

P R O M I S E 2

IMPLEMENTING
BARNAHUS QUALITY
STANDARDS IN EUROPE



CO-FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION



VISION: A EUROPE WHERE THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF CHILDREN TO PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE, TO SUPPORT AND TO BE HEARD ARE FULFILLED.

- Promoting progress at national level in several European countries
- Ensuring commitment from key authorities and facilitating inter-agency dialogue: national roundtables, developing plans and roadmaps, inter-agency agreements and frameworks
- Contribute to building a competent and committed workforce, including professionals from law enforcement, judiciary, medical and mental health staff and social workers
- Tailor-made training to Barnahus staff: forensic interviews, psychotherapy, medical treatment, multi-disciplinary collaboration and data collection
- A methodology will be developed to help Barnahus and child-friendly services gather children's views on their experience in Barnahus
- Communications activities
- Read more about the PROMISE Vision, including principles, criteria, goals and challenges at www.childrenatrisk.eu/promise/vision

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BUILDING ON LEARNING FROM PROMISE I (2015-2017)

- Launched the European Barnahus Movement in June 2017 in the presence of the EU Commissioner for Justice and Consumer Rights, and the UN Special Representative on Violence against Children.
 - Confirmed Barnahus as a good practice, validated the Barnahus model as a widely accepted concept
- Held a series of exchange meetings, study visits and capacity building efforts supported government officials and practitioners from more than 11 countries to establish Barnahus or similar institutions.

PROMISE Project Series www.childrenatrisk.eu/promise/publications

- **The European Barnahus Quality Standards** offer ground-breaking guidance and constitute the first attempt to define the principles and good practice standards for services that want to operate according to the Barnahus model.
- **The PROMISE tracking tool** provides a framework for services to assess their practice against the standards.
- **Enabling Child-Sensitive Justice** gives an overview of how the Barnahus model has emerged and gradually expanded in Europe
- **PROMISE Compendium of Law and Guidance** provides a comprehensive review of international and European law and authoritative guidance concerning the rights of child victims and witnesses.
- **Promoting Progress on Barnahus in Europe** guides the development of national and regional advocacy strategies.

PROMISE 2 is managed by the Children at Risk Unit in the Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat in close collaboration with Child Circle.

Project Partners

- Council of Baltic Sea States Secretariat, Coordinator
- Child Circle, Belgium
- Social Activities and Practice Institute, Bulgaria
- Hope for Children CRC Policy Center, Cyprus
- Social Insurance Board, Estonia
- National Institute for Health and Welfare, Finland
- World Childhood Foundation, Germany
- Szociális Szolgáltatók Közhasznú Egyesülete, Hungary, Region West
- Terre des Hommes, Hungary
- TUSLA, Ireland
- Centre Dardedze, Latvia

- Empowering Children Foundation, Poland
- Save the Children, Romania

Experts

- Barnahus Reykjavik, Iceland
- Barnahus Linköping and Stockholm, Sweden
- The National Police Directorate and 2 Barnehus, Norway
- Børnehus Sjælland, Denmark
- MDCK, Netherlands
- Child and Youth Protection Center of Zagreb, Croatia
- The Havens, Sexual Assault Referral Centre, Kings College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, England



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Child-friendly and Multiagency Response to Child Abuse in Europe – the case for Barnahus

Bragi Guðbrandsson, Former Director General and Ex Chair of the Lanzarote Committee,



Barnahus a response to Child Abuse and Adult Justice

The real object is to **determine or guilt or innocence** and applying the rules of the “**due process**” rather than ensure the best interest of the child

- 1) **Multiple interviews** in different locations and the corresponding re-victimization of the child-victim
 - Repeated interrogation within the justice system, in police stations and court settings adds to the traumatic experience
- 2) The months, even years of **waiting for the trials**, with one or even more appeals, puts the life of the child victim at halt and constant distress
- 3) **Hostile cross-examination**, intimidating and battering of the child-witness in an unfriendly environment
- 4) Lack of appropriate **medical evaluation** and in particular **therapeutic services** for the child victim and his/her family



