

## European Association for Social Innovation

### CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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**EaSI - European Association for Social Innovation**

NIPC 33256006 (fiscal number)

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## Organization purpose

The European Association for Social Innovation, from now forward being referred as EaSI, is a European network, representing more than 30 organizations from 15 countries. Its aim is the advancement of Social Innovation in Europe through the development of research and pilot projects, identification and dissemination of best practices, awarding grants and scholarships regarding the social Innovation practices, processes and systems developed in urban and rural areas, public services, third sector, and private sector.

EaSI development domains include:

- ✓ Inclusion of vulnerable groups
- ✓ Social dialogue and social movements
- ✓ Social entrepreneurship
- ✓ Rural and urban development
- ✓ Public policy and governance
- ✓ Technology and digital

By the very nature of our work, the staff members and others may, at times, come in close contact with vulnerable categories of persons, including children. Therefore, EaSI's work is based on the recognition that all human, and especially children and adolescents should have the opportunity to enjoy their rights, regardless of their national, ethnic or social origin, their gender, language, religion, political opinion or financial situation, their different abilities and any other condition they or their family have that could serve as a basis for discrimination.

EaSI firmly condemns all forms of discrimination, which has consequences, often serious ones, for children and adolescents. We have a zero-tolerance to behaviours that can harm children. This includes physical, sexual, verbal or emotional abuse, as well as exploitation of any kind, including but not limited to exploitative child labour, or child sexual exploitation. The definitions of these terms can be found later on in this policy document.

We recognize that the staff we have, together with our network members have a full and active part to play in protecting children from harm. Therefore, our organization will do everything to provide a safe and positive environment that promotes the social, physical and moral well-being of children through all the projects and programs that we develop.

## Stating of Commitment and Guiding Principles

EaSI has developed this Child Safeguarding Policy (CSP) aiming to create conditions which minimize the risk of unprotected situations for the children who participate, directly or indirectly, in our programs, projects, actions and activities.

The present safeguarding policy is based on the principles gathered in the following reference documents:

- [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)
- [Convention of the Rights of the Child](#) (CRC), which provides the international framework for the right to protection from all kinds of violence, discrimination and different forms of exploitation
- [Child Safeguarding Standards](#), from the network Keeping Children Safe
- [Romanian law No. 272/2004 on Protection and Promotion of Childs Right 2004](#)
- [EU Strategy on the rights of the child](#) (European Commission)
- [Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union](#)

Other relevant national documentation:

- [National strategy for the protection and promotion of children's rights "Protected children – Safe Romania" 2023 – 2027](#)
- Order of the Minister of Education No. 6235/06.09.2023 approving the Procedure for the management of cases of violence against pre-school/pre-school/pupil and school staff, as well as other related situations in the school environment and suspected violence against children outside the school environment. Available here (RO): [Ordin-6235-Procedura-cazuri-violenta-scolara MO-856-22-09.pdf](#)

The Child Safeguarding Policy is committed to and guided by the following principles:

1. Under the terms of UDHR, every human being under the age of 18 is considered a child, unless, under the applicable law, he / she reaches the age of majority earlier.
2. All children, without exceptions of any kind, have the right to be protected against any form of violence and to have their dignity respected. EaSI will take all the appropriate measures so that the child is effectively protected and can develop physically, intellectually, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal way, as well as in conditions of freedom and dignity.

3. EaSI proclaims the defence of all children against all forms of abandonment, cruelty and exploitation, and that it should not be the object of any type of trafficking. EaSI sustains that children should not be admitted to employment before an adequate minimum age and that under no circumstances they will be allowed to dedicate to an occupation that could harm their health and impede their physical, mental and moral development.
4. The child has the right to freedom of expression. This right includes the freedom to seek, receive and expand information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, in oral, written, printed or artistic form or by any other means at the child's choice. EaSI guarantees the child the right to freely express its opinion and choice on the issues that concern it, with the child's opinions being duly taken into account, according to their age and maturity. EaSI respects the child's right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
5. The child has the right to education, which must be free and compulsory, at least in elementary grades. Under the conditions of equal opportunity, children have the right to develop their mental skills and the sense of moral and social responsibility. EaSI's actions are governed by the child's best interests.
6. EaSI stands that every child with any mental or physical handicap or disability or suffering from any social impairment, should benefit from the treatment, education and special care required by his or her particular condition.
7. EaSI will work together with its members to promote Child Safeguarding within organizations and Child Protection within the wider community.
8. When possible, EaSI will support the strengthening of the abilities of its members' network, to guarantee that all of its activities (programs, projects, actions) are developed and implemented in a protected, positive treatment environment for children.
9. All representatives of EaSI must prove the highest standards of behavior towards children both in their private and professional lives. They have a responsibility to understand and promote this policy, meaning that they must do all that they can to prevent, report and respond appropriately to any concerns.
10. All decisions regarding children made by EaSI will primarily take into account the child's best interests.
11. This policy applies during, after and in between the work hours.

