The protection of particularly vulnerable children including refugee children, unaccompanied minors, victims of trafficking, sexual exploitation and other forms of abuse

Swiss Foundation of the International Social Service

Christoph Braunschweig, Social Worker
Comments of newspaper readers after the appearance of an article on the situation of Separated Children in Switzerland

«The UN-Convention on the rights of the child stipulates the right of family life, parental care and a safe home. For this reason, these children should be taken back immediately to their parents.»

«We should recall that it is an incredible irresponsibility of parents to send their children to Europe for a better life!»
Separated children who arrived in Europe last year

Figure 6 - Demandes d'asile de mineurs non accompagnés dans l'UE par pays d'origine (2014)

Top 10 citoyennetés
- Afghanistan: 5,790
- Erythrée: 3,620
- Syrie: 3,070
- Somalie: 2,180
- Gambie: 1,065
- Albanie: 790
- Maroc: 600
- Nigeria: 400
- Iraq: 375
- Mali: 370

Data source: Eurostat.
Migrant children, refugees, victims of trafficking or children at risk; vulnerable for many reasons

- Flee war, humanitarian crises, etc.; escape situations of violence, exploitation, abuse, conflict, or lack of future perspectives etc.
- Exposed to harm during the journey and risky living circumstances in countries of transit
- Suffering from separation, traumas and bad experiences etc.
- Unsecure situation; loss of familiar, cultural and religious values, psychological stress in receiving countries
International migration is increasingly challenging immigration regimes:

Interest of a (receiving) state to control immigration

to be balanced with the

Individual best interest of a concerned separated child
Responsibilities of receiving states to address particular protection needs

- Providing safe accommodation, nomination of a legal guardian
- Individual assessment of child’s situation, including family environment, relations and contact
- Education, care plan and development of a life project
- Access to a Best Interest Determination BID process
- Person of trust / person of reference / befriender
Durable solution

General comment No. 6 (CRC/GC/2005/6):

“The ultimate aim in addressing the fate of unaccompanied or separated children is to identify a durable solution that addresses all their protection needs, takes into account the child’s view and, wherever possible, leads to overcoming the situation of a child being unaccompanied or separated.”
Transnational child protection situations require

- Holistic approach and child-centered attitudes
- Inter-disciplinary and cross-sectoral cooperation
- Inter-agency and transnational cooperation and coordination between country of origin, country of transit and receiving country
- Cooperation between stakeholders from authorities, NGO’s and civil society
- Common standards
Separated Children Handbook:
From identification to the search for a durable solution

A Practical Guide for Professionals
Stages of care

- Arrival and identification
- Access to a best interests determination process
- Reception and support
- Temporary integration
- Assessment of the situation in the country of origin
- Assessment of the situation in the host country
- Definition of a durable solution
- Monitoring
- Support for young adults
Durable solution

Efforts are needed here and now for the concerned child’s future;

so that each child can grow up safely and be treated with respect, with stable relationships giving him or her the possibility to develop future perspectives.
Thank you very much for your attention!

For more information:  
www.ssiss.ch  
www.resao.org  
www.enfants-migrants.ch