



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MIGRATION AND HOME AFFAIRS

Directorate E – HOME Affairs Funds
The Director

Brussels
HOME.E.2/JG

**NOTE FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE HOME
AFFAIRS FUNDS**

Ref.: HOME-Funds/2023/25

Subject: Launch of the call for expression of interest under the “Specific Action MS under pressure - unaccompanied minors” under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) – Reference AMIF/2023/SA/1.2.1.

1. INTRODUCTION

Regulation (EU) 2021/1147 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) provides that Member States may receive funding for specific actions in addition to their initial allocations in their respective programmes.

Specific actions aim to fund transnational or national projects that bring Union added value in accordance with the objectives of the Fund for which one, several or all Member States may receive an additional allocation to their programmes.

They will be implemented as one of the components of the Thematic Facility in line with Art. 11 AMIF Regulation and the relevant financing decisions and work programmes for the AMIF Thematic Facility.

By the present note, the Commission launches a call for expression of interest for Specific Action “MS under pressure - unaccompanied minors”, in line with the actions listed in the above-mentioned work programme.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Specific actions will be implemented by Member States participating in the AMIF via funding received in addition to the allocation under their AMIF programmes.

Funding for specific actions is added to the Member States' programme allocations by means of a programme amendment. That additional funding is earmarked for the specific action concerned and shall not be used for other actions in the Member State's programme, except in duly justified circumstances and as approved by the Commission through the amendment of the programme.

Whereas the regular EU co-financing rate under the Member States' programmes will not exceed 75% of total eligible expenditure, projects implemented under specific actions may benefit from an increased co-financing rate of 90% of total eligible expenditure.

The specific action must be implemented by the Member States in accordance with the AMIF Regulation¹ and the Common Provisions Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 (CPR)².

Your attention is drawn in particular, to one provision of the CPR. As regard the value added tax ("VAT") eligibility regime, Article 64 (1)(c) of the CPR provides that VAT is not eligible, except:

- (i) "for operations the total cost of which is below EUR 5 000 000 (including VAT);
- (ii) for operations the total cost of which is at least EUR 5 000 000 (including VAT) where it is non-recoverable under national VAT legislation".

3. CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

3.1. Budget availability and reserve list

3.1.1. Indicative budget available

The indicative amount envisaged for the call AMIF/2023/SA/1.2.1. is EUR 120 million, with lot 1: unaccompanied minors and lot 2: reception at the external border (see separate call for expression of interest).

As part of the same call AMIF/2023/SA/1.2.1, both lots will be assessed together by DG HOME which can adjust the amount envisaged for each lot, according to the needs.

For Lot 1 EUR 70 million is available.

The requested amount (i.e. the Union contribution to the Member State's AMIF programme under the specific action, including technical assistance):

- should not be lower than EUR 5 million per application/work package (if applicable) and

¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/1147 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund

² Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy.

- should not be higher than EUR 15 million per application/work package (if applicable), except in duly justified cases.

3.1.2. Reserve list

Under the Thematic Facility work programme 2023-2025, additional amounts could be allocated in 2024 to Member States under pressure for proposals on unaccompanied minors and reception at the external border. Following the submission of proposals by Member States, the Commission would establish a reserve list in case additional budget is available in the future. The reserve list would be composed of:

- Proposals not selected under the present call: the Commission will establish a reserve list for proposals which are not selected but obtained a **minimum score of 65/100**.
- Proposals partially financed under the present call: when applying, Member States could submit proposals composed of different work packages. The Commission can propose to fund either one or multiple work packages, each one within the above-mentioned ceilings, and include the remaining one(s) in the reserve list, provided that they meet the **minimum score of 65/100**. In order for this to become applicable, please provide the information requested in the application form, where you also find more information on work packages.

3.2. Background for the specific action

The JHA Council of 25 November 2022 examined the situation of increasing migratory pressure along all migratory routes, including the particularly challenging situation in the Mediterranean and in the Western Balkans, and the largest refugee crisis since the Second World War in Europe, with around 4 million refugees from Ukraine who receive(d) temporary protection. The EU endorsed Action Plans on the Western Balkans and the Central Mediterranean route, bearing in mind the respective challenges of irregular border crossings and disembarkations after search and rescue. The JHA Council emphasized the need for joint efforts and solidarity, bearing in mind the need for a whole-of-route approach to find solutions.

