**VOICE**

**The voice of the child in cases of international child abduction**



**Objectives of the project**

- Promote child-friendly justice in cross-border family disputes.

- Provide minors with the opportunity to be heard in civil proceedings concerning international abduction and family mediation proceedings.

**Activities**

The project is divided into four "Workpackages" (WP):

WP1 - Research on the welfare of the child in cases of international subtraction

Research on a large scale, based on the analysis of data deriving from (i) a questionnaire concerning the well-being of minors victims of international subtraction, with particular reference to listening to the child in the jurisdictional or mediation proceedings; (ii) previous large-scale research conducted with the collaboration of more than 1000 families involved in an international abduction case. The aim of the research is to analyze how listening in the course of the procedure has influenced the well-being of minors victims of international sttration.

WP2 - Collection and analysis of jurisprudence in the field of international subtraction

WP2 focuses on the analysis of the jurisprudence of 16 EU Member States, with reference to cases of international child abduction, in order to analyze if and how the courts interpret and attribute substance to the concept of "best interests of the child" ". The data collected are analyzed and processed in a final study, and are also used to determine the training needs of judges, lawyers and other legal practitioners.

The WP2 therefore provides for the organization of two training seminars (one in Antwerp and one in Genoa), aimed at the above mentioned legal operators. The aim is to provide the tools necessary to evaluate and pursue the best interests of the child, through a thorough knowledge of the regulatory framework and the tools available to ensure respect for the fundamental rights of the child (first of all, to be heard in the proceedings).

WP3 - The voice of the minor in mediation proceedings

Organization of a training seminar addressed to mediators (in particular, specialized in cross-border family disputes), who intend to acquire specific skills on the involvement of minors in the mediation process.

WP4 - Final conference

Organization of the final conference of the project, in order to disseminate the results of the project.

**Expected results**

The main result of the project is to ensure the enhancement and improvement of the welfare of minors in cases of interactions, as well as a better implementation of the right of the same to be heard in these proceedings (including those of mediation). This will be guaranteed through the preparation and dissemination of effective methods for listening to the child.

**DURATION**

2017 – ongoing

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