

# JERICH0

Speak out to break down the wall that makes underage prostitution invisible

## D2.1 Country report. Greece

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## Introduction

A comprehensive legal framework on prostitution of minors exists at national, European and international levels, although experts have observed a notable absence of targeted measures aimed at preventing and combating this scourge, which is estimated to affect hundreds of thousands of minors across Europe. The sensitive nature of the subject and the scarcity of available data have hindered a thorough understanding of the extent of prostitution of minors thus far. In Greece, the available data refer to the issue of child trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation and not to the broader issue of prostitution of minors. Even though the statistics are low, they do not correspond to reality due to the observed large-scale under-reporting, reported by the interviewees. Prostitution of minors, alongside any other form of child sexual abuse, is a growing tragedy that inflicts unprecedented long-term physical and psychological consequences upon its victims. It is of crucial importance that necessary attention is given to it so as to be effectively addressed.

The “Jericho” project intends to contribute to making the phenomenon of prostitution of minors known, visible and talked about so that it can be prevented and treated, as well as supporting and protecting the direct and indirect victims in France, Italy and Greece. More specifically, the project has the following objectives:

- To gather and strengthen knowledge on the phenomenon of prostitution of minors, to associate a community of actors and create information content on different media, for different audiences, by creating and delivering:
  - Country reports
  - Animated web series
  - Prevention resource kit
  - Information guide for parents
  - Policy papers
  - Press release
- To run a campaign to raise awareness and prevent the prostitution of minors, targeting young people and their families, as well as institutions, in order to raise awareness and provoke reactions from the authorities, by:
  - Creating a multilingual website for parents and victims
  - Developing information campaigns on social media (Facebook, Instagram)
  - Organising a final conference with the participating organisations and representatives of the institutions, European Parliament and European networks

The present national report aims to provide an overview of the situation regarding the prostitution of minors in Greece, along with an extensive mapping of stakeholders at both national and EU levels. It is based on a literature review and qualitative data analysis resulting from interviews with professionals working in the field, conducted in Greece by KMOP. More precisely, six professionals with diverse occupations, including lawyers, psychologists, social workers, project managers working in the police, other competent public authorities and CSOs were interviewed. The fieldwork took place between April and July 2023.

## Legal framework on prostitution of minors at national, European and international levels

Prostitution of minors<sup>1</sup> is defined as: *“the use of a child in sexual activities for remuneration or any other form of consideration”* (Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, p. art. 2). Other forms of consideration include inter alia: shelter, food, drugs and objects. It is not necessarily the child who receives the object of exchange, but often a third person. Additionally, an object of exchange does not need to be actually provided; rather the mere promise of exchange suffices, even if it remains unfulfilled (ECPAT, 2016, p. 29). Being a form of child sexual abuse, which is manifested in different ways, there are various offences related to it that are explicitly criminalised in the Greek Penal Code (GPC).

### National level

To begin with, article 351A of the GPC, named *“sexual act with a minor for a fee”* provides that: *“sexual act with a minor committed by an adult with a fee or other material exchanges or sexual act between minors provoked by an adult and committed in front of an adult is punished as follows, if the victim is: a. under 12 years old, with incarceration of at least 10 years and a penalty fee, b. 12-15 years old, with incarceration and a penalty fee, c. 15-18 years old, with imprisonment of at least*

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<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting that the use of the term *“juvenile/child prostitution”*, which is firmly established in several international legal instruments, such as: the OPSC, the Lanzarote Convention and the Directive 2011/93/EU, is not universally accepted as a legal term. Some major legal instruments avoid its use - CRC uses instead the term *“exploitative use of children in prostitution”*, the ACRWC refers to *“use of children in prostitution”* and ILO refers to *“the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution”* - due to concerns that it may imply that the phenomenon is a legitimate form of sex work or that the child has given informed consent to engage in prostitution. Such implications are both erroneous and hazardous.

To address this issue, the alternative term *“prostitution of minors”* that more accurately reflects the child’s victimisation and emphasises their entitlement to protection has been proposed and adopted within the context of the project (ECPAT, 2016, p. 30).

*three years and a penalty fee*". Juvenile pimping is criminalised in article 349 of the GPC which stipulates that: *"whoever, to serve others depravity, promotes a minor in prostitution or forces or facilitates or participates in the prostitution of minors is punished with incarceration of up to 10 years and a penalty fee"*. Child trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation is incriminated in article 323 A (named *"human trafficking"*) par. 1, 3, 4, 5 of the GPC which provides punishment with incarceration of at least 10 years and a penalty fee to whoever abducts, recruits, transfers, harbours, delivers or receives a minor, with the purpose of the minor's sexual exploitation.

Child pornography is criminalised under article 348 A of the GPC. More precisely, the production, distribution, publishing, sale and possession of child pornography material is punished with imprisonment of at least one year and a penalty fee. Child pornography material consists of the real or virtual depiction in an electronic or another form of: a. the whole or part of a minor's body in a manner that manifestly provokes sexual stimulation, b. the real or virtual sexual act by or with a minor. The Greek legal system also protects child victims from the publication of any information that could lead to the reveal of their identity, so that the risk of their secondary victimisation is mitigated (article 352B of the GPC). It must be noted that articles 336-353 of the GPC also criminalise various other forms of child sexual abuse.

### European level

At the European and international levels, various directives and conventions have been adopted aiming at addressing all manifestations of child sexual abuse, including the prostitution of minors, while simultaneously offering comprehensive support to the victims. It is important to note that Greece has duly incorporated and ratified these directives and conventions, underscoring its commitment to adhering to the provisions outlined there.