The European Council of 9 February 2023 discussed the migration situation and invited the Commission to present Action Plans for the Atlantic, Western and Eastern Mediterranean routes, with a view to quickly alleviating the pressure on the Member States most affected.

The European Parliament has also called for solidarity with the Member States where large numbers of arrivals occur³.

A call for actions to support reception, asylum and return systems under pressure will contribute to the efforts of Member States to address challenges identified. The call will invite Member States to launch initiatives to make structural improvements at national level, taking into account shortcomings identified when facing the migratory pressure.

³ European Parliament resolution of 12 April 2016 on the situation in the Mediterranean and the need for a holistic EU approach to migration ([2015/2095\(INI\)](#))

In its Resolution of 11 March 2021 on the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child⁴ the European Parliament stressed the need for the EU to adopt and support the implementation of measures to improve the protection of children in migration. It underlined that a particular focus was required on access to adequate reception conditions, social and medical care, timely appointment of qualified legal representatives and guardians for unaccompanied minors, and access to child-friendly information.

In order to quickly alleviate the pressure on MS particularly affected and bearing in mind the Union acquis, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and standards set by the EU Asylum Agency, this call supports Member States to remedy shortcomings identified in reception systems for unaccompanied minors, to deliver on the effective protection of children and to bring about related structural improvements at the national level in the accommodation and care systems, especially for guardianship.

3.2.1. *EU legal and policy framework*

EU asylum and migration rules⁵ guarantee additional and specific protection for migrant children, and in particular for the most vulnerable, including unaccompanied and separated children⁶.

⁴ European Parliament resolution of 11 March 2021 on children’s rights in view of the EU Strategy on the rights of the child (2021/2523(RSP)) *OJ C 474*, 24.11.2021, p. 146–155

⁵ See Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection (recast), *OJ L 180*, 29.6.2013, p. 60–95 (‘the Asylum Procedures Directive’), Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast) *OJ L 180*, 29.6.2013, p. 96–116 (‘the Reception Conditions Directive’); Directive 2008/115/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals *OJ L 348*, 24.12.2008, p. 98–107 (‘the Return Directive’); Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof, *OJ L 212*, 7.8.2001, p. 12–23 (‘the Temporary Protection Directive’); and the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC, and having the effect of introducing temporary protection, *OJ L 71*, 4.3.2022, p. 1–6.

⁶ ‘Unaccompanied minor’ means third-country nationals or stateless persons below the age of eighteen, who arrive on the territory of the Member States unaccompanied by an adult responsible for them whether by law or custom, and for as long as they are not effectively taken into the care of such a person, or minors who are left unaccompanied after they have entered the territory of the Member States (see e.g. Art. 2 (e) of the Reception Conditions Directive – see fn. 5 above).

Within the group of the unaccompanied children, some are to be considered as ‘separated’. A ‘separated child’ is a child who arrives on the territory of the Member States accompanied by relatives or known (non-related) adults, whereby sometimes the latter have been provided by the parent(s) an authorisation to travel with the child and/or provide temporary care (example: Ukrainian mother traveling with her own children and those of another family). EU law does not contain a legal definition of ‘separated’ children, but the notion is defined in the [UN General Comment No 6 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child; Treatment of Unaccompanied and Separated Children Outside their Country of Origin](#).

Beyond the realm of EU legislation, the protection of migrant children is a shared European value and a stable political priority. In the [2017 Communication on the protection of children in migration](#), the European Commission made a comprehensive diagnosis of the multiple protection gaps revealed by the 2015-2016 migration crisis and set out specific recommendations of actions to reinforce the protection of children on the move.

The 2017 Communication devotes a specific section to actions aimed at **ensuring adequate reception conditions** for the migrant children. As the Communication recalls, reception conditions for children include not only safe and appropriate accommodation, but also support services to secure the child's best interests and wellbeing, such as guardianship, access to education and healthcare, psychosocial support, leisure and integration-related measures. The Communication encouraged the Member States to implement, with support from the European Commission and the EU agencies, actions aiming to:

- develop alternative (non-institutional) accommodation and care options for the unaccompanied children (e.g. foster/family-based care, community care, semi-independent living arrangements for teenagers, etc.);
- ensure timely access to education, healthcare and psychosocial support;

Developing **alternative (non-institutional) accommodation and care arrangements** for the unaccompanied migrant children is consistent with the overall process of de-institutionalisation of childcare that has been implemented in the EU over the last decade. The 2009 [UN Guidelines on Children in Alternative Care](#) set out clear recommendations on the necessity of providing to each child alternative care in a non-institutionalised environment, based on an individualised assessment of their specific needs and best interests.

