

GROWING UP UNDOCUMENTED IN EUROPE - WEBINAR

11 June 2021, 10:00 – 12:00 CET

With simultaneous interpretation English – Spanish – French.

Across Europe, undocumented children [face legal and practical barriers](#) to pursuing an education, getting the health care they need, and having a decent and stable home. Their parents often cannot provide their children with everything they need, be it school material or essentials like nutritious food or clothes, because they depend on exploitative working arrangements. Cases of violence and abuse against children cannot be reported to the police without the family risking arrest or family separation because police often pay more attention to a victim's residence status than to the crime they have come to report. This places undocumented children at greater risk of experiencing or witnessing violence, as they and their families are 'zero risk' victims.

[Undocumented children](#) are a diverse group, as they often change between categories or residence statuses during the course of their childhood and the moment they turn eighteen. Some are alone, some live with their parents or family members. As the child's status is dependent on their parents' status, they too become undocumented if the parent loses their right to reside or work permit. Children can also be born to undocumented parents, although they themselves have never lived anywhere else. Depending on their residence status, children can also become undocumented when they turn 18.

There is no homogeneity in treatment that Member States reserve to children with a migrant background, including undocumented children. In light of recent EU proposals on migration and asylum, **PICUM and Save the Children Spain invite you to join a regional webinar on how an irregular residence status affects children and initiatives by EU Member States to tackle this phenomenon and provide durable solutions.**

The webinar also provides an opportunity to dig deeper into two recent reports: [Crecer sin papeles en España](#) (porCausa and Save the Children Spain) and [Navigating Irregularity: The impact of growing up undocumented in Europe](#) (PICUM).

Objectives:

- To raise awareness of the consequences of growing up undocumented on children, families and young people
- To raise awareness of the need for [best interests procedures](#) in migration decision making for children, pathways for stay and national-level protection schemes for children (equally relevant for the EU Pact discussions)
- To highlight relevant legislative initiatives at Member State level providing stable residence status to children: examples from Belgium, Ireland, Italy and Spain

Programme:

- 10:00 – 10:15 **Welcome and introduction**
Michele LeVoy, Director, PICUM
- 10:15 – 11:25 **The experience of growing up undocumented in Ireland**
Mairéad McDevitt, Community worker, Migrant Rights Center Ireland
- Growing up undocumented in Spain**
Catalina Perazzo, Director of Childhood Policies and Awareness, Save the Children Spain
- Italy's right to stay for undocumented children and young people**
Giusy D'Alconzo, Institutional relationships & Advocacy Manager, Save the Children Italy
- The Belgian search for a durable solution for unaccompanied minors**
Melanie Zonderman, Coordinator, Platform Minors in Exile, Belgium
- Protection of undocumented children – the EU perspective**
Isabela Atanasiu, Legal Officer, DG Home, European Commission
- Council of Europe standards and tools: protecting undocumented children**
Carolina Lasen Diaz, Legal Adviser, Office of the Secretary General's Special Representative on Migration and Refugees, Council of Europe
- Panel moderation by*
Laetitia Van der Vennet, Advocacy Officer, PICUM
- 11:25 – 11:50 Q&A and discussion
- 11:50 – 12:00 **Conclusions**
Jennifer Zuppiroli, Advocacy and Policy Advisor Children on the Move, Save the Children Spain