## Definitions of terms<sup>1</sup>

*Child safeguarding:* is the responsibility that organizations have to make sure their staff, operations, and programmes do no harm children, or expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the organization has about children's safety within the communities in which they work, are reported to the appropriate authorities.

*Physical abuse:* actual or potential physical harm perpetrated by another person, adult or child. it may involve hitting, shaking, poisoning, drowning and burning. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or caregiver fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

*Sexual abuse:* forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities that he or she does not fully understand and has little choice in consenting to. This may include, but is not limited to, rape, oral sex, penetration, or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching. It may also include involving children in looking at, or producing sexual images, watching sexual activities and encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

*Child sexual exploitation:* a form of sexual abuse that involves children being engaged in any sexual activity in exchange for money, gifts, food, accommodation, affection, status, or anything else that they or their family needs. It usually involves a child being manipulated or coerced, which may involve befriending children, gaining their trust, and subjecting them to drugs and alcohol. The abusive relationship between victim and perpetrator involves an imbalance of power where the victim's options are limited. It is a form of abuse that can be misunderstood by children and adults as consensual.

*Neglect and negligent treatment:* allowing for context, resources and circumstances, neglect and negligent treatment refers to a persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, which is likely to result in serious impairment of a child's healthy physical, spiritual, moral and mental development. It includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm and provide for nutrition, shelter and safe living/working conditions. It may also involve maternal neglect during pregnancy as a result of drug or alcohol misuse and the neglect and ill treatment of a disabled child.

*Emotional abuse:* persistent emotional maltreatment that impacts on a child's emotional development. Emotionally abusive acts include restriction of movement, degrading, humiliating, bullying (including cyber bullying), and threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

*Commercial exploitation:* exploiting a child in work or other activities for the benefit of others and to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development. It includes, but is not limited to, child labour.

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<sup>1</sup> Child Safeguarding Standards, Keeping Children Safe, p. 5

## GDPR

According to the code of conduct, personal details or pictures of children cannot be utilized without obtaining permission from the child's parents, legal representatives, or guardians, as well as from the child themselves. EaSI's data policy complies with the GDPR (EU Regulation 2016/679 of the 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016) and the relevant national law (Law no. 190 of the 18<sup>th</sup> July 2018).

After the child agrees to be involved in the dedicated activities and have their data included in the project's database, their parents/legal representatives/guardians will be asked to sign a GDPR form. The form will explicitly outline the boundaries of the consent provided (fully or partially) regarding the child's personal information (such as image, voice, name, educational institution), which may be utilized in materials highlighting the outcomes of the activities involving children.

The GDPR form will include EaSI's data retention practices, the access rights to the stored data, the contact information of the organization and the process for communicating the withdrawal of consent. The consent withdrawal intent should be communicated in writing (digital or paper) to the organization by the child's parent/legal representative/guardian. Information shared on social media during the period of consent granted by the parent cannot be removed by EaSI from databases beyond its control, such as those operated by Google, Meta, YouTube, Instagram, and others without limitation.

The GDPR form will be signed in 1 copy, kept by EaSI. However, on request, the child's parent/legal representative/guardian can receive a copy of the document as well. All materials including children's data and records resulted from project/initiatives implemented by EaSI are to be stored securely by the later mentioned.

## Staff Training

EaSI will deliver a mandatory training session to all its staff members, interns and volunteers aimed at presenting the current document (CSP), focusing on children protection strategies and the internal reporting process of incidents involving children.

Furthermore, the goal of the staff training is to guarantee that all EaSI staff members, interns and volunteers have the information, abilities, and consciousness required to shield children from exploitation, abuse, and injury. Special consideration will be given to the internal reporting mechanism and immediate action when faced with a potential incident addressing children.

The training is to be conducted either online or in person by the Child Safeguarding Officer.

## Recruitment procedures

The process of recruiting employees, interns and volunteers within EaSI aligns with the principle of child safeguarding. Furthermore, every staff member and intern is selected and assigned to specific projects and/or services according to their technical skills and past experience.

In case the specific position would require regular direct contact with children, the recruitment process conducted by EaSI will require the presentation of the certificate of criminal record. On the same note, other staff members may be asked to provide their criminal record certificate if they have direct contact with children or engage in unsupervised interactions without the presence of staff who have already submitted their criminal records.