“[...] alternatives should be developed in the context of an overall deinstitutionalization strategy, with precise goals and objectives, which will allow for their progressive elimination. To this end, States should establish care standards to ensure the quality and conditions that are conducive to the child's development, such as individualized and small-group care, and should evaluate existing facilities against these standards. Decisions regarding the establishment of, or permission to establish, new residential care facilities, whether public or private, should take full account of this deinstitutionalization objective and strategy.”

During the 2014-2020 programming period, the EU Structural Funds already prioritised **de-institutionalised childcare**, with investments of EUR 10 billion in services for children and families. The 2021-2027 EU Structural Funds will also prioritize de-institutionalisation.

Ensuring **effective guardianship** for the unaccompanied children is also at the core of the 2017 Communication. Without effective guardianship, unaccompanied migrant children have reduced chances of accessing their basic rights (starting for suitable accommodation and day-to-day care, and going through healthcare, education, psychosocial support as needed, etc.). Guardians are indispensable for also ensuring that the children are properly assisted and guided throughout the asylum and migration procedures, and ultimately can pursue a future conform to their best interests and

potential. The [EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child](#) adopted in March 2021 placed renewed emphasis on the need to strengthen guardianship systems in the Member States and to reinforce the [European Guardianship Network](#) ('EGN').

Child protection is also central to the EU's support to **persons fleeing the Russian aggression against Ukraine**, and particularly in the context of the activation and implementation of the **Temporary Protection Directive**⁷. On 31 March 2022, the Commission adopted a [10-Point Action Plan for stronger European coordination on welcoming those fleeing Ukraine](#). As part of this 10-Point Plan, the Commission worked closely with experts and stakeholders to identify the specific challenges related to reception and care for the most vulnerable categories of children arriving from Ukraine. This work resulted in comprehensive recommendations, published in July 2022 in the form of the [Frequently Asked Questions on Unaccompanied and Separated Children Fleeing from War in Ukraine](#). In the March 2023 [Communication marking one year of implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive](#), the Commission outlined the main challenges that lie ahead for ensuring adequate protection to the more vulnerable categories of children arriving from Ukraine, i.e. children evacuated from Ukrainian institutions, and more generally, also other children arriving to the EU accompanied by their Ukrainian guardians.

3.2.2. *Current challenges and protection gaps*

The reception systems for unaccompanied children and child protection systems of several Member States are under increasing strain, due to increasing arrivals of unaccompanied migrant children and the need to respond to the specific protection needs of children fleeing from war in Ukraine.

In 2021, 24,147 migrant children arrived in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta and Spain. Of these, 17,185 (71%) were unaccompanied or separated children. Child arrivals had increased by 44% in 2021 compared to 2020 (16,700)⁸. In 2022, the EU27 received almost 40,000 asylum applications from unaccompanied migrant children, accounting for 19% of the applications made by children in the same year.

Since the adoption of the 2017 Communication on the protection of children in migration there have been unquestionable improvements in several Member States in terms of addressing the protection gaps identified therein. For instance, several Member States have reformed their guardianship systems for unaccompanied migrant children, or improved reception conditions for them, by developing alternative (non-institutional) care solutions, and improving access to basic rights such as education and healthcare.

In 2022 several Member States reported a notable increase in the arrivals of unaccompanied migrant children, which put the spotlight on any pre-existing gaps in the procedure to appoint guardians or secure suitable accommodation and care⁹. Some of the

⁷ Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof, OJ L 212, 7.8.2001, p. 12–2.

⁸ UNHCR (July 2022): [Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe - Accompanied, Unaccompanied and Separated - Overview of Trends January to December 2021](#).

⁹ EUAA [Annual Asylum Report 2022](#).

Member States also reported difficulty to recruit qualified staff for attending to the specific care needs of children – guardians, caretakers, social workers, medical and psychosocial specialists, but also interpreters, cultural mediators, etc.

The specific protection needs of Ukrainian children are also an important concern for some of the Member States. Currently the EU offers protection to one out of five of Ukraine’s children.