More precisely, at the EU level, the [Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse](#)<sup>2</sup>, the so-called *"Lanzarote Convention"*, requires the criminalisation of all kinds of sexual offences against children, including inter alia: sexual abuse, child prostitution and pornography, corruption of children, solicitation of children for sexual purposes. The Convention sets out several measures to prevent child sexual exploitation and abuse, such as: the screening, recruitment and training of people working in contact with children, making children

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<sup>2</sup> Ratified in Greece by law 3727/2008 (Government Gazette 257/A/18.12.2008)

aware of the risks and teaching them to protect themselves, as well as monitoring measures for offenders and potential offenders. It also establishes programmes to support victims, encourages people to report suspected sexual exploitation and abuse and sets up telephone and internet helplines for children. Moreover, the [Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings](#)<sup>3</sup> – encompassing all forms of trafficking (national, transnational, linked or not to organised crime) and taking in all persons who are victims of trafficking (women, men, children) – provides for a series of rights for victims of trafficking, in particular: the right to be identified as a victim, to be protected and assisted, to be given a recovery and reflection period of at least 30 days, to be granted renewable residence permit and to receive compensation for the damages suffered.

The [“Child Sexual Abuse Directive”](#) (*Directive 2011/93/EU on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography*)<sup>4</sup> also introduces important provisions on the issue, such as: the criminalisation of possession and acquisition of child sexual abuse material and provisions to remove or block websites containing such material. It also sets out an obligation for the member states to provide law enforcement authorities and prosecution with effective tools to investigate child sexual abuse offences and identify the child victims at an early stage.

The [“Anti-trafficking Directive”](#) (*Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims*)<sup>5</sup> sets out minimum standards to be applied throughout EU in preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, such as increased criminal penalties, a non-prosecution and non-punishment provision for victims, a requirement for member states to appoint national rapporteurs or establish equivalent mechanisms to collect statistical data on trafficking in human beings and monitor the implementation of anti-human trafficking policy at national level.

Also, the [“Victims’ Rights Directive”](#) (*Directive 2012/29/EU*)<sup>6</sup> establishes minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of all crimes, regardless of their nationality and residency status. As soon as a crime is committed or criminal proceedings take place in the EU, the victim must be granted all the rights established by the directive. Its main goals are to ensure that victims of

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<sup>3</sup> Ratified in Greece by law 4216/2013 (Government Gazette 266/A/10.12.2013)

<sup>4</sup> Ratified in Greece by law 4267/2014 (Government Gazette 137/A/12.06.2014)

<sup>5</sup> Ratified in Greece by law 4198/2013 (Government Gazette 215/A/11.10.2013)

<sup>6</sup> Ratified in Greece by law 4478/2017 (Government Gazette 91/A/23.06.2017)

crimes: receive appropriate information, support and protection and may participate in criminal proceedings. Noteworthy is the fact that it adopts a broad definition of the term “victim”, providing those rights not only to the victims but also to their family members, who are considered indirect victims (APAV, 2016).

### International level

At international level, the main instrument for the protection of children’s rights, including their protection from all forms of abuse, violence, neglect and exploitation (article 19) is the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(CRC\)](#)<sup>7</sup>. Article 34 of the CRC requires states parties to protect children from “*all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse*”. Also important is article 39, which requires States to provide recovery and reintegration of a child victim in an environment that fosters their health, self-respect and dignity. CRC is supplemented by the [Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography \(OPSC\)](#)<sup>8</sup>, which inter alia lays down minimum standards for protecting child victims in criminal justice processes and recognises the right of victims to seek compensation (UNICEF. Innocenti Research Centre, 2009, p. 2). In addition, in 2000, UN also adopted the [Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children](#)<sup>9</sup> (*Palermo Protocol*), supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime.

All in all, as it can be inferred from the abovementioned the existing legal framework on the prostitution of minors encompasses a wide range of provisions, covering various aspects related to prevention, intervention, prosecution of offences and protection of victims. However, a noteworthy observation is that the severity of penalties, as highlighted also by the interviewees, fails to align with the gravity of such heinous acts. This discrepancy is further compounded by the existence of mitigating circumstances within the penal system, which could potentially result in offenders being released after serving only a limited number of years. The existence of a thorough legal framework is essential in preventing and combating the prostitution of minors. Although, equally significant is its effective implementation, which, as revealed in the interviews, suffers from various challenges:

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<sup>7</sup> Ratified in Greece by law 2101/1992 (Government Gazette 192/A/02.12.1992)

<sup>8</sup> Ratified in Greece by law 3625/2007 (Government Gazette 290/A/24.12.2007)

<sup>9</sup> Ratified in Greece by law 3875/2010 (Government Gazette 158/A/20.09.2010)

underreporting, insufficiently trained personnel within the competent authorities and delays in fulfilling the undertaken commitments.

## Data on prostitution of minors. Statistics and profile of victims

There is a significant lack of data gathering, analysis and distribution at all levels – national, regional and international – when it comes to minors impacted by prostitution (UNICEF. Innocenti Research Centre, 2008, p. 6).

### Difficulties in Data Collection and Reporting in Greece

Greece, similar to many countries, encounters difficulties in collecting and accurately reporting data on prostitution of minors. Currently, there is no agency that systematically and comprehensively gathers data on all forms of sexual exploitation of children. However, data specifically related to child trafficking can be accessed through the National Referral Mechanism for the protection of victims of human trafficking (NRM). The NRM began recording data on January 1, 2019, and its annual reports are available [online](#). Nonetheless, there remains a dearth of specific data regarding the broader issue of prostitution of minors, as well as other forms of child sexual exploitation.