## Child Safeguarding Officer

The person in charge of the correct implementation of this policy is Daria Bădescu – EaSI Project Manager. The officer, together with the members of EaSI Board and activity managers, when applicable, are responsible for the dissemination, awareness and implementation of the child safeguarding policy during any activity involving children carried out by the organization. Thus, they will ensure:

- All parts involved in the specific activity are aware of the identity of the policy responsible officer and the reporting mechanism.
- The facilitation of child safeguarding trainings/briefings.
- A regular review of the policy.
- The facilitation of the decision-making process when a situation or incident occurs/is raised by any activity participant or related adult.
- Keeping records and all evidence provided of any cases on child protection issues.

Contact details of the Child Safeguarding Officer: [daria.badescu@easi-socialinnovation.org](mailto:daria.badescu@easi-socialinnovation.org).

All complains & communication related to the implementation of the present policy should be communicated directly to the officer or the present staff member within the activity. Each staff member is instructed to further report the incident/case to the designated officer.

## Reporting mechanisms

Individuals included in this policy are required to inform the activities manager of any suspected abuse, who will then alert the Child Safeguarding Officer, who will guarantee that the following procedure is fully carried out.

If an adult covered by this procedure is not satisfied with the suggested action, they may ask for the case to be reviewed by the Board Members, with the backing of a member of the organization. Issues will be raised sincerely and will not lead to any retaliation, penalties, or other adverse consequences for the individual voicing the concern. Confidentiality will be assured by all EaSI parts involved in the management of the case.

For any suspicion or incident tackling the subject of the present policy, a notification will be made to the activity manager (EaSI staff member) or if possible, directly to the Child Safeguarding Officer. If an incident happens during or is connected to an EaSI activity, or if there are concerns regarding the organization's activities or its employees, EaSI is responsible for managing the case. EaSI will go as far as, if necessary, referring the case to competent authorities.

Each complaint or reported case will be tackled by the Child Safeguarding Officer with urgency, seriousness and in objective manner. The Officer will further inform EaSI's Board of the case and an internal investigation will commence.

## Risk assessment & mitigation

EaSI acknowledges that preventing and combating child abuse are essential to creating secure and healthy environments for kids. Therefore, in order to take the required action, all staff members and volunteers should approach any concerns regarding child safeguarding as urgent matters and bring them right away to the officer in charge.

To mitigate the risks of any type of violence or abuse towards children, EaSI takes the following measures:

- After each activity or event, EaSI will apply a satisfaction/feedback questionnaire that will include open questions, which will allow the participants to note any incident that may have appeared. More precise measurements and enquiries might be added to satisfaction surveys to enhance this measure.
- Any accusations involving staff and volunteers must be communicated to the designated contact person and EaSI's Board. Accordingly, the case will be analysed and a collaborative decision will then be made about how to engage with the appropriate authorities and organizations (such as the police, child protection services, etc.).



- All EaSI's permanent staff, interns and volunteers will benefit from a training on the contents of the CSP. EaSI will make certain that throughout the training, all personnel working with children are made aware of typical behavioural signs associated with various forms of abuse, as well as the appropriate procedures (such as reaching out to the designated contact; what details need to be collected at that moment) and the relevant authorities that must be notified in these situations.
- EaSI usually organizes sessions featuring two facilitators (chosen for their relevant experience). This approach can be a crucial tactic to prevent any misconduct by a single staff member and to guard against abuse.

### List of national contacts for specialist advice & information

- Single emergency contact: 112
- Single emergency contact for children: 119
- Children Telephone Association: 116 111 (unique european line) / [Acasă - Telefonul Copilului](#)
- National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights and Adoption: 021 310 07 89
- DGASPC District 1: 021 223 41 90
- DGASPC District 2: 021 252 22 02
- DGASPC District 3: 037 212 61 00
- DGASPC District 4: 037 271 51 00
- DGASPC District 5: 021 310 17 31
- DGASPC District 6: 021 317 63 11

## Child Safeguarding Policy Monitoring & Review

EaSI's Board Members, in collaboration with the responsible Child Safeguarding Officer, revise the Child Safeguarding Policy every three years or whenever there are relevant changes in national and/or international legislation and/or guidelines and/or the results of the monitoring suggest the need for improvements in the Child Safeguarding Policy.

EaSI's Child Safeguarding Officer, to implement and ensure the present policy's enforcement, is Daria Bădescu (Project Manager). She must be contacted for all communications regarding the topics addressed in the CSP by means of the following email address: [daria.badescu@easi-socialinnovation.org](mailto:daria.badescu@easi-socialinnovation.org).

EaSI's Board recognises, agrees and subscribes the present Child Safeguarding Policy.

General Director,

**Tiago Leitão**