These multiple challenges are outlined for example in the [Factsheet on Reception conditions for children seeking international protection in the EU](#) and the [Factsheet on Age Assessment and Guardianship for Unaccompanied Children](#) published by the EUAA in June 2022.

3.2.3. *Complementarity*

The actions to be financed under this call should be complementary to any actions that individual Member States may finance under the AMIF 2021-2027 Programmes or other EU funding instruments, such as the ESF+, for the objective of enhancing the capacity of national reception and care systems and national guardianship systems in the sustainable long-term.

Moreover, the actions to be financed should also be complementary to Union actions financed under the AMIF and ideally, should build upon the lessons learnt for the national systems by such projects. Under the [AMIF Union Action Call 2018](#) and the [AMIF Union Action Call 2019](#), the European Commission co-financed projects facilitating the cross-border exchange of good practices and know how on how to create/develop alternative care solutions for the unaccompanied migrant children (such as foster or family-based care, community care, supervised independent living solutions for the teenagers, etc.).

Under the [AMIF Union Action Call 2020](#), the Commission funded projects facilitating the cross-border exchange of good practices and know how on how to support the transition of young migrants turning 18 to adulthood and autonomy.

Under the [Transnational Actions on Asylum, Migration and Integration \(AMIF-2023-TF2-AG-CALL\)](#), the Commission will finance the exchange of good practices and knowledge-sharing on the types of support to be given to guardians of unaccompanied migrant children. The call gives examples of the types of external support that guardians of unaccompanied children may need:

- training - for being able to deliver their tasks well, and to become familiar with EU and national asylum and migration laws),
- being provided adequate resources (starting from the funding necessary to perform their tasks but also including the availability of social assistance, mediators and interpreters, psychosocial support for the children, etc.);
- being able to network with other guardians for support and exchanges of views;
- psychosocial support enabling them to confront the risk of burnout (their tasks being one that exposes the guardians to high emotional charge), etc.

The activities financed under the above-mentioned 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2023 Union Action calls mainly included workshops, conferences, study visits, development of training modules, actual training.

Applications for financing under the present call should consider whether and how they can build on the deliverables of the proposals financed under these calls.

In case the Member State has a EUAA operational plan regarding unaccompanied minors, the proposal should ensure complementarity with it.

3.2.4. Minimum requirements for proposals

The call will invite the Member States facing migratory pressure arising in 2022 and first half of 2023 to launch initiatives to make structural improvements at national level, taking into account shortcomings identified in the national reception systems for unaccompanied minors and for the protection of children.

The proposals should be embedded in a national strategy and thus contribute to capacity building at national level for these systems. The application should describe the baseline situation, the strategy concerned and the expected results. This means that proposals should indicate how the project fits into the (broader) plans of the government for improving the situation in the mid to long term. The project may contribute to better implementation of existing policies, for instance by upscaling activities, or prepare for other forms of support, by testing a new initiative, which would then be continued and/or replicated in a sustainable manner afterwards with national budget.

To contribute to a successful strategy, the proposals should take into account relevant existing guidance from the EUAA and could involve further targeted guidance for the proposed actions from the EUAA and, where appropriate, other international organisations and/or national asylum agencies in other Member States.

The proposals should support measures that are in line with EU standards and guidance and where appropriate build on good practices in other Member States.

Furthermore, the applicants should consult EUAA on their proposed actions. The applicant could, for instance, involve the EUAA to support the proposal with the design of the initiative, its testing and roll-out.

Moreover, the proposals should demonstrate sustainability of the capacity being built through the project at national level. To this end, proposals will need to expose the cooperation and active participation, and at the very least the written agreement of all the national administrations and/or institutions benefitting from it. The proposals should also include a description about steps to be taken after the end of the project in connection to the national strategy for capacity building.

3.3. Scope of the specific action for Member States under pressure

This call for specific action is part of a number of specific actions that seek to address the challenges identified at the February European Council on migration. All these specific actions aim to support Member States under migratory pressure, in accordance with the work programmes for AMIF and BMVI of the Thematic Facility. The work programme for AMIF refers to actions to support reception, asylum and return systems under pressure.

