

Legal, Institutional and Practical Perspectives on Special Guardianship for Unaccompanied Minors in Croatia

An Abstract of the Project by Julija Kranjec

In the years prior to the great humanitarian crisis of 2015, the periods of arrivals/passages of a large number of unaccompanied minors (UAM) alternated, depending on geopolitical changes in the world. Croatia was mostly a country of transit, in exceptional cases a country of destination, and it maintained this status to this day. Although Croatia ratified relevant international documents and developed legal and institutional framework for care and protection of UAM, still the entire system in charge of caring for UAMs appears very incoherent - partial solutions and measures are adopted discontinuously, resulting in the inconsistency and fragmentation of immediate, practical care for unaccompanied children. Having in mind Croatian context and several researches with UAMs done, it became obvious that social workers' perspective is relevant but missing.

The aim of the project "Legal, institutional and practical perspectives on Special guardianship for unaccompanied minors in Croatia" was to offer research- based recommendations for advocating improved and more quality system of special guardians for UAM in Croatia. The project resulted with policy paper "We're just handing out some papers to each other while the children are passing by", covering the needs of social workers- special guardians; analysis of legislative and institutional environment relevant for special guardians' work; and recommendations for improvement of the system.