

# 'FORM A CHAIN TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN'

## WHAT?

The project 'Form a chain to safeguard children' talks about child abuse and domestic violence. About how you can work together to stop this violence and make families stronger. The project will hopefully inspire many professionals, services or organisations involved with children and families that are affected by abuse and domestic violence.



These families often face problems in several areas of their lives. This makes it difficult to obtain an overview of the violence and the safety, precisely because each professional only oversees a small part of the problem. Wouldn't it be best - especially when serious, multiple and complex problems are involved - to approach this violence by allowing all the necessary services to collaborate? By forming a chain around the child and the family? With shared responsibility and with a common goal: sustainably breaking the circle of violence?

But what exactly do we understand by child abuse and domestic violence? Is there a single general approach to stopping this wide range of forms of violence? What does collaborating to combat violence actually involve? How do you initiate a chain approach? And what developments are taking place in Europe in this area?

The guide we have developed in the framework of this project provides a step-by-step insight into the issue of child abuse and inspires professionals, especially those that work in their own partnerships. You will also obtain an idea of how far several regions go in their collaboration in the area of child abuse and domestic violence and the challenges with which they are confronted.

And not to be forgotten, the content of this guide is accompanied by a blended training course, which you can follow anytime, as a group or as an individual. You can find the digital training modules on [www.formachain.eu](http://www.formachain.eu).

## WHO?

The project partners have explored these questions in depth in the context of a European project. A project that Belgium, via the FPS Home Affairs, introduced in the European Commission 'Prevention of and fight against crime 2012' programme.

The project was implemented - during the period June 2013 to May 2015 - by the Province of Limburg (BE), in close collaboration with various experts from the Thomas More University College (BE), the Confidential Centre



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for Child Abuse & Neglect Limburg (BE), the Center for General Welfare Limburg (BE), the Research Group Education & ICT of the University Colleges Leuven Limburg (BE), the Province of Antwerp (BE), Cardet (CY), the National Police (ES), the Victim Support Unit (HU), the Ministry of Justice - Juvenile Justice Department (IT), the Children Support Center (LT), the Establishment Center Dardedze (LV), the Mutsaers Foundation (NL) and the Nobody's Children Foundation (PL).

## WHY?

We know that families, and especially children and young people, are more likely to be safeguarded if professionals are structurally and regularly trained in:

- Having a better understanding of the violence & abuse
- Recognizing key signs
- Knowing how to respond
- Knowing how to successfully collaborate

Promoting skills and training for professionals involved in child abuse and domestic violence is essential, especially when implementing new legal frameworks and entering into multidisciplinary collaboration partnerships. A great many Member States provide training courses related to domestic violence but only a minority of Member States provide compulsory training for actors such as the police, public prosecution service and judges.

With regard to training related to child abuse, just fifteen Member States provide compulsory training for professionals that work with children in danger. What's more with the exception of Latvia and Spain, there is no compulsory training for professionals that are responsible for taking decisions in judicial proceedings on prosecution, punishment and victim protection. Therefore there is considerable room for improvement.

Multidisciplinary training can be particularly useful for further educating professionals. The possibility of learning and acquiring experience together is highly valued. Participants in multidisciplinary training courses most often report more mutual respect and a higher level of trust when working with colleagues from other disciplines.

## HOW?

That is why this project will:

- **Offer guidance (via a book / guide)** on child abuse and on how to collaborate effectively to safeguard children
- **Transform this guidance into blended learning modules training** that will equip law enforcement officers and other agencies with the necessary knowledge and skills in order for them to better know how to respond and to collaborate more effectively with those from other professions.



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