3.3.1. *Distinction from programmes and emergency assistance*

The scope of the support for Member States under pressure under these specific actions needs to be well defined and a clear delineation must be drawn with funding opportunities under:

- a. Member States' Programmes (National Programmes); and
- b. Emergency assistance (EMAS),

as well as direct awards provided to international organisations and non-profit organisations assimilated with international organisations in accordance with Article 156 of the Financial Regulation for this same purpose.

3.3.2 *General principles for specific actions Member States under Pressure*

The following general principles should be taken into account for specific action addressed to Member States under Pressure:

- The actions should serve to cover additional structural or exceptional needs and running costs, including contingency, stemming from the additional burden resulting from the continuous migratory pressure in the Member State concerned or at its external borders.
- The request for funding should demonstrate that national funds and/or funds under Member States' programmes or other sources of funding are not sufficient over the 7 years period to carry out the proposed actions, or that the proposed actions deliver additional EU added value to the actions funded under the Member State programme.
- The complementarities between the different funding tools should be explained in the proposal to avoid potential overlaps.
- The actions deliver particularly high EU-added value considering recent developments and demonstrate EU solidarity with Member States under pressure in line with the specific objectives of the Fund-specific Regulations.
- The actions are foreseeable and of medium or long-term nature. The needs are predictable and can be planned by the Member States authorities.
- The applicant should ensure that the proposed action will be implemented in full respect of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and in line with EU acquis.

3.3.3. *Requirements relating to Member State under Pressure*

For this specific action, proposals should provide a justification that the Member State concerned is facing continuous pressure on its migration system and is bearing a high share of responsibility on behalf of the Union as a whole.

The description of the baseline situation at the time of the application in the proposal should provide data for this purpose.

Data can include for instance the number of new and/or pending asylum applications, the occupancy rate in the national reception system (including in points of arrivals and in pre-removal detention centres), the number of beneficiaries of temporary protection, international protection and any other criteria justifying the relevance of the proposal (see also section 3.4).

Data may also relate to concerns about shortcomings in the systems or the risks of not complying fully with the Union acquis as regards the protection of unaccompanied minors.

Member States are invited to present more detailed data about the target population in the description of the baseline situation. This call targets in particular Member States who can demonstrate a notable increase of the pressure on their reception and child protection systems due to one or more of the following circumstances:

1. increased number of unaccompanied minors compared to past years. For instance by providing data on annual arrivals compared to past years and on the number of UAMs protected or applying for protection in the system;
2. number of children living in inadequate accommodation, combined with proven national efforts to shift these UAM to de-institutionalised housing / care systems;
3. increased pressure on the reception system for unaccompanied minors due to change of the number or systems of guardians resulting in an inadequate ratio minors/guardians.

Data should be comparable and reference should be made to how the data was collected, measured or calculated.

3.4. Objectives and activities of the specific action

The objective of this specific action is to finance proposals aimed at one or both of the following priorities for Member States under pressure:

1. **to enhance the capacity of national reception and child protection systems to provide quality reception and care for unaccompanied minors**, by creating/developing/consolidating alternative (de-institutionalised) accommodation and care solutions,
2. **to enhance the capacity and the quality of national guardianship and child protection systems for unaccompanied minors.**

The specific action proposed must include activities related to one or both following two priorities as follows:

- 1) Introducing or creating additional capacity for **providing accommodation and care for the unaccompanied minors in a quality, de-institutionalised environment**, e.g.: foster/family-based care, community care, semi-independent living arrangements for teenagers, etc.). Such actions may include, for example:
 - purchase/refurbishment of real estate for providing accommodation in community-based models;

- recruitment, training and support (including financial, but also of other types) to personnel in charge of dedicated facilities;
- recruitment, training and support (including financial, but also of other types) to social workers, medical and psychosocial staff providing individualised support to the children in accordance with their specific needs;
- costs related to the transportation of the children;
- legal assistance to the children throughout asylum and migration procedures, including for the purposes of prospecting regularization on other grounds than international or secondary protection, and during family reunification procedures.

2) Introducing or creating additional capacity for the **national guardianship and child protection systems** to be able to adequately deal with the increasing number of unaccompanied minors arriving. Such actions may include, for example:

- Direct support for the recruitment and/or training of guardians. This could also be coupled with guardianship reforms;
- External support to the guardians, to enable them to adequately perform their role vis-à-vis the unaccompanied children, e.g.: training; being provided adequate resources (starting from the funding necessary to perform their various tasks to providing to them support with social assistants, cultural mediators and interpreters, psychosocial support for the children, etc.); setup of networks of guardians; guarantee coordination mechanisms to follow up on the situation of minors ensuring a personalised approach, psychosocial support to the guardians, enabling them to confront the risk of burnout, etc.