According to the NRM annual reports, in 2020, 74 children were reported as victims of trafficking, out of which four girls were trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation (National Referral Mechanism for the protection of victims of human trafficking, 2021). In 2021, 35 children were reported as trafficking victims, including two boys and four girls trafficked for sexual exploitation (National Referral Mechanism for the protection of victims of human trafficking, 2022). The most recent NRM report of 2022 indicates that 68 children were reported as victims of trafficking, including six girls and five boys trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation (National Referral Mechanism for the protection of victims of human trafficking, 2023).

The actual numbers of victims of child trafficking are likely to be significantly higher than those mentioned above. Under-reporting is a prevalent issue, resulting in a substantial “dark figure” that remains unaccounted for. Consequently, the available data do not offer a complete depiction of the true extent of child trafficking. Furthermore, it is important to note that the data provided earlier specifically pertain to child trafficking and more precisely to child trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation and not the broader issue of prostitution of minors.



## Reasons for Under-Reporting

Various reasons are contributing to the under-reporting. Firstly, as highlighted by all the interviewees, the majority of victims do not identify themselves as victims. Even if they do recognise their situation, they may believe that they have some level of control over it. For instance, as one of the interviewees mentioned regarding one such case: *“They hold the belief that they were in control and they would stop when they would gather the money they needed”*. Secondly, detecting such cases proves challenging, as victims may actively avoid engaging with law enforcement authorities. They may choose not to respond to police calls and remain hidden, making it difficult to identify and assist them.

Thirdly, victims often experience feelings of shame and stigma, which act as barriers to reporting. One of the interviewees mentioned that specifically boys may feel more ashamed to provide testimony. Fear plays also a significant role in preventing victims from reporting such cases. The fear of bringing dishonour upon themselves or their families due to the publication of these cases can discourage other victims from coming forward. Additionally, there is a general lack of trust in state authorities regarding their effectiveness, response time and capabilities to address such issues. Victims, particularly minors who are refugees, migrants or unaccompanied, may also fear that they could be accused. This fear is associated with the apprehension of interacting with public authorities, such as the police or the juvenile prosecutor. Their uncertain or undetermined legal status in the country exacerbates this fear, as they may lack proper identification or residency permit.

Fourthly, victims of prostitution of minors may have been subjected to multiple crimes, including: bias-motivated violence and domestic violence. In such cases, the attention and response may be primarily focused on one specific crime, leading to the neglect of other forms of victimisation they have experienced. This narrow focus can contribute to an incomplete understanding of the full extent of the harm suffered by the victims. It is important that all the dimensions of victimisation are acknowledged and addressed and comprehensive support is provided to the victims.

Professionals working in the field as well as ordinary citizens may hesitate to report due to the fear of potential accusations. It is of crucial importance that the state protects those who report such crimes, ensuring that they cannot be wrongly accused by the offenders, provided that their reports are truthful and made in good faith. Last but not least, the absence of a specialised agency dealing with all forms of child sexual exploitation further hinders effective communication and support.

Despite the challenges in obtaining an accurate representation of the prostitution of minors in Greece, insights from professionals working in the field have shed some light on the issue of the prostitution of children in the move over time. According to the interviewees, the situation deteriorated and became more visible to the authorities during the significant influx of migrants and refugees in 2015-2016. Then, it wore off. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the situation worsened again.

### Vulnerable Groups and Exploitation within Families

Certain groups of children are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation through prostitution. More precisely, as highlighted by the interviewed professionals heightened susceptibility face: minors living in low-income socio-economic households, children living in child protection units or other institutional settings, children who have experienced sexual abuse or violence within the family, children who do not attend school, unaccompanied minors, Roma children and children who are pressured by their families to send money. They are all children who experience an absence of a supportive care framework that meets their needs and provides them with appropriate supervision.

It is worth noting that in the majority of cases, the exploitation of children through prostitution occurs within the family environment. Parents or relatives within the extended family are often the ones who subject children to exploitation for profit, as the interviewees mentioned. They also referred that the majority of victims of prostitution of minors fall under the age group 12-16 years old.

### Lack of Comprehensive Data at the EU Level

A lack of comprehensive data regarding the issue of prostitution of minors is also observed at the EU level. The available data indicate that the prostitution of minors primarily involves teenage girls between the ages of 14 and 17, but the involvement of boys has also been reported in several countries in the region. More data are available on the issue of child trafficking. According to the latest available, between 2017 and 2018, almost every fourth victim of trafficking in the EU is a child, 78% of child victims were girls, 60% of the child victims were trafficked for sexual exploitation and three-quarters (75%) of all child victims in the EU were EU citizens (European Commission, 2021, p. 12).

## Gender Perspectives

Despite being recognised as a significant concern, the issue of prostitution of boys has not been thoroughly investigated and continues to go unnoticed and unaddressed, due inter alia to: *“lack of gender perspective in research and programmes, the stigma attached to homosexuality, a tendency not to see males as victims of prostitution”* (ECPAT International, 2014, p. 11), and the under-reporting linked with it (European Commission, 2021, p. 13). While the data remains limited, it is crucial to acknowledge that both girls and boys can be victims of prostitution, and efforts should be made to address the issue comprehensively for all genders.

## Implications of Limited Data for Prevention and Combat

The scarcity of available and reliable statistics both at national and EU levels further hinders the effective prevention and combat of the prostitution of minors, as it limits the development of informed policies and measures to combat this form of exploitation.