Barnahus, evolving approach

- ✓ Barnahus has assumed a key role in the Justice as well as Child Protection System of the Nordic Countries
- ✓ Allowing for difficulties of definitions, Barnahus can be found in 60 locations in Iceland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and recently in the Baltic states, Poland, Hungary, Cyprus and potentially more including the Netherlands and England
- ✓ Recommended by international and professional bodies *inter alia*:
 - ✓ Council of Europe: the Lanzarote Committee and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Guidelines of Child-friendly justice (2010) etc.
 - ✓ Implementation supported by the EU through the Promise project
 - ✓ ISPCAN, the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect: The multidisciplinary award 2006



The Emergence of Barnahus Concept

- ✓ Barnahus Iceland founded in 1998 rooted in the principles of child-friendly, multiagency and interdisciplinary features of the CAC model in the US with the overt aim of integrating:
 - ✓ The US - longstanding tradition of investigative approach in child protection and criminal justice
 - ✓ The great legacy of the Nordic welfare model and the principles of the UN CRC



Child Sexual Abuse - Uniqueness of the Crime

- ✓ The vulnerability of the child victim
 - ✓ Child victims do not normally bring charges against their offenders
 - ✓ The “silent” crime, secrecy of the abuse
 - ✓ Child victims difficulties in disclosures
- ✓ The Perpetrator most often in the Circle of Trust
- ✓ Lack or absence of evidence other than the child’s disclosure
 - ✓ Medical evidence in less than 10% of cases and only conclusive in less than 5% of all cases
 - ✓ Other hard evidence or witnesses other than the child victim’s rarely exist



Uniqueness of the Intervention

- ✓ Addressing Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is not only a judicial issue but requires multiagency intervention
- ✓ The child's victim's disclosure is the key for:
 - ✓ Ensuring the safety of the child
 - ✓ Providing assistance to the child victim with the aim of physical and psychological recovery
 - ✓ Uncovering the crime in terms of criminal investigation, prosecution and sentencing
 - ✓ Preventing the perpetrator from reoffending



Multiple interviews – Harmful to the Child Victim

- ✓ All the different agencies: the Child Protection Service, the Medical Profession, the Police etc. need to have the child's account
- ✓ Repetitive interviews by many professionals in different locations can have very harmful effect for the child victim
- ✓ Retraumatization – re-victimization
 - ✓ Refers to painful/stressful re-experiencing of trauma as a consequence of sexual violence



Violation of the “best interest of the child”

✓ *Retraumatization!*





Multiple interviews – Harmful for the Criminal Investigation

- ✓ Repetitive and unstructured interviews can distort the child's account
 - ✓ Suggestibility and leading and misleading questions
 - ✓ The child's disclosure becomes contaminated
 - ✓ Discrepancies in the child's story
 - ✓ The evidential value of the narrative diminishes
- ✓ Additional harmful experience: the Absence of a child-friendly facilities
 - ✓ High level of stress precludes optimal expression
 - ✓ Police stations or Hospitals: Wrong messages!



“In the best interest of the child”

✓ The UN CRC, Article 3.1

✓ “In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interest of the child shall be a primary consideration”



Multiagency collaboration

- ✓ The Gov. Agency for Child Protection
- ✓ The State Police
- ✓ The State Prosecution
- ✓ The Police Dep. in Reykjavik
- ✓ The University Hospital – Dep. of Pediatric and Dep. of child Psychiatry
- ✓ Association of the Directors of Local Social Services
- ✓ The Child Protection Services in Reykjavik





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The Barnahus in Reykjavik





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On arrival at Barnahus





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Children's waiting room





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Waiting room for teens





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Barnahus

Medical Exams and Evaluation	Joint Invest. Interviews: court statements/ CPS interviews	Victim Therapy
Family Counselling/ Support	Consultation and advice to local CPS	Education, training and research



