

RELEASE Project

pRotEcting migrant chiLdrEn AgainSt detention through the EU Charter

CERV-2023-CHAR-LITI

In March 2024 – February 2026, the ICJ-EI together with partners implements the two-year-long RELEASE project (pRotEcting migrant chiLdrEn AgainSt detention through the EU Charter). The project seeks to build on the achievements and results of the recent ICJ's [CADRE Project](#) which highlighted a need for greater support to lawyers in strengthening their ability, and that of civil society more generally, to engage in strategic litigation to end the immigration detention of children. This is because the absence of case law, regulatory standards, and public awareness may hinder practitioners from pursuing legal action against minors' imprisonment in immigration detention.

The project partners are:

- [Aditus Foundation \(aditus\)](#) – Malta
- [Défense des Enfants International \(DEI Belgique\)](#) – Belgium
- [Forum for Human Rights \(FORUM\)](#) – Czech Republic
- [Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights \(HFHR\)](#) – Poland
- [Greek Council for Refugees \(GCR\)](#) – Greece
- [Foundation for Access to Rights \(FAR\)](#) – Bulgaria

Together, the consortium of partners seeks to deepen and expand the existing work with a strong focus on **strategic litigation** and **alternatives to detention (AtD)** for migrant children at risk of being subjected to unlawful detention or whose rights may be violated in alternatives to detention. The project's main objective is to **contribute to a favourable EU environment to protect migrant children from detention by:**

1. increasing the ability of specialised migration lawyers, civil society, and NHRIs from the six selected EU Member States to develop and implement efficient litigation strategies in relation to (alternatives to) the detention of migrant children in order to promote and protect their rights based on Article 24 of the EU Charter and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;
2. raising awareness among lawyers, civil society, and public authorities in the target MSs about the detrimental effects of detention on children.

The key long-term impact sought is to make sure that the **best interests of the child principle** becomes a more judicially relevant element in the **case-law of the UN CRC, the ECtHR, and the CJEU**, and to explore other litigation venues (ECSR, HRC, CAT).

The main activities include:

- six national trainings in six EU Member States;
- three transnational exchange workshops;
- follow-up mentoring;
- updates to the case-law database;
- publication of a Guide for lawyers on strategic litigation related to detention of children in migration;
- a communications campaign and audio-visual materials with information for migrant children.

See the [ICJ Child Protection Policy](#).



This project is co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are, however, those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.