## Responsible agencies/authorities to tackle the prostitution of minors

### Agencies/authorities against prostitution of minors

In Greece, the competent authorities responsible for addressing the issue of prostitution of minors are the General Police Directorate of Attica (GADA) –Subdirectorate of Minors Protection and the Juvenile Prosecutor. When a minor is suspected to be subjected to prostitution, the professional who identifies them informs both authorities. The Juvenile Prosecutor may decide the removal of the child from their current environment and place them in a facility that provides psychological and medical treatment.

The General Police Directorate of Attica – Subdirectorate of Minors Protection plays a crucial role in this process by coordinating all the actions and interventions necessary to protect the minor. The professional who detected such a heinous act must provide a testimony to the police. Subsequently, the child is removed from their current living environment by the police and transferred to either to GADA or to Children’s House, accompanied by the professional who detected the situation and a psychologist to provide a testimony. Minors are then transferred to a Child Protection Unit or to an Accommodation facility for unaccompanied minors. It is important to note that both types of facilities are not specifically specialised in addressing the issue of sexual exploitation of children. As a result, they may not be able to address the diverse range of needs that arise in such cases. Thus, while they play a vital role in providing initial support and ensuring the safety of the child, specialised

care and services tailored to the unique needs of children who have experienced sexual exploitation are more than essential. Systematic efforts are necessary to establish and maintain specialised facilities and services that can comprehensively address the physical, psychological and social needs of child victims of sexual exploitation.

The testimony process in the police and judicial authorities may be difficult and traumatic for child victims, as the police and judicial staff are reported to lack sufficient training to effectively handle such sensitive and demanding issues. The lack of adequate training can result in the mishandling of evidence and insensitive treatment of child victims leading to their secondary victimisation. According to the interviewees, in particular Roma children as well as children from third countries have reported experiencing bias-motivated treatment from the police. The lack of child-friendly institutions, both within the police and the judicial system, has been a significant challenge.

To address the gap in providing child-friendly support and services, the establishment of “Children’s Houses” has been provided in major cities of Greece (Athens, Piraeus, Thessaloniki, Patras and Irakleio). These structures are based on the Barnahus model and aim to centralise all relevant actions for the protection of child victims of sexual abuse and exploitation in a child-friendly environment. This includes inter alia conducting testimonies, medical examinations and providing psychological support. It is noted that Barnahus is the leading European response model in the treatment of child sexual abuse cases that: *“coordinates parallel criminal and child welfare investigation, brings all relevant services under one roof, and thus helps to avoid the revictimisation of the child” (Council of Europe, 2022).*

Concerning the testimonies, the goal is to conduct a single, comprehensive investigation involving all relevant professionals, including the police and the prosecutor. The child is placed in a designated room with a social worker who facilitates the testimony process, while the police and the prosecutor observe from behind a one-way glass. This setup aims to create a less intimidating and more supportive atmosphere for the child, reducing potential distress and re-traumatisation.

It is important to note that while the establishment of Children’s Houses was provided by law in 2017<sup>10</sup>, only one of them, located in Athens, began operating in 2021. It provides the opportunity for testimonies and offers psychological support to the child and their family. However, it has been

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<sup>10</sup> Law 4478/2017 (Government Gazette 91/A/23.06.2017)

reported that it does not follow a research protocol and supportive materials are not provided to the children. Additionally, a limitation is that it currently operates within office hours only.

Furthermore, not all child victims of sexual abuse can access these institutions, as the decision on whether the testimony will take place at GADA or Children's House is determined by the police. This leads to many cases not receiving the specialised, child-friendly treatment offered in the Children's House. Efforts shall be made to address these limitations and ensure that all child victims of sexual abuse and exploitation have access to child-friendly procedures.

While there may not be NGOs in Greece specialised in combating prostitution of minors, several NGOs do offer supportive services to victims, such as: [Network for Children's Rights](#) (in the context of the "[Protection 4 all minors](#)" project offers supportive services to unaccompanied minors living in unsafe situations), [Arsis – Association for the Social Support of Youth](#), [Praxis](#), the [Smile of the Child](#). These organisations play a crucial role in providing support, protection and rehabilitation for child victims. Their services include: shelter, counselling, medical assistance, legal aid and educational support. While their focus may not be exclusively on the prostitution of minors, they contribute significantly to addressing the needs of victims and working towards their recovery.

The coordinating mechanism, which monitors all the stages of a victim's inclusion in the country's protection system, beginning with its initial detection and identification, followed by the provision of protection and support services during the legal process, up to its voluntary assisted return to its country of origin or integration in the country of arrival is the [Greek National Referral Mechanism for the Protection of Human Trafficking Victims \(NRM\)](#).

More precisely, NRM is responsible for: a. the collection and referral of requests for the protection of victims detected/identified by the competent public authorities or by cooperating actors who provide reception and social support services to the target group, b. monitoring case management, c. the creation and operation of a system with the aim of recording the requests for the protection of victims (reporting, referral and monitoring of management). The establishment and operation of the Mechanism has not created new structures or protection services for victims. What was sought was the coordination of existing services, their optimal utilisation for the effective protection of victims, and consequently the identification of gaps and/or negative practices (Greek National Referral Mechanism for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking, 2021, p. 31) .

Finally, the [Institute of Child Health \(ICH\)](#) has created a [guide](#) with the objective of raising awareness, developing effective strategies, and providing training to public authorities' personnel regarding the issue of child trafficking so that the response of public authorities to child trafficking is strengthened, the identification and support for victims improved, and the collaboration among different stakeholders involved in addressing the issue promoted.

