



# Tackling and preventing child abuse in different European countries: Spotlight on the Child Assault Prevention Programme in Croatia

Wednesday 8th May 2024  
9.30-17.30 CET  
Zagreb, Croatia



*European Study Seminar on child abuse in the digital world  
co-organised by COFACE Families Europe and Step by Step Parents Association*

## **Tackling and preventing child abuse in different European countries, with a spotlight on the Child Assault Prevention Programme in Croatia**

9.30-14.00, Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024

[Hotel Dubrovnik Zagreb](#)

Zagreb, Croatia

### **Child sexual abuse in the digital environment**

Every child has the right to be protected from all forms of violence. Nevertheless, about 1 in 5 children in Europe become victims of sexual abuse, and in recent years reports of child sexual abuse online have dramatically increased. The rapid development of technology has led to new forms of sexual abuse against children, with the abuse increasingly occurring online or being facilitated by technologies. This includes, for example, grooming and the distribution of child sexual abuse material (CSAM).

At EU level, the European Commission proposed a [new regulation](#) in 2022 putting forward rules for online platforms to prevent, detect and report CSAM, but so far no agreement has been found. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 2023, the Commission furthermore proposed the [recast of the Child Sexual Abuse Directive](#), which will update the minimum rules on definitions and sanctions in the light of the increased use of evolving technologies in relation to this offence. It also puts forward more specific requirements for prevention and assistance to victims.

### **Child Assault Prevention (CAP) programme**

The Child Assault Prevention (CAP) programme is one of the most comprehensive and innovative prevention programmes for child abuse in the world. The original CAP programme began to be implemented in the United States in 1978. The International Center for Assault Prevention (ICAP), founded in 1985, has expanded the programme to other countries around the world. This central organisation does not exist anymore, but the programme continues to be implemented in Regional Training Centres.

COFACE member, Step by Step Parents Association, is such a Regional Training Centre in Croatia where they train facilitators to implement the CAP programme. The CAP programme equips children with effective prevention strategies to reduce their vulnerability and exposure to various forms of violence. Additionally, it ensures better support for parents, guardians, and educators. The programme has several variants that are intended for children of different ages and needs: preschool, kindergarten, teenagers, and children with disabilities.

## Objectives of the study seminar

The aim of this study seminar will be to learn more about the CAP approach in Croatia, exchange ideas with practitioners from other countries working also to prevent child abuse, assess together how to upgrade programmes to prevent child abuse online, and finally to build partnerships between [family organisations](#) and [Safer Internet Centres](#).

## Practical information

Working languages of the study seminar: English and Croatian.

Participants: CAP facilitators, Family organisations, Safer Internet Centres, Hotlines.

Inclusive and safe meeting spaces: COFACE and Step by Step are committed to the participation of all people on equal terms and aim to create inclusive meeting spaces where diversity is valued and respected. We aim to create an inclusive atmosphere and an accessible environment in our meetings, while enforcing non-violent communication and balanced, inclusive facilitation.

Co-moderators of the study seminar:

- *Beatrijs Gelders, Policy and Advocacy Officer, COFACE*
- *Elizabeth Gosme, Director, COFACE*

## PROGRAMME

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### Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024 - European study seminar

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9.30-10.00      **Registrations**

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10.00-10.20      **Welcome**

- **Jagoda Novak**, External Associate, Step by Step Parents Association
  - **Annemie Driescens**, President of COFACE Families Europe
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10.20-11.00      **Spotlight on the CAP Programme in Croatia**

Speaker: **Gorana Hitrec**, Step by Step Parents Association (Croatia)

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11.00-12.00      **Prevention of child sexual abuse online: perspectives from European countries**

*A holistic response is needed to tackle the ever-evolving crime of child sexual abuse. Awareness-raising and education of parents and carers can help engage with children about online behaviours, and how to recognise certain risks. However, more needs to be done to support these efforts. This session will identify some practices of prevention of child sexual abuse and assistance to victims, survivors, and their families. In addition, the session will reflect on what the key elements of good practices are or can be, and which structural changes might be needed.*

Speakers:

- **Andreas Rentzis**, Project Manager, KMOP (Greece)
  - **Patricia Cardona Roca**, Brave Movement (Spain)
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12.00-12.15      Stretching break

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12.15-12.45

**Evolving technologies and next steps: AI-generated sexual abuse material**

*This session will consider the impact of evolving technologies on preventing and tackling child sexual abuse. Extended Reality (XR) technologies and Artificial Intelligence (AI) have been around for a while but evolve rapidly and bring forward new challenges in the fight against child sexual abuse. The technologies are used for the harmful production and distribution of child sexual abuse and exploitation in the digital dimension.*

Speaker: **Jonah Thompson**, Policy and Public Affairs Executive, IWF (UK)

12.45-13.00

**Concluding session**

*This concluding session will allow participants to share their reflections on what they have heard during the various presentations.*

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13.00-14.00 Lunch break

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14.00-17.30

**Parallel meetings**

**Meeting of CAP facilitators - 25 years of CAP programme in Croatia (see separate agenda)**

*This is an internal meeting for Croatian delegates part of the CAP network.*

*Working language: Croatian.*

**Internal COFACE Working Group on Safer Internet (see separate agenda)**

*During this internal COFACE Working Group on Safer Internet, the COFACE network will discuss EU developments, build connections with the Insafe and INHOPE networks, discuss initiatives of different COFACE members, and COFACE's safer internet work in the future.*

*Working language: English.*

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