

# Whose children? Protecting unaccompanied migrant children in Europe: a case of diffused responsibility?

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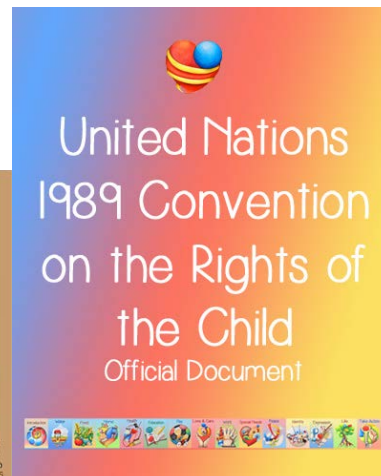
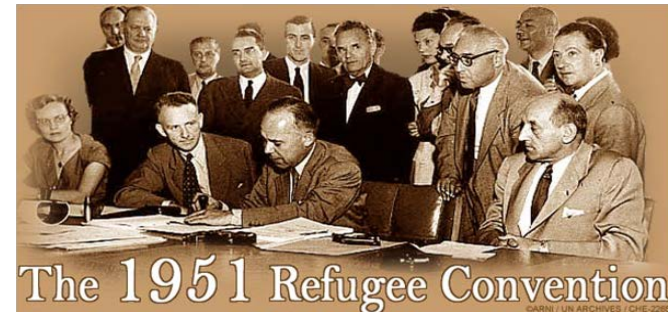
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# 1. Child refugees: legal and policy approaches

## 1.1. Child refugees and UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

- ▶ Refugee children: an uncertain status
- ▶ Status of invisibility (national/international level)
- ▶ Migration control prioritized at expense of rights' protection
- ▶ Ambivalent approach regarding UAMs
- ▶ Limited and fragmented legal and policy provisions



# 1. Child refugees: legal and policy approaches

## 1.2. Common European Asylum System (CEAS), Child Rights and UAMs

- ▶ CEAS: 'fortress Europe'
- ▶ Security objectives prioritized over human rights objectives
- ▶ Limited rights-based approaches
- ▶ Gaps in CEAS vis-à-vis UAMs
- ▶ UAMs: falling through the cracks of various systems
- ▶ Unclear responsibility for UAMs



## 2. Refugee Crisis and UAMs

- ▶ Refugee crisis: a crisis of CEAS
- ▶ Culture of disbelief and suspicion
- ▶ EC policy: not fit for purpose
- ▶ Context: financial pressures



## 2. Refugee Crisis and UAMs

### ► Problems faced by UAMs across Europe:

#### *1. Protection of children's rights*

- ❑ 'Best interests of the child': not observed in practice
- ❑ 'Child participation': not observed in practice

#### *2. Processes conducive to 'durable solutions'*

## 2. Refugee Crisis and UAMs

► Problems faced by UAMs across Europe:

3. *Access to services*

4. *Integrated child protection systems*

5. *Holistic approaches to UAMs' protection*



### 3. Explaining failure to protect UAMs

One of the explanations: 'bystander effect' and diffused responsibility

#### Features:

- ▶ *Apathy*
- ▶ *Diffused responsibility*
- ▶ *Fragmented responsibility*
- ▶ *Ambiguity*



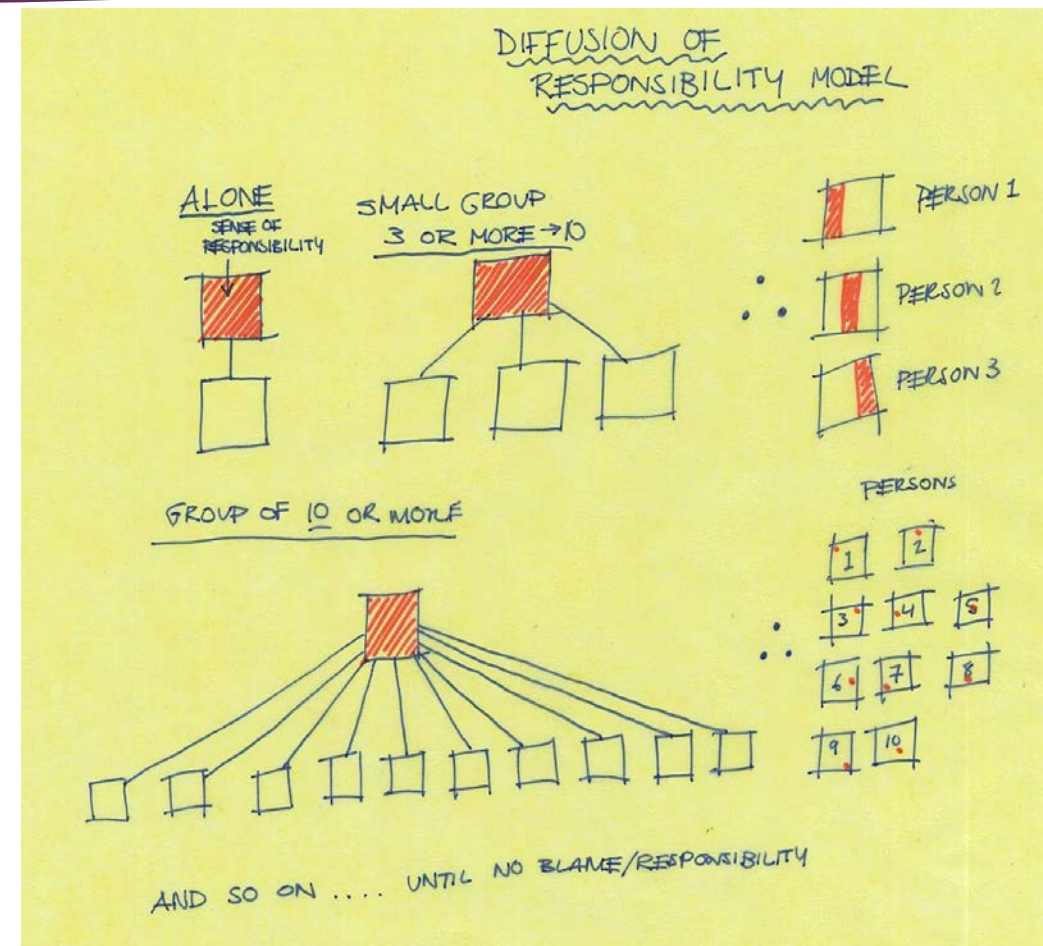
# 3. Explaining failure to protect UAMs

## 1. Horizontal responsibility

- ▶ No multi-sectoral approach to UAMs' protection
- ▶ No holistic approach to UAMs' protection
- ▶ No upholding of child rights

## 2. Vertical responsibility

- ▶ Fragmented division of responsibility between EU, national & local levels
- ▶ No cross-border coordination and cooperation
- ▶ Limited inter-agency cooperation
- ▶ No overarching approach to protection







**THANK YOU!!!**