At European and international levels, there are several organisations that work on fighting child trafficking: the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), the European Police Office (Europol), the European Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice (eu-LISA), the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), the EU Judicial Cooperation unit (Eurojust), the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX), the EU agency for Fundamental Rights, the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound). According to the [Joint Statement](#) that they signed on June 13, 2018, they have committed to the following: countering the culture of impunity for perpetrators, abusers and exploiters, enhancing their focus on prevention, taking into account the entire trafficking chain inside and outside the EU, ensuring a gender-specific and child-sensitive approach, addressing the vulnerabilities of victims and ensuring accountability towards them, enhancing the effectiveness of investigations and prosecutions, promoting cross-border and internal law enforcement and judicial cooperation, strengthening training activities, sharing good practices, improving information sharing within the limits of data protection rules. There is also the [EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator](#), based in the European Commission, who is responsible for improving the coordination and coherence among EU institutions, EU agencies, member states and international actors for developing existing and new EU policies to address trafficking in human beings. Also, [ECPAT International](#) is the only international NGO network - currently comprised of 124 civil society organisations in 103 countries – solely dedicated to the fight against sexual exploitation of children, by coordinating research, advocacy and action towards this aim.

### Measures against prostitution of minors

#### Measures for the prevention and combat

In Greece, in a significant step towards prevention, sexual education was introduced as a mandatory course in the educational programme in 2022. The curriculum is taught in the third and sixth grades of Elementary School, as well as in the second grade of High School. Rather than being organised

around a specific textbook, the curriculum is based on various resources, from which the teacher can choose. The aim is to provide students with age-appropriate knowledge and skills to understand and navigate topics related to sexuality, relationships and personal boundaries. It is important to note that the interviews revealed that teachers do not feel adequately trained to handle such a sensitive subject and respond to questions that children may have.

As far as the measures towards combating prostitution of minors in Greece, the establishment of the Office of the National Rapporteur for the combating of human trafficking and the National Reporting Mechanism for the protection of victims of human trafficking play a crucial role. The Office of the National Rapporteur is responsible for monitoring and reporting on human trafficking cases in the country. It collects and analyses data, conducts research, and provides recommendations for policy improvements. The Office serves as a central point for coordination and collaboration among relevant stakeholders in the fight against human trafficking. The National Reporting Mechanism, as mentioned above, is a coordinating mechanism that oversees the entire process of including victims into the protection system of the country. This mechanism ensures that victims are identified and provided with the necessary protection and support services throughout the procedures.

Moreover, there are several helplines for reporting child abuse incidents in Greece and seeking assistance: the *National Telephone Line for Children “1056” of the Smile of the Child (24/7)*, the *National Child Protection Line “1107” of the National Centre for Social Solidarity (24/7)*, the helpline *“11525”- Together for the Child*. They provide a means for child victims to report what they have suffered, seek advice and receive support in a confidential and accessible manner. Similar services are also provided by the following helplines: the *Resource Line for Human Trafficking A21, “1109”* and the *Emergency Social Helpline “197” of the National Centre for Social Solidarity*. Additionally, the establishment of Children’s House is an important initiative to provide specialised care and support for victims of child sexual abuse.

Finally, a significant step in the prevention and combat of child sexual abuse occurred in December 2022 with the completion of the Nation Action Plan for the protection of children from the crime of sexual abuse and exploitation, covering the period from 2022-2027. It focuses on several key areas, including the development of suitable services for child victims of sexual abuse and exploitation. Furthermore, the plan emphasises the need for well-defined protocols that govern the functioning and coordination of various agencies involved in addressing child sexual abuse. In addition to service

provision and coordination, the National Action Plan highlights the importance of strengthening the existing legal framework for the protection of children, developing new laws when necessary, and ensuring effective enforcement and application of these laws. By addressing these key areas, the National Action Plan lays the foundation for a comprehensive and integrated approach to safeguarding children, promoting their well-being and preventing future incidents of abuse.

#### Measures for the support and protection of direct and indirect victims

Regarding the measures that have taken place for the provision of support and protection to direct and indirect victims, educational trainings for professionals working in frontline positions, both in police departments and NGOs have been organised by the National Centre for Social Solidarity and the National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government, as well as by A21 and Arsis. These trainings aim to enhance the knowledge and skills of those professionals in addressing child sexual abuse cases in a sensitive and child-friendly way.

In addition to professional training, A21 conducts awareness-raising campaigns and informative sessions in schools. Expanding these campaigns to reach the general population is crucial, with a particular focus on children, teachers and parents. Children should receive age-appropriate and easily understandable information on rights, safety, how to activate their supportive circle and the agencies they can contact for help and support.

For parents, awareness-raising campaigns shall cover various topics, including: approaching their child, understanding the role of social media, recognising warning signs of potential exploiters and exploitation, knowing what to do if such a case occurs, the importance of developmentally appropriate supervision and maintaining open communication with a difficult adolescent.

Similarly, tailored awareness-raising campaigns for teachers are essential, as they actively seek educational materials and training on these sensitive issues. Topics related to sexual education are often considered taboo, even within school settings. Providing teachers with the necessary knowledge and resources is crucial to effectively address these issues.

#### EU policy

At the EU level, the European Commission adopted a comprehensive [strategy](#) in July 2020 to combat child sexual abuse – both offline and online. The primary objectives of this strategy are to enhance existing EU measures for safeguarding children from sexual exploitation and to address emerging challenges, particularly in the digital media context. The strategy focuses on verifying compliance



with EU regulations, developing sector-specific rules for law enforcement agencies and the private sector for detecting and reporting child sexual abuse on the internet. It centres on establishing an EU centre for preventing and combating child sexual abuse by focusing on transferring knowledge and networking within the EU. It also aims at improving how children are protected against sexual violence through networking different actors in global alliances.