Avoiding retraumatisation

Testimonies for court hearings

- ✓ The Court Judge (prosecutor or police) is in charge of the procedure – the “**due process**”
- ✓ **The Defence**
- ✓ The Prosecution
- ✓ The Police
- ✓ The CPS representative
- ✓ The Child’s Legal Advocate
- ✓ The child’s disclosure is elicited by trained forensic interviewer according to evidence based interview protocol and videotaped





The European Court of Human Rights:

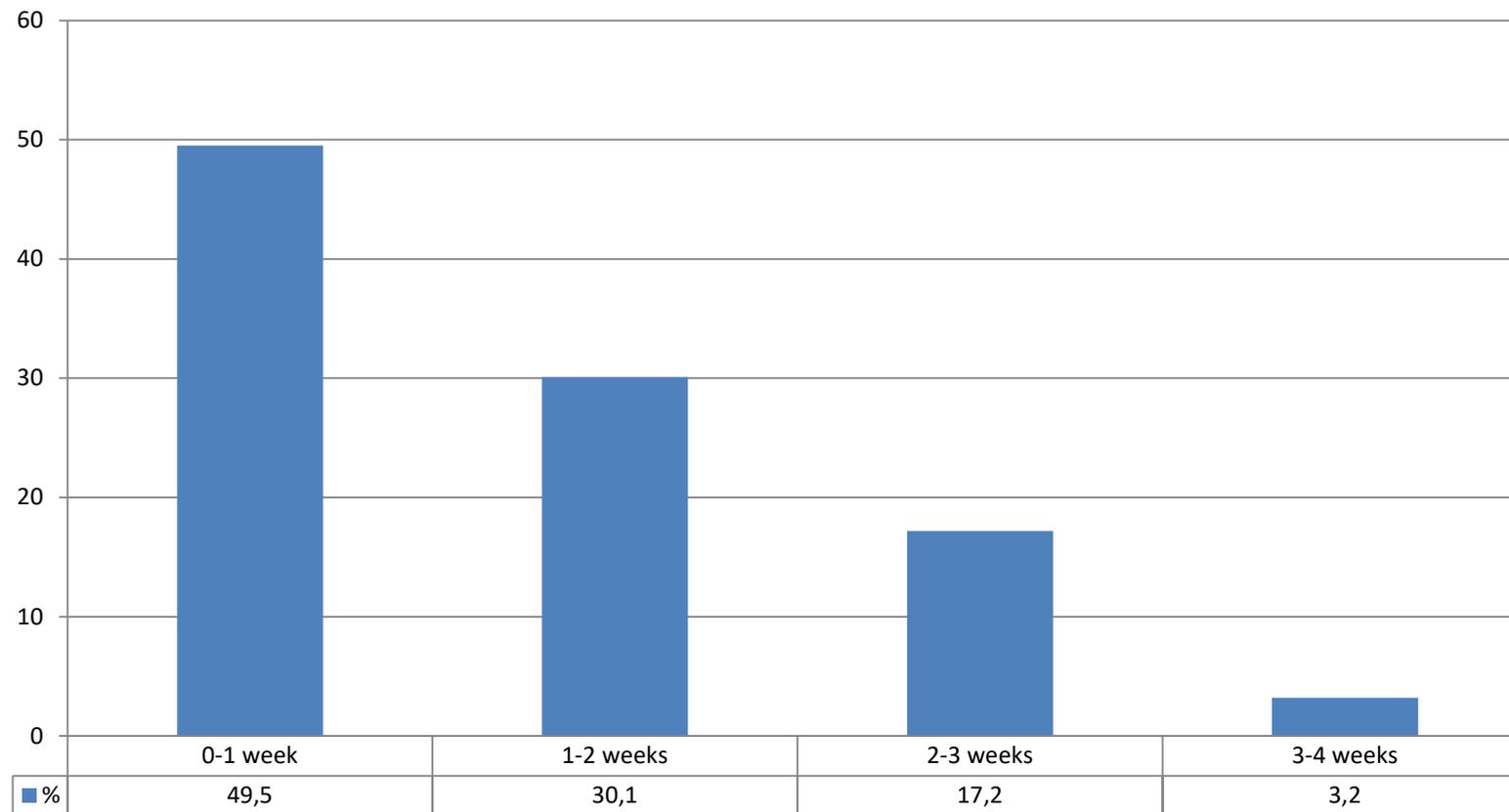
Balancing principles of Human rights

Barnahus reflects child-friendly strategies and practices to ensure

- ✓ The “best interests of the child”
