

Slovenia's first Barnahus

In May 2022, the first Barnahus opened in Slovenia. This is an effective model to support victims of child abuse and is designed to create a space that is safe, homely, and non-threatening for those who need it.

(Illustration photo: iStockphoto)

"About [one in five](#) children in Europe are victims of sexual violence. When child abuse is not prevented, the way we care for children that are victims is often less than helpful," writes Arnar Númi Sigurdarson in the [news item](#) about the new Slovenian Barnahus at eeagrants.org.

"[One third](#) of children never tell anyone about the abuse they have faced. Often, speaking up about abuse is just as traumatic as the act of the abuse itself. We should be focusing on making that process as easy, and as victim friendly as possible. Repeatedly telling a traumatic story to different people is hard – and it takes an emotional toll. We need concrete solutions for children in these situations," writes Sigurdarson in the [news item](#) at eeagrants.org.

A child-friendly service for abused children

The general goal of the project has been to provide child-friendly justice in accordance with [EU directives](#), and to improve interagency cooperation in processes and procedures concerning the treatment of abused children according to the Barnahus model. Abused children are the main beneficiary of the project Barnahus in Slovenia. On [eeagrants.org](#) there is a description of the project and why it's needed:

"Existing judicial proceedings in the event of suspected child abuse in Slovenia are lengthy and rigid. The coordination between the competent institutions and the exchange of information between various involved experts and access to psycho-social support for abused children and their families are insufficient.

This increases the risk of trauma and repeated victimization of the child. Statistical data from various sources such as Ministry of Labour and Family show the increase of number of cases where children are victims of crimes and domestic violence.

The Barnahus model, a child-friendly, multidisciplinary and interagency services for abused children, recognized and promoted by the Council of Europe as an example of good practice, offers a workable solution to most of the mentioned problems."

Read more: [First Barnahus for child victims of sexual abuse launched in Slovenia](#)

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The reforms are a deep-seated change in how we care for children affected by violence

In 2021, Slovenia passed a law based on the Barnahus model.

"It institutionalises the tenets of the model, such as a safe environment for children to be interviewed – and children are ensured effective pre-trial and criminal proceedings. The Slovenian Parliament even received guidance from the Icelandic Barnahus on the advantages of such a legislation," writes Sigurdarson in the [news item](#).

"The changes that the Barnahus model introduces, is not only to one institution. The Barnahus model is normally embedded in national systems, for example the judicial system, law enforcement, health or child protection systems. The reforms are a deep-seated change in *how* we care for children affected by violence," writes Sigurdarson in the [news item](#).

Read the entire news item at [eeagrants.org](#)