### Stakeholders' mapping

Name of service/organisation	Description	Role in preventing and combating prostitution of minors	Role in the provision of support or services to victims	Contact info (Phone, e-mail, website)
<b>Greece</b>				
<b>General Police Directorate of Attica (GADA) – Subdirectorat e of Minors Protection</b>	GADA – Subdirectorate of Minors Protection plays a vital role in coordinating all the requisite actions and interventions to ensure the protection of minors.	<u>Responsible to:</u> -Receiving reports -Conducting testimonies -Implementing the removal of the child from the current living environment, following a pertinent decision by the Juvenile Prosecutor.	<u>Responsible to:</u> -Receiving reports -Conducting testimonies -Implementing the removal of the child from the current living environment, following a pertinent decision by the Juvenile Prosecutor.	<u>Phone:</u> 2106400131/21064298 90/2106476270 <u>E-mail:</u> <a href="mailto:yva.daa@hellenicpolice.gr">yva.daa@hellenicpolice.gr</a> <u>Website:</u> <a href="https://www.astynomia.gr/epikoinonia/genikes-astynomikes-diefthynseis/g-a-d-attikis/diefthynsi-asfaleias-attikis/">https://www.astynomia.gr/epikoinonia/genikes-astynomikes-diefthynseis/g-a-d-attikis/diefthynsi-asfaleias-attikis/</a>
<b>Juvenile Prosecutor</b>	The Juvenile Prosecutor serves as prosecution authority.	<u>Responsible to:</u> -Deciding upon the report made to them on the status of the victim and the potential necessity of their removal from their current environment.	<u>Responsible to:</u> -Deciding upon the report made to them on the status of the victim and the potential necessity of their removal from their current environment.	In Athens: <u>Phone:</u> 2108839029/21088277 13 <u>Website:</u> <a href="http://www.eispa.gr/opencms/opencms/epa_site/epa/deps/tmima_anilikon.html">http://www.eispa.gr/opencms/opencms/epa_site/epa/deps/tmima_anilikon.html</a>
<b>Children's House</b>	The primary objective of Children's House is to centralise all pertinent	<u>Responsibilities include:</u> -Conducting the testimony of the minor	<u>Responsibilities include:</u> -Conducting the testimony of the minor	<u>Phone:</u> 2109811067/21098024 67

	measures for safeguarding child victims of sexual abuse and exploitation within a child-friendly environment.	-Conducting medical examinations -Providing psychological support to victims and their families.	-Conducting medical examinations -Providing psychological support to victims and their families.	E-mail: <a href="mailto:spitipaidiou.ath@moj.gov.gr">spitipaidiou.ath@moj.gov.gr</a>
<b>Network for Children's Rights</b>	Established in 2004, Network for Children's Rights is an NGO committed to advocating for and safeguarding the rights of children. Among its initiatives, the organisation presently implements the "Protection for All Minors" program, providing comprehensive assistance to unaccompanied minors residing in precarious circumstances in Greece.	<u>Responsibilities include:</u> -Informing, supporting and empowering unaccompanied minors to move away from precarious living conditions, offering a range of services, such as: guidance, psychological and legal support.	<u>Responsibilities include:</u> -Informing, supporting and empowering unaccompanied minors to move away from precarious living conditions, offering a range of services, such as guidance, psychological and legal support.	Phone: 2108846590  E-mail: <a href="mailto:diktio@ddp.gr">diktio@ddp.gr</a>  Website: <a href="https://ddp.gr/protect/onforminors/">https://ddp.gr/protect/onforminors/</a>
<b>Arsis – Association for the Social Support of Youth</b>	Arsis is an NGO with extensive expertise in combatting child trafficking, demonstrated through the successful implementation of various projects, such as: "Reveni", "Mario", "Nathalie", "Tact" and "Tiatas".	<u>Services provided include:</u> -Training front-line service providers to address trafficking issues effectively -Conducting informative sessions with children to raise awareness about child trafficking and exploitation.		<u>Phones and e-mails:</u> <i>Athens</i> – 2108259880 / <a href="mailto:arsisathina@gmail.com">arsisathina@gmail.com</a> <i>Thessaloniki</i> – 2310526150 / <a href="mailto:infothes@arsis.gr">infothes@arsis.gr</a> <i>Volos</i> – 2428099939 / <a href="mailto:arsis.xenonas@hotmail.com">arsis.xenonas@hotmail.com</a> <i>Alexandroupoli</i> – 2551038952 / <a href="mailto:arsisalex@gmail.com">arsisalex@gmail.com</a> <i>Ioannina</i> – 2651400823 / <a href="mailto:arsishpeiros@gmail.com">arsishpeiros@gmail.com</a> <i>Kozani</i> – <a href="mailto:arsishpeiros@gmail.com">m</a>