 - ✓ Without compromising the human right principle
- ✓ The “due process” (fair trial)
 - ✓ “Equality of arms”, “evidential immediacy”
- ✓ Applicable in adversarial as well as inquisitorial legal system



Duration from the time a request is made for court testimony until it takes place





CPS exploratory interview

Guidelines:

- ✓ At the request of the Child Protection Services
- ✓ Disclosure is absent or very weak/ambiguous
- ✓ Offender has not been identified
- ✓ Offender is below the age of criminal responsibility(15 years)



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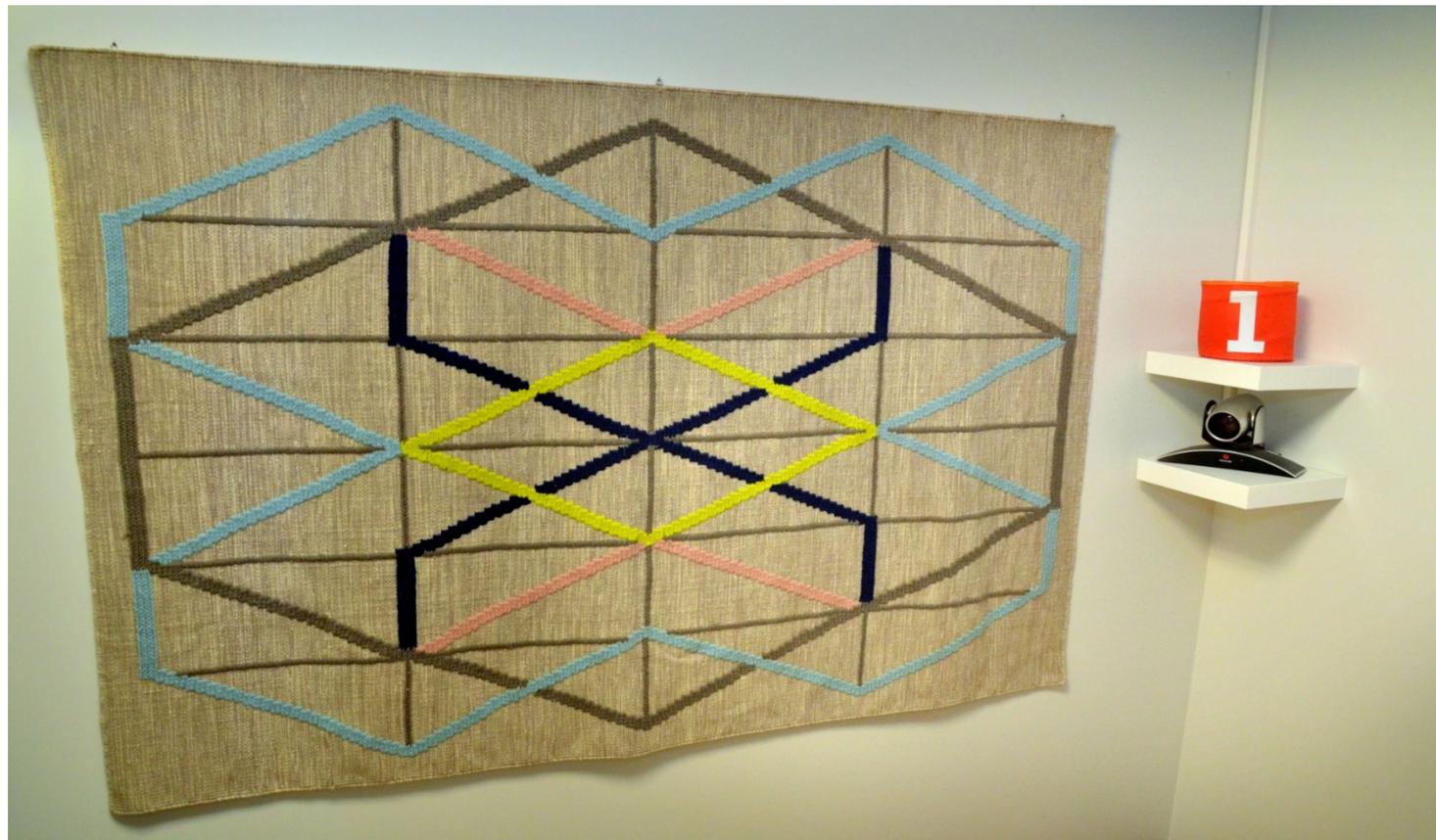
Interviewing room





