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Networking and Exchange
Activities to Reinforce
Guardianship on housing,
labour and education

LETTER OF INTENT

SISTER CITIES
FOR INCLUSION



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INTRODUCTION



This Letter of Intent is a bottom-up document, a **declaration of shared values and commitments** from local actors across Europe who **support unaccompanied migrant children and young people** in their pathway toward autonomy and social inclusion.

It is the result of a **collaborative process** spanning **five countries** and includes contributions from Municipalities, civil society organisations, educators, other public authorities, and youth themselves.

Through continuous dialogue, exchange of practices and collective reflection, shared structural challenges affecting access to education, housing and labour integration have been identified as well as commitments to overcome these challenges.

This Letter of Intent, while rooted in different local realities, reflects shared values and commitment among the EU to strengthen coordinated, sustainable and rights-based local responses.

We, the Undersigned, recognize our shared responsibility in building effective integration that requires action at multiple levels of governance.

This Letter of Intent has been **discussed with unaccompanied migrant children and young people**, whose contributions have helped identify and highlight the priorities that matter most to them.

SHARED CHALLENGES



Across European cities, unaccompanied migrant children and young people face structural and recurring barriers that affect their ability to fully access rights and opportunities and affect the long-term sustainability of their inclusion pathways.

We identified the following cross-cutting challenges:

- **Administrative and legal barriers** – particularly related to residence status and documentation - restrict access to essential services, lawful employment, housing and education.
- **Instability during key life transitions** due to changes, including changes in legal status, relocation, transition out of guardianship at 18, or migratory trajectories disrupts continuity in education, housing and employment pathways.
- **Insufficient continuity of support beyond the age of 18** increases the risk of exclusion, precarious living conditions, and irregular employment during critical transition phases.
- **Structural discrimination**, social prejudices, limited prioritization and lack of awareness within institutions, local communities, and private markets hinder inclusive policies and equal access to opportunities.
- **Gaps in the inclusion of the voices**, experiences, and perspectives of unaccompanied migrant children and youth in the design of policies and practices that affect their lives.
- **Lack of specialised resources** and support in terms of **mental health** to accompany UASC during their growth.

SHARED VALUES



This Letter of Intent is grounded in a rights-based, youth-centred approach, recognising education, housing, and labour integration as fundamental rights.

We believe that:

- **Inclusion requires cooperation and collective responsibility** among **public authorities** at different levels, civil society, communities, and other stakeholders.
- Unaccompanied migrant children and youth should enjoy the **same opportunities as their peers**.
- **Diversity**, multilingualism, and intercultural exchange **are assets** for communities.
- **Children and young people** should not be addressed as beneficiaries, rather **active subjects** for more inclusive and resilient cities.
- It is essential to **place individual stories, aspirations and potentials at the centre** of the policies' design and programming.
- **Policy responses to housing, education and labour integration** issues should be grounded in empathy and openness respecting individual needs, experiences, and aspirations.

EDUCATION

Vision

We envision **education systems** that offer **equal, flexible, and meaningful learning opportunities**, including **mainstream education**, vocational pathways and extracurricular, cultural and social activities aligned with young people's talents, aspirations, and local labour market contexts.

Education pathways should ensure:

- Stable reference figures.
- Early integration into local systems, and inclusive learning environments.
- **Linguistic and cultural mediation** as a tool for better socio-educational inclusion.

Commitments

Signatories recognize the importance of the following actions and commit to:

- Support **administrative simplification** to facilitate universal access to mainstream education and training pathways.
- Promote/encourage inclusive, multi-linguistic, and intercultural learning environments.
- **Strengthen cooperation** among schools, public services, civil society, and communities.
- Support/encourage **vocational and skills-oriented pathways** that respect young people's aspirations and are aligned with local labour market realities.
- Promote **narratives** that recognise the active role and meaningful **participation of unaccompanied migrant youth** as well as narrative against discrimination and hate speech.
- Promote extracurricular, cultural, and social **activities among peers** to foster opportunities for social interaction and cultural exchange.

HOUSING

Vision

We envision **housing systems** that provide safe and **stable initial reception conditions** and **personalised and transitional pathways towards autonomy**, particularly for young people leaving care after 18.

Housing solutions should:

- Be locally anchored and flexible.
- Be **connected to education** and employment for an integrated approach.
- Promote structured and transition mechanisms beyond the age of 18 to prevent abrupt exits from care systems and offer **gradual support towards independence**.

Commitments

Signatories will:

- Promote **high-quality initial reception condition**.
- Improve **access to housing pathways beyond the age of 18**, based on individual needs to accompany a gradual transition to autonomy.
- **Strengthen coordination** across local administrations, companies, and other actors in order to develop integrated and sustainable housing strategies over time.
- Explore **innovative and transitional housing solutions**/models depending on employment, rather than on age.
- Increase the **participation of former UASC in the narrative** building to raise awareness and address stereotypes within local communities.
- Improve **continuity of support**, including psychosocial wellbeing in **post-care** trajectories.

LABOUR INTEGRATION

Vision

We envision **labour market pathways** that provide **stable, lawful and long-term employment opportunities** recognising both structural legal constraints and the role of local actors in facilitating inclusive access.

Labour integration efforts should:

- Recognise **soft skills** alongside technical competencies.
- **Reduce vulnerability** to informal or exploitative employment.
- Encourage **early job market participation** through counseling and shadowing.
- Engage **employers as active partners**, raising awareness about the issues UASC often face and by fostering **partnerships between institutions, the third sector and businesses**.

Commitments

Signatories will:

- Create structured **spaces** and dedicated resources for **dialogue among private companies, public authorities and civil society** organizations to encourage inclusive recruitment and awareness initiatives among employers.
- Promote **partnerships with employers** aligning skills with labour market opportunities respecting talents and aspirations of youth.
- Strengthen **integrated support** connecting labour and employment services, housing and education pathways.

ENDORSEMENT - CONCLUSION



By endorsing this Letter of Intent, we reaffirm our willingness to cooperate, exchange knowledge and strengthen coordinated responses that **promote stability, autonomy and equal opportunities for unaccompanied migrant children and young people.**

We invite continued collaboration across local, regional, national and European levels to translate these shared principles into sustained action.

ANNEX | Examples of concrete actions extracted from best-practices

Orientation and legal counseling

Dedicated help desks providing information and guidance on **legal and administrative procedures**, aimed at facilitating the issuance of residence permits and regularization pathways. The help desks offer tailored assistance on applicable laws and procedures.

Education

Guidance and practical assistance desk providing **support with school** enrolment, in order to facilitate the integration of unaccompanied minors into the mainstream education system, with interventions coordinated at the municipal level. In addition to enrolment support, educational assistance could also include language courses, cultural mediation, and teacher training.

Artistic, sports, social, and cultural **activities involving both unaccompanied minors and local young people**, with the aim of fostering peer-to-peer relationships and social inclusion.

Housing

Transitional housing projects dedicated to unaccompanied minors approaching adulthood, aimed at fostering their autonomy with the support of a multidisciplinary team accompanying them in their pathway (including economic, health and educational aspects), as well as to young adults who have recently reached the age of majority, for whom local administrations commit to granting access to affordable housing solutions.

Access to employment

Working groups with social workers or educators, private companies, and civil society organizations to co-design concrete and tailored pathways for unaccompanied minors to access the labour market, ideally integrating employment opportunities with housing solutions.

