

## ENSURE Project

### Ensuring Access to Intermediaries for Children with Disabilities in Legal Proceedings

CERV-2024-DAPHNE

Between March 2025 and February 2027, the [International Commission of Jurists – European Institutions \(ICJ-EI\)](#), together with partners, implements the two-year-long **ENSURE project (Ensuring Access to Intermediaries for Children with Disabilities in Legal Proceedings)**. This initiative is dedicated to improving communication with child victims with disabilities in the criminal justice system by integrating intermediaries, support persons, and special representatives and aligns with the EU's objectives to enhance child protection systems and ensure access to justice for children with disabilities.

By developing tools for multidisciplinary support and fostering coordination among authorities and professionals, the project seeks to remove communication barriers that prevent children with disabilities from effectively engaging in legal proceedings. While intermediaries already exist in some EU countries, their formal regulation remains inconsistent. ENSURE will test their integration into existing professional categories or explore the creation of new roles in **Austria, Romania, and Serbia**, with contributions from experts in Spain and Ireland to share best practices.

#### Project Partners:

- [Validity Foundation \(Validity\)](#) – International
- [Terre des Hommes \(TdH\)](#) – Romania
- [Child Rights Centre \(CRC\)](#) – Serbia
- [Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Fundamental and Human Rights \(LBI-GMR\)](#) – Austria

The project's overall objective is to enhance access to justice for child victims with disabilities by improving coordination and cooperation among specialized roles. It targets criminal justice professionals, protection professionals, judicial authorities, and EU policymakers, ultimately benefiting disabled children in the justice system. Specific objectives include developing the roles of intermediaries, enhancing the skills of legal professionals, improving multidisciplinary cooperation, and raising awareness of the importance of specialized support for disabled child victims.

#### The main activities include:

- **Disability advisory board** engaging experts with disabilities to guide project activities and ensure inclusive approaches
- **National reports** examining the role of experts, consultants, and interpreters in justice systems, focusing on their impact on procedural accommodations for children
- **International synthesis report**

- **Model Rules-based processes** for special representatives, intermediaries, and support persons, adapted to national contexts through **National Rules-based processes**
- **Internal online workshop**
- **Training pack and curriculum**
- **Three national workshops** conducted in person in Austria, Romania, and Serbia to equip professionals with practical skills for working with intermediaries
- **International conference**
- **Two public webinars**
- **Policy brief**
- **International expert panel**

By implementing these activities, the ENSURE project aims to make legal proceedings more accessible, inclusive, and supportive for children with disabilities, fostering systemic change in child protection and justice systems across Europe.