

# Statement on Child Trafficking and Slavery

## **Ethics Working Group of the European Academy of Paediatrics (EAP)**

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### Introduction

The European Academy of Paediatrics in collaboration with our African partners wish to express our outrage and distress following recent reports of children migrating to Europe who find themselves the victims of child trafficking for the purposes of labour exploitation, sexual exploitation, ransom, and slavery. The trafficking of migrant children is systemic and organised within European borders as well as outside European borders.

As paediatric healthcare professionals our vocation and profession are not defined by geographic, political, religious, or economic borders. We share a responsibility for the physical, psychological, and spiritual health of children regardless of their land of origin, statehood status, and/or civil status. The care of children is not limited to those who enter our hospitals, clinics, and offices, but extends to all children through the responsibility we jointly share and in which we support one another.

### A Call to Action

As paediatricians and paediatric healthcare professionals, we call on all healthcare organisations and healthcare workers to identify migrant children at risk for human trafficking, to protect them and support them in finding safe and healthy living situations. We further call on our governments, our intergovernmental organisations, our civic and religious societies, and fellow compatriots to act within the law, and to the fullest extent of the law, to identify, disband, and prosecute child traffickers.

Children who have been the victim of child trafficking have a right to safe housing, healthcare services, counselling, and pathways to fruitful and fulfilling futures.

Recognising that the migration of persons and peoples is part of our common human heritage, we request that our governments, civic and religious societies, and healthcare systems work together to identify the migratory routes children and to provide safe haven and healthcare along these routes. We further request that the sources and causes of economic and/or forced migration of children be addressed to prevent the future sense of need and desperation that lead children to leave their homes and communities to seek a better life and the means to support their families.

### Our Resolve

As paediatricians and paediatric healthcare workers committed to the health and well-being of migrant children inside and outside our borders, migrant children originating from within our communities or arriving into our communities, we resolve to share our concerns and responsibilities for their health and well-being.