



Missing Children Europe To Launch First European Online Course On Runaways

Brussels, 2 November 2020

Today Missing Children Europe and its partners in the [RADAR](#) consortium, Child Focus, IAC, ITAKA, Child Helpline International and Liege University, announce the first European online course on runaway children launching in January 2022.

Every year, around 250,000 children are reported missing in the EU. Children and young people who run away or are pushed from their home or care institutions are the largest group of missing children across Europe. In 2020, [young runaways made up 51.8% of the missing children cases](#) reported to the 116 000 European hotlines for missing children.

Inaccurate perceptions of runaway children and misunderstandings around their behaviour lead to descriptions as ‘attention-seeking’ or a ‘behavioural problem’. However, [research](#) shows that running away is rather a symptom of adverse childhood experiences, with themselves describing it as a means to “send a message that something is wrong” or to distance themselves from a difficult situation.

Stigma attached to running away acts as a barrier to accessing support. Misconceptions lead to inadequate responses and insufficient attention for runaways within child protection systems.

The course aims to improve understanding of runaways, equip professionals with the ability to detect and respond to behaviour, and encourage trust between professionals and runaway children upon their return.

It is a 4-week course welcoming law enforcement officials, social workers, teachers and educators, hotline and helpline operators, and other professionals.

The course is free with the possibility to upgrade to obtain a certificate.





Pre-register today to reserve your place.

“Young runaways are often misunderstood and are approached with prejudice. The young people we work with ask that we really listen to their concerns and experiences. This course will equip professionals working with children at risk of running away to improve their ability to detect and respond to runaway behaviour. In this way we hope to prevent runaway episodes, improve overall reporting rates of runaways and of adverse childhood experiences and reduce the risk of negative experiences for runaways.”

Aagje leven, Secretary General at Missing Children Europe –

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Editor Note:

The [RADAR](#) (Running Away: Drivers – Awareness – Responses) project aims to reframe runaway behaviour as an indicator of underlying adverse childhood experiences such as abuse, neglect, mental health problems, or living with a family member with mental health problems and/or addiction. The project will raise awareness on the topic of runaway children through developing research, advocacy, trainings and toolkits as well as a Mass Open Online Course for professionals in relevant fields.

[Missing Children Europe](#) is the European Federation for Missing and Sexually Exploited Children, representing 31 grassroots NGOs in 26 European countries. Missing Children Europe coordinates the network of missing children hotlines available through the 116 000 number. The hotline is currently active in 31 countries in Europe.

For more information contact [Musu Kargbo-Reffell](#).

