidence such as absence of the requirement for oath or other similar declarations, or other child-friendly procedural measures, should not in itself diminish the value given to a child's testimony or evidence.
- (8) Interview protocols that take into account different stages of the child's development should be designed and implemented to underpin the validity of children's evidence. These should avoid suggestive or leading questions and thereby enhance reliability.
- (9) With regard to the best interests and well-being of children, it should be possible for a judge to allow a child not to testify. Such a decision should be duly motivated and the child should be informed of the possible consequences of such refusal.
- (10) A child's statements and evidence should never be presumed invalid or untrustworthy by reason only of the child's age.
- (11) Member states should examine the possibility of taking statements of child victims and witnesses in specially designed child-friendly facilities and child-friendly environment.

E. Child-friendly justice after judicial proceedings

- (1) The child's lawyer or representative should explain the given decision or judgment to the child in a language adapted to the child's level of understanding and should give the necessary information on possible measures that could be taken, such as appeal or independent complaint mechanisms.
- (2) National authorities should take all necessary steps to facilitate the execution of judicial decisions/rulings involving and affecting children without delay.
- (3) When enforcement is ineffective, children should be informed of available remedies either through complaint mechanisms or access to justice.
- (4) Execution of judgments by force should be a measure of last resort in family cases when children are involved, except in circumstances of imminent risk to the child.
- (5) After judgments in highly conflictual proceedings, guidance and support should be offered, ideally free of charge, to children and their families by specialised services.
- (6) Particular health care and appropriate social and therapeutic intervention programmes or measures for victims of neglect, violence, abuse or other crimes should be provided, ideally free of charge, and children and their caregivers should be promptly and adequately informed of the availability of such services.
- (7) The child's lawyer, guardian *ad litem* or representative should have a mandate to take all necessary steps to claim for damages during or after criminal proceedings in which the child was a victim. Whenever possible, the costs should be covered by the state and recovered from the perpetrator.

- (8) Measures and sanctions for children in conflict with the law should always be constructive and individualised responses to the committed acts, bearing in mind the principle of proportionality, the child's age, physical and mental well-being and development and the circumstances of the case. The right to education, vocational training, employment, rehabilitation and reintegration should be guaranteed.
- (9) In order to promote the reintegration within society, and according to national law, criminal records of children should be non-disclosable outside the justice system on reaching the age of majority. Exceptions for the disclosure of such information can be permitted in cases of serious offences, in cases of employment with vulnerable adults or children or for reasons of public safety.

IV. PROMOTING OTHER CHILD-FRIENDLY ACTIONS AND APPROACHES

Member states are encouraged to:

- (1) promote research into all aspects of child-friendly justice, including child-sensitive interviewing techniques and dissemination of information and training on such techniques;
- (2) exchange practice and promote co-operation in the field of child-friendly justice internationally;
- (3) promote the publication and widest possible dissemination of child-friendly versions of relevant legal instruments;
- (4) set up, or maintain and reinforce where necessary, information offices for children's rights, possibly linked to bar associations, welfare services, (children's) ombudsmen, NGOs etc.;
- (5) facilitate children's access to courts and complaint mechanisms and further recognise and facilitate the role of NGOs and other independent bodies or institutions such as children's ombudsmen in supporting children's effective access to courts and independent complaint mechanisms, both on a national and international level;
- (6) support the establishment of a system of specialised judges and lawyers for children and further develop the concept of specialised courts in which both legal and social measures can be taken in favour of children and their families;
- (7) develop and facilitate the use by children and others acting on their behalf of universal and European human and children's rights mechanisms for the pursuit of justice and protection of rights when domestic remedies do not exist or have been exhausted;
- (8) make human rights, including children's rights, a mandatory component in the school curricula and for professionals working with children;
- (9) develop and support systems aimed at raising the awareness of parents on children's rights;
- (10) set up child-friendly, multi-agency and interdisciplinary centres for child victims and witnesses where children could be interviewed and medically examined for forensic purposes, comprehensively assessed and receive all relevant therapeutic services from appropriate professionals;
- (11) set up specialised and accessible support and information services, such as online consultation, help lines and local community services free of charge.

V. MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

- (1) Member states should review domestic legislation, policies and practices to ensure the necessary reforms to implement these guidelines.
- (2) Member states should periodically review and evaluate their working methods within the child-friendly justice setting.
- (3) Member states, in accordance with their judicial and administrative systems, should maintain or establish a framework, including one or more independent mechanisms, as appropriate, to promote and monitor implementation of the present guidelines.
- (4) Civil society, in particular organisations, institutions and bodies which aim to promote and to protect the rights of the child, should participate fully in the monitoring process.