				2461049799 / <a href="mailto:infokoz@arsis.gr">infokoz@arsis.gr</a> <u>Website:</u> <a href="https://arsis.gr/en/">https://arsis.gr/en/</a>
<b>Praxis</b>	Praxis is an NGO dedicated to providing services to vulnerable social groups, including trafficking victims, regardless of their gender identity, sexual orientation, origin, ethnicity, or political or religious beliefs.	<u>Services provided include:</u> -Accommodation provision -Psychological support -Legal counselling -Interpretation and cultural mediation -Access to healthcare -Distribution of clothing and shoes.	<u>Services provided include:</u> -Accommodation provision -Psychological support -Legal counselling -Interpretation and cultural mediation -Access to healthcare -Distribution of clothing and shoes.	<u>Phone:</u> 2105205200 <u>E-mail:</u> <a href="mailto:info@praksis.gr">info@praksis.gr</a> <u>Website:</u> <a href="https://praksis.gr/">https://praksis.gr/</a>
<b>The Smile of the Child</b>	The Smile of the Child is an NGO committed to safeguarding children's rights. Its primary objectives encompass rescuing children from abusive situations and facilitating their access to free healthcare services.	<u>Services offered include:</u> -Training sessions for frontline professionals -Operation of the National helpline for children, SOS 1056 which is staffed by social workers and psychologists who are available 24/7. Calls to the helpline are free of charge. -Implementation of the Chat 1056 application, enabling direct written communication for children who prefer this method. The chat platform offers online counselling and support services.	<u>Services offered include:</u> -Training sessions for frontline professionals -Operation of the National helpline for children, SOS 1056 which is staffed by social workers and psychologists who are available 24/7. Calls to the helpline are free of charge. -Implementation of the Chat 1056 application, enabling direct written communication for children who prefer this method. The chat platform offers online counselling and support services.	<u>Phone:</u> 2103306140 <u>E-mail:</u> <a href="mailto:sos1056@hamogelo.gr">sos1056@hamogelo.gr</a> <u>Website:</u> <a href="https://www.hamogelo.gr/gr/en/">https://www.hamogelo.gr/gr/en/</a>
<b>A21</b>	A21 is an NGO dedicated to eradicating human trafficking through awareness, intervention and aftercare.	<u>Services offered include:</u> -Informative sessions on the issue of human trafficking -Awareness-raising programmes for children to educate them about trafficking	<u>Services offered include:</u> -Informative sessions on the issue of human trafficking -Awareness-raising programmes for children to educate them about trafficking	<u>Phone:</u> 2310 537690 <u>E-mail:</u> <a href="mailto:info@a21.gr">info@a21.gr</a> <u>Website:</u> <a href="https://www.a21.org/content/greece/gr4wco?permcode=gr4wco">https://www.a21.org/content/greece/gr4wco?permcode=gr4wco</a>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Operation of helpline “1109” for potential human trafficking victims</li> <li>-identification of victims of trafficking</li> <li>-trainings for professionals involved in combating human trafficking</li> <li>-Legal counselling services</li> <li>-Provision of accommodation centres for victims</li> <li>-Establishment of freedom centres to assist and support survivors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Operation of helpline “1109” for potential human trafficking victims</li> <li>-identification of victims of trafficking</li> <li>-trainings for professionals involved in combating human trafficking</li> <li>-Legal counselling services</li> <li>-Provision of accommodation centres for victims</li> <li>-Establishment of freedom centres to assist and support survivors.</li> </ul>	
<b>Institute of Child Health (ICH)</b>	ICH is dedicated to the development of research and education programmes focused on children’s health.	-Guide for the detection of child victims of trafficking		<p><u>Phone:</u> 2132037300</p> <p><u>Website:</u> <a href="https://ich.gr/">https://ich.gr/</a></p>
<b>Greek National Referral Mechanism for the Protection of Human Trafficking Victims (NRM) – National Centre of Social Solidarity (NCSS)</b>	NRM is a coordinating mechanism, which monitors all the stages of a victim’s inclusion in the country’s protection system (detection and identification, provision of protection and support services during the legal process, voluntary assisted return to its country of origin or integration in Greece).	<p><u>Services provided include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Receiving reports from victims of human trafficking or professionals who have identified potential victims.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Services provided include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Communication with the detecting organisation to be informed about the services provided to the victim</li> <li>-Regular updates every four months (i.e. three times per year) with the organisation to keep them informed about the victim’s status.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Website:</u> <a href="https://ekka.org.gr/index.php/en/ethnikos-mixanismos-anaforas-en">https://ekka.org.gr/index.php/en/ethnikos-mixanismos-anaforas-en</a></p> <p><u>E-mail:</u> <a href="mailto:epikoinonia@ekka.org.gr">epikoinonia@ekka.org.gr</a></p> <p><u>Tel:</u> Immediate Social Help “197”</p> <p>National Line of Child Protection: “1107”</p>
<b>Office of the National Rapporteur for the combating of</b>	The Office of the National Rapporteur for the combating of human trafficking is responsible for devising, coordinating	<p><u>Responsible for:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Monitoring and reporting on human trafficking cases within the country</li> </ul>		

<p><b>human trafficking</b></p>	<p>and implementing the national strategy to combat human trafficking.</p>	<p>-Collecting and analysing relevant data -Conducting research -Providing recommendations for policy improvements.</p>		
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## EU & International levels

<p><b>EU agencies which signed a joint statement on addressing human trafficking</b></p>	<p>They have committed to working closely to address human trafficking, according to their areas of competence, which range from gathering intelligence and facilitating prosecution in trafficking cases to coordinating Member States' efforts to support victims and prevent victimisation.</p>			<p><u>Website:</u> <a href="https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0607">https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0607</a></p>
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<p><b>EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator</b></p>	<p>EU Anti-trafficking coordinator is responsible for improving coordination and coherence among EU institutions, EU agencies, Member States and international actors.</p>	<p><u>Responsible for:</u> -Improving coordination among all the anti-trafficking stakeholders -Monitoring the implementation of the EU strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings -Contributing to the reporting carried out by the European Commission every two years on the progress made in the fight against trafficking.</p>		<p><u>Website:</u> <a href="https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/internal-security/organised-crime-and-human-trafficking/together-against-trafficking-human-beings/eu-anti-trafficking-coordinator_en">https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/internal-security/organised-crime-and-human-trafficking/together-against-trafficking-human-beings/eu-anti-trafficking-coordinator_en</a></p>
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<p><b>ECPAT International</b></p>	<p>ECPAT is a global network of civil society organisations working together to end the</p>	<p>ECPAT coordinates research, advocacy and action towards the aim of ending the sexual exploitation of children.</p>		<p><u>Website:</u> <a href="https://ecpat.org/">https://ecpat.org/</a></p>
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	sexual exploitation of children.			
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## Conclusions and recommendations