Without prejudice to the recommendation in section 3.2.4 on (general) advice and guidance from EUAA, other international organisations and/or national agencies in other Member States, proposals can include concrete, in kind support from other Member States or international organisations. For example, experts from one MS could help with training in other MS, or with identifying workable solutions to specific challenges, etc.

The proposals must demonstrate having considered the recommendations stemming from the main EU legislative and policy frameworks in this area (see section 3.2. above), as well as the following main reference documents:

- Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) (2014): Guardianship for Children deprived of Parental Care.
- European Union Asylum Agency (EUAA) (2018): Guidance on reception conditions for unaccompanied minors.
- Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) (2022): Guardianship systems for unaccompanied children in the European Union: developments since 2014.
- Minutes and materials of the ten (10) meetings held so far by the HOME Expert Group on the Protection of Children in Migration (the 10th meeting of the HOME Expert Group of the Protection of Children in Migration, held on 16 February 2023, explored in particular the current challenges related to the reception and care for unaccompanied children, respectively for vulnerable categories of children fleeing from war in Ukraine. Alternative care system, and external support to guardianship systems, have also been explored at previous editions.)

- Documents and resources listed in the Frequently Asked Questions on the Unaccompanied and separated Children Fleeing from War in Ukraine.
- Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) (2023): Guardianship for unaccompanied children. A manual for the training of guardians.
- The resources and materials published by the EUAA Vulnerability Network.
- The 2019 EMN Children in Migration Inform.

Given the limited resources under this call and considering the scope of AMIF and other EU funding instruments, the specific action proposed should not include activities related to:

- Facilitating access to education – which is a horizontal need of all migrant children, including those arriving from Ukraine, and which is in principle, funded by other EU funding instruments, such as ESF+.
- Projects where the predominant or exclusive action is research. This is without prejudice to the need to provide in each proposal a practical mapping of the specific protection needs to be addressed by the project, how it fits within the national reception and child protection system, the national strategy to address the needs of migrant children, the estimate of costs for ensuring its long-term sustainability etc. It is also without prejudice to the possibility to test innovative approaches, resulting from research findings (at national level, under Horizon or from methodologies developed under Union actions).
- Projects that could be financed under other EU funding instruments, such as ESF+, except where the proposed actions are clearly delineated from funding under the AMIF.
- Projects that have already received EU financing for the same actions and objectives – except where the need to continue financing is demonstrated with external objective factors, which are not related to the failure of the beneficiary to ensure tenure and sustainability of the previous projects.

3.5. Expected results following the call

The proposals to be financed under this call must explain in detail under part 2 “Presentation of the proposal” in the application form how the proposal will enhance the capacity of national reception and child protection systems to (1) provide quality reception and care for unaccompanied minors, by creating/developing/ consolidating alternative (de-institutionalised) accommodation and care solutions (priority 1); and/or (2) provide quality guardianship for unaccompanied minors (priority 2).

3.6. Follow up and monitoring projects selected

DG HOME may organise workshops bringing together all project beneficiaries to meet, share information and report on progress and exchange good practices throughout the life cycle of the projects.

The aim of this joint monitoring activity is not only to share information on preliminary results, indicators, methodology, implementation issues and any preparations for sustainability but also to compile results collectively and thus identify the overall impact of the specific action.

4. PROCEDURE FOR APPLICATION

4.1. Application content

Each Member State is entitled to submit **one application only**.

You have the possibility to present in your application the different priorities/topics/stages of the proposal as work packages composed of activities that you wish to carry out. For each work package, indicate the priority in relation to the other ones, the different activities and their relevance with regards to the capability gaps and expected timeline for delivery.

We recommend that you present the work packages according to a logic that is inherent, in your opinion, to an optimal development of your reception, guardianship and child protection system for unaccompanied minors. Please describe the reasoning behind this intervention logic with work packages in the application form and use the budget form to detail each work package, within a separated excel sheet, with the relevant activities.

The work packages that are part of a proposal should be clearly inter-connected and contribute to the achievement of the objective(s) of the proposal. Nevertheless, should there be work packages not selected/added to the reserve list, it should not affect the implementation of the work package(s) selected and their effective commencement.