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Camera in the interviewing room





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The monitoring room





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Cort session via IT - technology





Medical examinations

- ✓ At the request of the Police, the CPS, the Child or the Parents
- ✓ Implemented by experienced paediatrician, a gynaecologist and a trained nurse
- ✓ A child friendly examination room
- ✓ The use of “video-colposcope” and it’s therapeutic value by active participation of the child
- ✓ Anaesthesia exceptional
- ✓ Acute forensic medicals performed at UH





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The Medical room





Victim therapy - family counselling

- ✓ The child and the non-offending parent(s) receive (legal) counselling after the investigative interview
- ✓ Victim therapy can start soon after
- ✓ The dual role of interviewer/therapist excluded in individual cases
- ✓ The videotaped child's disclosure is used for initial assessment and treatment plan
- ✓ TFCBT (Trauma Focused Cognitive-behavioural) therapy – group therapy under way
- ✓ The therapists are generally required to submit reports and testify in court proceedings



Almost 20 years of experience

- ✓ More than 5.000 children have been referred to Barnahus from the onset; appr. 250 - 300 annually in recent years
- ✓ Enhanced credibility results in increase of reports of SA
 - ✓ Cases investigated have more than doubled
 - ✓ Indictments pr. year have tripled
 - ✓ Convictions pr year have more than doubled
 - ✓ Appropriate treatment provided without delay and is not limited to victims in cases that meet the criteria for burden of proof in the legal sense
- ✓ Evaluation shows significantly better outcomes for child victims and their families



Barnahus in the Nordic context:

