



# FOCUS Reference Table for Progress

**Individual assessment – a gateway to  
a child centered justice**

December 2021



Working together  
for children in criminal  
proceedings



**Terre des hommes**  
Helping children worldwide.



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**Disclaimer**

The contents of in FOCUS Reference Table for Progress: Individual assessment – a gateway to a child centered justice represent the views of the author only and is his/her sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



## Acknowledgments

The **FOCUS Reference Table for Progress** has been developed as part of the FOCUS project and is a component of a set of **FOCUS tools and resources**. This version is developed for the piloting process to be undertaken in FOCUS in 2021 in Bulgaria, The Netherlands, Serbia, Romania and Greece. The FOCUS reference table for progress helps stakeholders identify actions to achieve improvements.

Rebecca O' Donnell (Child Circle), took a lead role in the development of the FOCUS Reference Table for Progress, while receiving valuable input from the FOCUS experts Silvia Randazzo , Child Justice Expert, Annemieke Wolthuis, Research, mediator and trainer Mariama Diallo, Regional Programme Manager Access to Justice, Regional Office of Terre des hommes for Europe and Orinda Gjoni, FOCUS Regional Project Coordinator and our partners – Child Rights Centre (Serbia), Defence for Children (The Netherlands), SAPI (Bulgaria), Terre des hommes Hellas and Terre des hommes Romania.





## About the FOCUS project

FOCUS<sup>1</sup>, a European Union co-funded project (2020 – 2022), centred on promoting and supporting the implementation of EU legal obligations to carry out **individual assessments of the needs and circumstances of children involved in criminal proceedings, whether as victims, suspects or accused**. These obligations are set out in three EU Directives concerning combating sexual abuse and exploitation of children<sup>2</sup>, victims' rights<sup>3</sup> and procedural safeguards<sup>4</sup> respectively, as transposed into, and sometimes complemented by, national law.

The **ultimate objective** of the project is to support child-centred justice, and ensure that children in contact with the law, as victims and as offenders, receive individualised care, and have access to personalised support and responses, including through restorative justice processes. FOCUS partners see the implementation of **robust and multidisciplinary individual assessment process as a gateway into child centred justice**. Focus sought in particular to:

1. Make systematic individual assessment practices of more common application with children involved in criminal proceedings.
2. Build the knowledge, capacities and skills of youth justice professionals, about standards, tools, procedures and process in the use of multidisciplinary individual assessment with children in criminal proceedings.
3. Build the knowledge and capacities of children about their rights in the criminal justice system and empower children to be agents of change and advocates for child-centred justice.

The project facilitated learning through international mutual exchange of practices between the five target countries: Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, Romania and The Netherlands. FOCUS partners identified gaps between theory and practice on the implementation of individual assessment practices, gaps which were addressed by providing professionals with new, practical tools and resources to apply and systematize individual assessment process and practice in their countries.

The main FOCUS tools and resources developed are:

1. The FOCUS Standards: provide guiding principles for undertaking individual assessments for children involved in criminal proceedings, including respect for the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (tool)
2. The FOCUS Standards self-reflection tool: accompanies the FOCUS Standards and supports stakeholders and professionals in reflecting on how the Standards are fulfilled or can be better fulfilled in their practice or in their national systems (tool).
3. The FOCUS Mapping Tool: helps stakeholders review the state of development of individual assessment processes (tool)
4. The FOCUS reference table for progress helps stakeholders identify actions to achieve improvements (tool)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://tdh-europe.org/our-work/focus-on-my-needs-working-together-for-children-in-criminal-proceedings-/7144>

<sup>2</sup> EU Directive 2011/93 on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography.

<sup>3</sup> EU Directive 2012/29 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime.

<sup>4</sup> EU Directive 2016/800 on procedural safeguards for children who are suspects or accused persons in criminal proceedings.



5. The FOCUS pilot planning tool: helps stakeholders plan pilot activities to improve individual assessment processes (tool)
6. The FOCUS research summary on individual assessment with children in Europe (resources)
7. International human rights standards applicable on individual assessment practices (resources)
8. Q&A Individual assessment – a gateway to a child centered justice: key concepts and frequently asked questions (resources).
9. The Focus capacity building resources: the Focus Training Handbook, Focus on-line platform and the Focus e-learning module.



## Reference Table for Progress to support identifying goals for system change and the objectives for pilot and activities

State of play and general goals for progress needed	Examples of realistic objectives of pilot & potential activities
<p><b>STATE OF PLAY:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ No law or</li> <li>◆ Law but no other elements of the system to fulfil it</li> </ul> <p><b>GOAL:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ New law and system development needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Improve understanding of requirements and need to introduce law and system change and to create champions for change.</li> <li>◆ Training of professionals and stakeholders</li> <li>◆ Workshops (which actors should be involved in) can potentially create recommendations for change or propose a roadmap for change</li> <li>◆ Improve individual case practice.</li> <li>◆ (E.g. through the training of professionals and by providing them with the <b>means and support</b> enabling them to better carry out their role in relation to individual assessments (based on the standards).</li> </ul>



<p><b>STATE OF PLAY:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ There is a law</li> <li>◆ There are some procedures</li> <li>◆ But there is a need to build further elements of the system</li> </ul> <p><b>GOAL:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ E.g. build coordination protocols</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Improve understanding of requirements and the need to further build the system (stakeholders should be involved); create champions for change.</li> <li>◆ Workshops can potentially create recommendations for change or propose a roadmap for change</li> <li>◆ Workshops can potentially help to build case management protocols among practitioners (how realistic is this?)</li> <li>◆ Improve individual case practice (as above)</li> </ul>
<p><b>STATE OF PLAY:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ there is a law,</li> <li>◆ there are procedures</li> <li>◆ there is some coordination system</li> <li>◆ need for practice tools</li> </ul> <p><b>GOAL:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ e.g. agreement on better case management or practice tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Stimulate system improvement through workshops</li> <li>◆ Workshops to focus on identifying useful tools to support practice (stakeholders take inspiration from international tools)</li> <li>◆ Improve individual case practice (as above)</li> </ul>



<p><b>STATE OF PLAY:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a law</li> <li>• There are procedures</li> <li>• There is a coordination system</li> <li>• There are practice tools</li> <li>• But there is a need for more specialised practitioners</li> </ul> <p><b>GOAL:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ E.g need for training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Pilot activities focus on training and sustainability Improve individual case practice (as above)</li> </ul>
<p><b>STATE OF PLAY:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a law,</li> <li>• There are procedures</li> <li>• There is coordination</li> <li>• There are case management tools</li> <li>• There are specialised practitioners</li> <li>• There is training</li> <li>• But there is a need for further adaptation for special cases</li> </ul> <p><b>GOAL:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ More resources and planning to be inclusive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Workshops to focus on what resources/adaptations are needed for special cases</li> <li>◆ Improve individual case practice (as above)</li> </ul>





<p><b>STATE OF PLAY:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ There is a law</li> <li>◆ There are procedures</li> <li>◆ There is coordination</li> <li>◆ There are case management tools</li> <li>◆ There are specialised practitioners</li> <li>◆ There is training</li> <li>◆ Adaptation for special cases</li> <li>◆ Implementation patchy</li> </ul> <p><b>GOAL:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ More regular monitoring, accountability mechanisms and review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Workshops focus on how to improve monitoring, review mechanisms</li> <li>◆ Improve individual case practice (as above)</li> </ul>
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