### Conclusions

Through the desk research and the interviews’ findings, we draw certain conclusions about the issue of prostitution of minors in Greece:

- A thorough legal framework on the prostitution of minors exists at national, European and international levels, covering a wide range of issues, including prevention and combating of the crime and provision of support to the victims. Although, as reported by the majority of the interviewees, the penalties imposed for it are not commensurate with its atrocity.
- Having an adequate legal framework in place concerning the prostitution of minors in Greece is one aspect of the fight against it. Equally important is its implementation. It is common ground that bridging the gap between “*law on the books*” and “*law in action*” remains a key challenge in modern crime policies (Panagos & Mamai, 2018; Panagos & Mamai, 2018). This challenge also extends to the provision of services for survivors of prostitution of minors due to several factors, including: underreporting, insufficiently trained personnel in relevant authorities and delays in fulfilling commitments.
- Scarcity of data collection, analysis and dissemination exists regarding the prostitution of minors, as well as other forms of child sexual abuse both at national and European levels. The only available data refer to the issue of child trafficking, but it is likely that these reported numbers do not accurately reflect the true extent of the issue due to the underreporting. A crucial aspect to highlight is that in the majority of cases, the prostitution of minors occurs within the family environment. Parents or relatives within the extended family often subject children to exploitation for profit, as reported by the interviewees.
- The professionals in the competent authorities (police, juvenile prosecutor) responsible for addressing the issue of prostitution of minors in Greece are reported to be insufficiently trained to handle the complexity, sensitivity and specific needs associated with such cases.

This absence of child-friendly procedures intended to bridge the establishment of Children’s Houses. Despite the provision of the establishment of five such houses, only one has recently started functioning and according to interviewees, it does not provide its services adequately.

- Several NGOs offer support services to victims of child sexual abuse, but there is currently no NGO dedicated to addressing the issue of prostitution of minors both at national and European levels. The services offered by these NGOs include: shelter, counselling, medical assistance, legal aid and educational support.
- Measures for the prevention and combat of child sexual abuse exist both at national and EU levels, but there is need to be furthered, reinforced and adequately implemented. The existing measures include the introduction of a course on sexual education in the school curricula, the establishment of the Office of the National Rapporteur for the combating of human trafficking, the National Reporting Mechanism for the protection of victims of human trafficking, the operation of helplines, the Nation Action Plan for the protection of children from the crime of sexual abuse and exploitation (2022-2027) and the EU Strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse.

### Recommendations

From the desk and field research conducted in Greece, the following recommendations can be made:

- **Legal framework**  
 According to the majority of the interviewees, it is important that the penalties for the crime of prostitution of minors, as well as all other forms of child sexual abuse are increased.
- **Reporting**  
 Establishing a reporting mechanism for all cases of child sexual abuse is of paramount importance. Reporting shall also be encouraged by providing support to those who come forward. It is essential to acknowledge that reliable data play a crucial role in informing well-targeted and effective advocacy, policies and programs aimed at preventing and combating all forms of child sexual abuse.
- **Child-friendly agencies and procedures**  
 Efforts should be made to rectify the deficiencies in the current functioning of “Children’s House” by: ensuring the establishment of as many branches as possible across the country,

assuring that all child victims of sexual abuse and exploitation have access to it, monitoring the procedures followed are child-friendly, providing information of service providers. Providing a safe and supportive space that caters to their specific needs is crucial in the healing and recovery process.

- **Capacity-building activities**

Priority should be given to the organisation of training programmes for police and judicial staff, as well as other professionals working on the frontline, which will aim at enhancing their knowledge, skills and understanding of the issue. This will enable them to handle such complex and sensitive cases in an appropriate, empathetic and child-friendly manner, thereby minimising the risk of secondary victimisation of the children.

- **Awareness-raising activities**

The organisation of awareness-raising activities, such as: info days and events on the issue targeted at children, parents and teachers are of utmost importance to prevent and combat this scourge. Age-appropriate and easily comprehensible information about their rights, safety measures, how to activate their support circle and the agencies available for assistance should be provided to children. For parents, awareness-raising campaigns should encompass different subjects, such as: how to approach their child, understanding the role of social media, identifying potential exploiters and signs of exploitation, knowing the appropriate course of action in such cases, the significance of developmentally appropriate supervision and maintaining open communication with challenging adolescents. Likewise, tailored awareness-raising campaigns are crucial for teachers, as they actively seek educational material related to these sensitive matters.

- **State and EU commitment to further, reinforce and actually implement measures to prevent and combat all forms of child sexual abuse**

Equal attention shall be devoted to both the adoption and the effective implementation of measures to prevent and combat all forms of child sexual abuse. This requires: fulfilling the commitments, closely monitoring the responsible authorities, and fostering the exchange of best practices among states. Additionally, involving children in decision-making processes is crucial to ensure their perspectives and needs are taken into account.



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