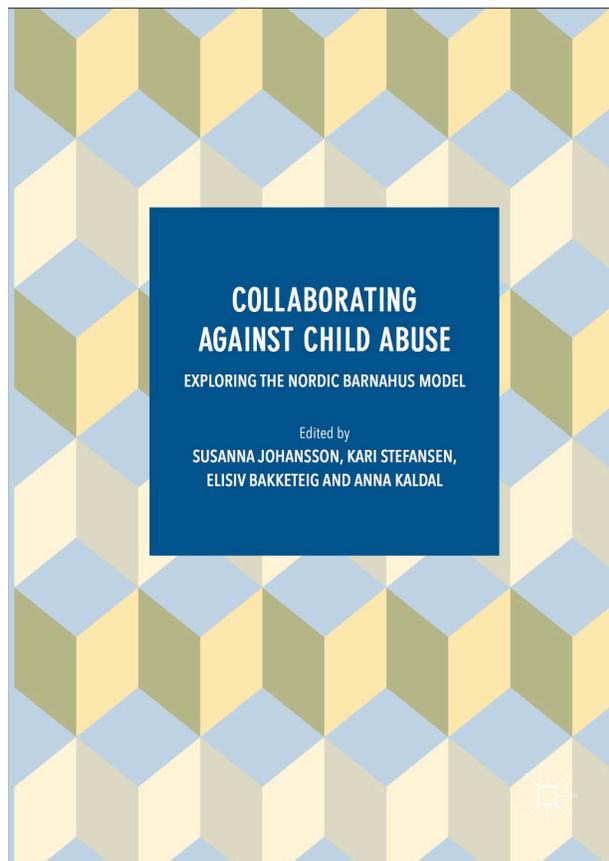
Diverse paths and implementation

- ✓ Paths of coming into being
- ✓ The role of the state, regional- and the local authorities
- ✓ The legislative framework
- ✓ Affiliations: social services/police
- ✓ Juxtaposition: responsibilities of partners
- ✓ Collaboration: from being structured to informal
- ✓ Target groups: victims sexual abuse or CAN generally
- ✓ Investigative interviews
- ✓ Medical examination
- ✓ Treatment strategies



Barnahus:

The first Scientific publication in 2007



- A comparative analysis on the different implementation of Barnahus among the Nordic countries at the initiative of NOVA, the Norwegian Research Institute.
- Published by Palgrave Oct. 2017
- Can be downloaded for free:
<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007%2F978-3-319-58388-4?page=1#toc>



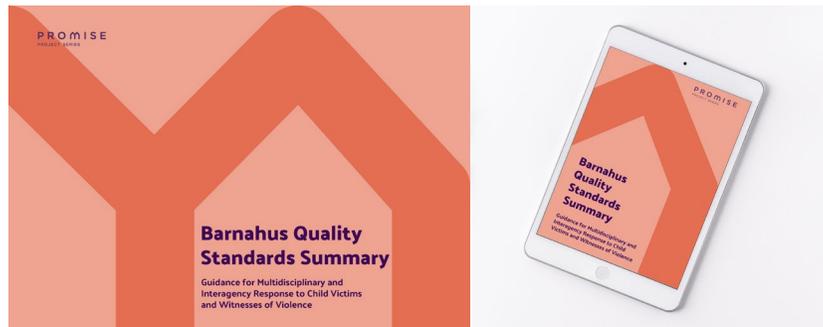
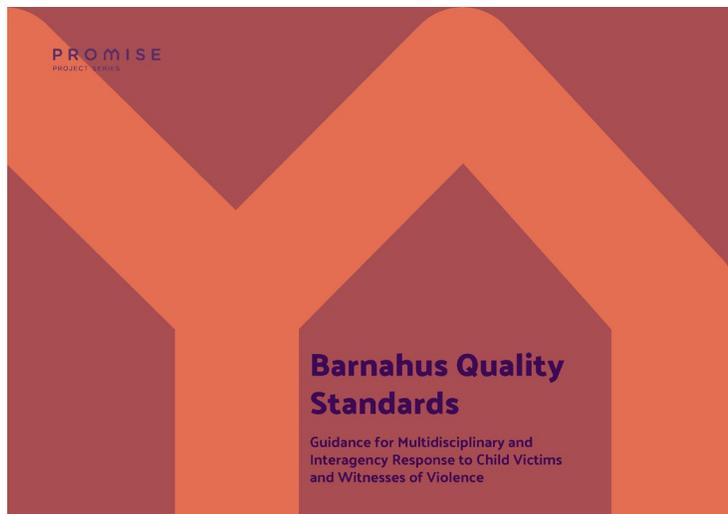
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Promise: a milestone in evolution of Barnahus

- The first systemic attempt to bring together European states for the purpose implementing Barnahus
- The project has brought together professionals who have been generous in sharing their experience, wisdom and knowledge to develop strategy for the future
- The collaboration has enriched the conceptualization of Barnahus and deepened our understanding of how to ensure the transferability of the model across cultures
- Created a professional network into the future



European Barnahus Standards



- Developed by the EU supported **Promise** project launched 2015 and can be accessed online on the Children at Risk website:
<http://www.childrenatrisk.eu/promise/>
- The first systemic attempt to establish quality standards for child-friendly, multi-agency response to child abuse in the European context
- Addresses the evidence based components of Barnahus including structured forensic interviews, medical examination and therapeutic services
- Ensuring necessary flexibility to allow for implementation in diverse social/legal environment with the necessary fidelity required for professional implementation



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