The EU has introduced legislation that all of the Member States are bound to implement at the domestic level, particularly in relation to child protection issues with a cross-border element such as child trafficking, child abduction, forced migration and forms sexual exploitation. It has also developed laws to uphold the rights of children during the course of criminal proceedings whether they are victims, or alleged offenders. All of this law will have to be renegotiated or replaced by national law as a result of Brexit.

Binding EU Child Protection Law

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EU Child Protection Mechanisms to Facilitate Co-operation and Communication

Binding laws, however robust, can only operate if supported by a sturdy child protection infrastructure to facilitate the cross-national gathering and exchange of information relating to both victims and perpetrators. Among the mechanisms that have been set up by the EU in this regard are:

- **EUROJUST**, a judicial co-operation body responsible for co-ordinating investigations and prosecutions across the Member States.
- **EUROPOL** facilitates co-operation between the investigative authorities in the Member States with a view to combating serious organised crime involving children. Europol’s European Cybercrime Centre plays a pivotal role in providing operational support for the EU Member States and producing threat assessments related to online child sexual abuse.
- The European Arrest Warrant provides a fast-track extradition procedure to secure the arrest and return of an alleged offender to their territory to answer charges of an offence. This is now commonly used for those suspected of crimes against children.
- **ECRIS** links up national criminal records databases to ensure that information on those convicted of offences involving children is exchanged between Member States in a uniform, speedy and easily computer-transferable way. This helps prevent those convicted of offences against children from securing jobs with children in other Member States.

The UK’s Membership of all of these networks will have to be renegotiated as a result of Brexit.

Other EU Support

The EU has developed policies and supported research and data gathering, information exchange and trainings across a range of child protection areas, including:

- Online child abuse
- Missing Children
- Violence

The UK will no longer necessarily have access to these support mechanisms as a result of Brexit.

Sources

- European Commission Summary of Child Protection Activities
- National Crime Agency Statistics relating to the European Arrest Warrant

Check out ECRU’s other Brexit Briefing Papers:

- Family Law
- EU Migrant Children
- Forced Migrant Children
- Football Players
- Child Employment

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