Given the limited budget available, it is likely that only some work packages of a proposal will be financed. Since there is no earmarking of the amount per Member State and the EU budget may not be sufficient to cover all additional needs identified, the application should present your views on the priorities for funding among the needs identified and the sequencing for each activity.

4.2. Admissibility and assessment aspects

All EU Member States participating in AMIF are eligible. DG HOME will assess the proposals submitted by the Member States.

To be considered admissible, a proposal has to

1. be submitted within the deadline (see below) to the AMIF specific actions functional mailbox HOME-AMIF-SPECIFIC-ACTIONS@ec.europa.eu in the official AMIF/2023/SA/1.2.1. Application Form attached to this note, together with its annexes, and readable and complete (all fields necessary for assessment are filled in),
2. be submitted by the Managing Authority on behalf of the entity in the Member State that will be responsible for the implementation of the specific action,
3. identify a project beneficiary (an entity) that will be responsible for the implementation of the specific action in the Member State (in the lead for the action),

Other entities can be involved in the implementation of the specific action as co-beneficiaries.

DG HOME will assess admissible proposals based on the following criteria:

A. Relevance and content (40 points – minimum ‘pass score’: 25 points):

1. Degree to which the Member State concerned is under pressure (description of the baseline situation) and the proposal outlines structural improvements to address the pressure in the system in line with the objectives of the call (section 3.3.3)
2. Compliance with the minimum requirements for relevant proposals under this call (section 3.2.4)
3. Clarity and consistency of the objectives and scope of the proposal against the objectives and expected results identified in this call for expression of interest (sections 3.4 and 3.5)

B. Quality (30 points – minimum ‘pass score’: 15 points):

1. Maturity of the proposal: appropriateness of the design; planned implementation (timetable), considering the envisaged activities; organisation of work and strategy for project management (operational and financial) and monitoring, measures undertaken to mitigate the identified risks, communication, awareness raising and evaluation
2. Complementarity of the proposal with current and/or past use of national budget or other EU funding instruments; degree to which the proposal will build on actions funded previously or ensure synergies with ongoing projects

C. Impact (30 points – minimum ‘pass score’: 15 points):

1. The impact or effect of the proposal in relation to the objective of the call for expression of interest in terms of:
 - a. the number of unaccompanied minors benefitting from the proposal
 - b. scope and size of structural improvements made at national level to the system by the proposal
2. The expectations for the sustainability of the improvements achieved with the proposal.

Member State(s) should also ensure respect for the horizontal principles described in Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060.

4.2. Application procedure

Deadline for the application: Member States are invited to submit their proposals by 25/08/2023 at the latest, using the official AMIF/2023/SA/1.2.1. Application Form attached to this Note, together with its annexes.

The proposals should be submitted to the AMIF specific actions functional mailbox HOME-AMIF-SPECIFIC-ACTIONS@ec.europa.eu. Member States may submit additional documentation if necessary.

Deadline for any clarification requests on this Note: Member States can send requests by 04/08/2023 at the latest to HOME-AFFAIRS-FUNDS-COMMITTEE@ec.europa.eu.

The Commission may also contact the Member State to request further specific information. A reply should be provided by the Member State within 3 working days.

In order to ensure equal and fair treatment of the proposals and allow the Commission to allocate at the same date all the available funding, DG HOME will assess all proposals simultaneously. Therefore, proposals submitted after the deadline won't be admissible.

The Members of the Committee for the Home Affairs Funds are informed at the latest 10 working days before the deadline for the submission of the proposals in case the deadline for the submission of proposals is extended.

DG HOME will inform Member States of the outcome of the assessment of the proposals towards October 2023.

5. AMENDMENT OF THE AMIF PROGRAMMES AND ELIGIBILITY OF EXPENDITURE

After having been informed of the outcome of the call for expression of interest, each successful Member State shall submit to the Commission a request to amend its AMIF programme via SFC. The amended programme should include a short description of the specific action, adjust the output and result indicators and include the costs and codes linked to this specific action (respectively in the description and under tables 1, 2 and 3 of the relevant specific objective, and table 6 of the programme).

Yours faithfully,

Silvia MICHELINI

Enclosure: Annex 1: Application form
 Annex 2: Budget form

c.c.: Permanent Representations – JHA Counsellors